

In today's Gospel Jesus emphasises how much he loves us and how we need to love Him in return.

First of all Jesus says: 'If you love me you will keep my commandment': so loving Jesus is more than believing in Him and thanking Him for what He has done for us on the cross. Loving Him also means we keep His commandment, and we read about His commandment in John 13:34-35: <sup>34</sup> **“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”** Then in John 15: 13 He makes it even more explicit how He loves us and so how we should love one another: **‘ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.’** Jesus laid down His life for us not in accord with His own plan, but in loving obedience to the Father's loving and saving plan. To know the Father's loving and saving plan you need to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you. If you really love the Father, then you would want to know His plan for your life in general and for the life of people who are entrusted to you. If you don't know how to figure out the Father's specific plan for you just carry out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and so you become an image of the Father. Today's world which is gravely challenged by the present Coronavirus epidemic and by many other challenges I believe we as Christians are called more than ever to show the face of God our heavenly parent to the world.

In last Sunday's Gospel Jesus said that **‘to have seen me is to have seen the Father...’** So when Jesus shows His love He also shows the Father's love. He acts in perfect harmony with the Father's will. He is filled with the Father's love, He obeys it and acts upon it as a channel of God's love, and the love of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit. So Jesus acts in accord with the Father's love and in the power of the Holy Spirit and so He shows the Father's face to a world that was struggling just as much as we do today.

So love is not a matter of what one individual wants to do. True love is a teamwork, so to say. In secular society love is minimised to the level of individual, and that attitude can creep also into our attitudes as Christians. This was my attitude as well: I had an idea about what God's love was like and I tried to act in accord with this idea, but I was never really interested, if what I did in the name of God's love was really what God wanted me to do, because just like most of us we were brought up to know Christian morals and apply them to daily actions, which is very important and helps most of the time to know what to do, especially when you have to act quickly, but the problem is when you never ask God what to do, especially in very important and difficult situations, because this way you completely become autonomous. Thanks God I have developed that awareness that especially in case of important and difficult decisions I ask for God's guidance, but still I am far from perfect in discerning His will and acting upon it.

So if you want to show God's love to others, especially in difficult situations,

- first you need to **make yourself free from your own biases** as much as possible. For that you need to look at your own heart in silence, because the Father and Jesus are there. Your heart is the centre of your affectivity and of your feelings and thoughts. Jesus says in today's Gospel reading that He lives in you and the Father lives in Him. But unfortunately Jesus in your heart is probably surrounded with your own plans, frustrations and worries and preoccupations, and these can be louder than Jesus' voice.
- So once you are aware of these **hand them over to the Father** in prayer, so you can be free from your deep seated biases, and then you will be more able to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- Then **ask the Spirit to increase the gifts of understanding, knowledge and wisdom** so that you may comprehend what He wants to reveal to you in pictures or words about the will of the Father and Jesus for a particular situation for which you ask guidance.

So **do not simply act on the basis of moral principles**, because if we want to be honest we can use His moral principles for our own interest as well, just like the Bible can be used for mere human interests. So **act also upon what you believe the Father is telling you**. It can take sometimes a couple of days to get the message from the Holy Spirit. Once you've got the message, **ask for the gift of courage** and go and be the face of the Father. This is true love!