

Welcome to this short time of worship and reflection for the

6th Sunday of Easter

(17th May 2020)

as we think about

LOVE

The collect

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

Remember that lovely Hymn by Charles Wesley

Love Divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion;
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,

Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Our Reading

John 14:15-21

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

Something to think about

Like many hymns, "Love Divine" has a Trinitarian (Father Son and Holy Spirit) theme: Christ is invoked in the first verse as the expression of divine love; the Holy Spirit in the second as the agent of sanctification; the Father in the third as the source of life; and the Trinity in the final verse as the joint Creator of the New Creation.

It has been said "The words, "Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded Love Thou art", (1st verse 4th line) come to mind often when He overwhelms us with His goodness and mercy."

What do we hear when the word LOVE is used ? I love gardening? I love eating chocolate? I love my Mum? I love travelling ? And so on . We use the word so often, it possibly loses its real deep meaning.

In Greek there are several words when talking about love, and the one used over 200 times in The New Testament is “Agape”, which means more than superficial love – it is a LOVE that far outweighs the expectation of the loved person. Note again John 3 v 16: “God so Loved the world” that Easter happened!

Jesus came and died for you and me. Not because we deserved Him, but because God “agaped” us. God the Father, through the saving work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, wanted us to return to His Kingdom. To become His children. To inherit the Kingdom of God. To be sisters and brothers of Jesus. That is the Love (Agape) we are reflecting upon. As our hymn says. “all loves excelling”.

Whatever we think when we use the word Love, however much it means to us, when God Loves us it is Agape, so much more than we can imagine. More than we can dream about. More than we deserve!

Like all the words we use, we need to think carefully about what we mean. What does the word mean to us and to those who hear? “Pure, unbounded love Thou art”, we sing. That is God's love (agape) for us. Do we reflect that love, that agape, in our churches, society, families, all our relationships?

Remember 1 Corinthinians ch 13 vv4-7: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

“Love one another” was one of Jesus' commandments. What a challenge in these difficult times to love Jesus and keep His commandments, as our reading said!

Rev Richard

Keep a moment of silence and reflect on these words.

A prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, we thank You
that You so loved the world that You sent Jesus to save us;
may we in all our actions and thoughts and relationships,
reflect that AGAPE.

Amen

To God the Father, who loved us,
and made us accepted in the Beloved:
to God the Son who loved us,
and loosed us from our sins by his own blood:
to God the Holy Spirit,
who spreads the love of God abroad in our hearts:
to the one true God be all love and all glory
for time and for eternity.

Amen.