Easter 5 C

# MDP of God

IF I were to give this homily a title I’d call it “Love one another--- 101”

Jesus gives us the command to love one another- how do we do that?

First of all – love needs to start at home

Because if we’re not loving the people closest to us – chances are that we’re not loving at all [*Don’t get me wrong love can’t just stay in the house*- it needs to go outward- but it needs to start at home]

One of Satan’s biggest strategies – *is to try to get us to love in an illusionary way*

And what I mean by that is- you can have people who are very very concerned with the hunger throughout the world – with the people who were hurt or killed in the bombings in Sri Lanka a few weeks ago—or people whose hearts really go out to the folks who are sick or hungry in Africa/// --- *but they treat their husband or wife like dirt-*or they deny their spouse their marital rights- or are mean to their parents or disrespectful to teachers

They feel such compassion for people they never met – but the people they live with every day – they don’t have time for-or don’t have patience for them

And what happens – is they have these **feelings** of love and compassion *for nameless people-* **but they are hardened toward the people they live with – or the people they see every day**

So the love and compassion is kind of an illusion – *but the selfishness- the self –centeredness—the meanness at home* **is very real**

## That’s what’s being lived every day

In true love we’re called to **forget *ourselves*** for the sake of others- offer helping hands- perform thoughtful actions- kind words---///*these are the things of love*

Not just warm caring compassionate feelings for people you haven’t ever met

Now living a life of love at home – *should also lead us to a real concern for others*- but it needs to start at home

Because if you’re not loving the people you see every day – *then chances are you are not living with real love*

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Second point is this---*true love is really a matter of head* **more than the heart////**

Jesus gives us a command to love one another – *but we can’t control our feelings* – *so He’s not commanding us to have feelings*- **He’s commanding us to make a decision**

The decision to give of yourself for others

There’s the example of a little girl who comes home and says, “mommy I really love you”

And the mom says, “I’m so glad you love me- I’m just so tired and I don’t feel well – could you do the dishes for me?”

And the little girl says, “I do love you, *but not in that way*”

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My friends, love does not consist in saying words- or having feelings – *love finds it’s way into our lives through the decisions we make*

The decision to do the dishes – the decision to inconvenience yourself for the one you love—the decision to skip going to the bar after work so you can spend time with the kids—the decision to not get something you might want *so you can get something your spouse might want*

And that can be with the people we live with – or work with – or go to school with ---it can be a decision for the people we pray with at Church or *it can be a decision for people we don’t know*

You can choose to spend your money wisely so that you can give more to the poor or to the work of the Church

You can choose to deny your desire to watch your favorite show so you can spend some time with your spouse

You can take some time to visit a friend who is sick

All of those are choices to love – they don’t seem like big and grand things – *but true love is usually shown in the simple decisions of everyday life*

We may not feel like doing these things – we might prefer to something more fun – or more interesting or less demanding

*But it’s that giving of self that is at the heart of love*

I also want to point out that we need to love the Church—*that really is a part of all of our readings today*—let me explain:

In our 1st reading from the Acts of the Apostles we heard of Paul and Barnabus’ love for the church—they went from town to town setting up a local church—and they ordained –our translation says elders—but the Greek word is “presbyters”—which is what we normally translate as “priests” [irritates me that our Catholic translation often doesn’t make the Catholic meaning clear]

In our 2nd reading we hear of the “heavenly Jerusalem coming down from heaven”—this is after the wicked city that the book of revelation calls “Babylon” is destroyed—*that was most likely a reference to the earthly Jerusalem*

At the time Jerusalem was the center of persecution of the Church—Jesus had predicted that the city would be destroyed for its lack of faith—so God gave Jerusalem the typical 40 years to come to faith in Jesus—and when they refused—the city was destroyed

So for 40 years the OT church and the NT Church overlapped—at the end of 40 years the OT sacrificial was done away with—*there was no more Temple to offer sacrifice*—**no more OT priesthood**—so the Judaism of Jesus’ time was done away with *and the new Jerusalem*—**the Church is seen coming down from heaven-** *and so we see the Church as being at the center of God’s saving plan*

And then in the Gospel—Jesus gives the command to love one another—so the command to love *is given to the Apostles when their gathered with each other*—**so the command is primarily to love their brothers in Christ**—to love those in the Church with them

So the Church is very much at the center of that command to love—that means the guy who cut you off in the parking lot—the usher who put the guy who smells like a smoke stack right next to you—the music director who picks songs you don’t like—even the priest who goes on and on and on—and just won’t stop talking

One last point – ***love-true love-- takes time***

If we don’t have time for the people in our lives – then what do we have?

If you’re too busy to talk to your husband or wife about what’s going on in your life – *then you’re too busy*

IF you’re too busy to visit a sick friend or to chat with a lonely neighbor – then you’re just too busy

The way you spell **love** to a spouse or a child or an elderly parent – is t-i-m-e---/// Taking time for them

One eight year old boy summed it up like this—“Daddy reads me a bed time story- true love is when he doesn’t skip any of the pages

That’s how we spell it with God too

An hour at Mass on Sunday- A few minutes when we get up to thank Him for another day- a quick prayer before we eat- a little time before bed to reflect on where God was in our day and where He is in our lives—turning off the radio in the car so we can say a rosary or reflect on all the gifts God has given you—maybe spending time in chapel or church to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament

*Time is usually one of the biggest commodities in expressing love*

That’s basically love 101

It has to begin at home—it then has to expand to others—the Church and then the wider community

It’s more a matter of the head then the heart—**it’s a decision** *not a warm fuzzy feeling*

And it takes time

Let’s love one another – let’s love God who is the source of all we have and are—let’s love our brothers and sisters in Christ—and let’s bring that love to the world