

Sixth Sunday of Easter B2024

In the Gospel of this morning Our Lord invites us to remain in his love and to love one another. He has chosen us and made us his friends. Human experience teaches us that there is a joy in being chosen among many other people to be part of a group or a team. We see this fact evidenced when there is a competition, like that of American idols, Miss Universe or Dancing with the Stars, etc.

After the competitors have given so much, only a few are chosen as winners, while many others are left out. Anytime it happens that way, the winners jump for joy because they have been found worthy of a prize. Here is, however, the intriguing part. Those who are so chosen win because of their performance, their skills or their beauty. There is nothing free; they earned it by the sweat of their brows.

When Our Lord says that he has chosen us, it is not because of some merits we have displayed, but it is out of love. With the love given by Our Lord, there is nothing to boast for; everything becomes a gift. That is our privilege, namely to be chosen out of love in order to be disciple.

Because we are chosen out of love, we have to replicate that love in our relationship with Our Lord and with one another. Then, we understand why Jesus says, "Remain in my love"... "Love one another".

In that perspective, it becomes clear that we are chosen in order to love. Our role, then, as disciples of Jesus is to love. We are not there in order to compete with one another; or to quarrel with one another; but rather in order to love. We are not called to discipleship in order to hate each other; but in order to love. That is the commandment we have received and we have to put into practice. By fulfilling it, we honor Our Lord and his Father. By despising it, we dishonor Our Lord and his Father.

The more we love, the more we prove that we are Jesus' friends. In fact, to be a friend, especially when it is about someone important or famous, is a great privilege and an honor. What is interesting in today's Gospel is that Our Lord contrasts friendship with slavery. In this country, the concept "slave" evokes very negative things and a state of being that nobody would like to see again.

The relationship of slave-master was a painful business. A slave was more than a baby, submitted to the dictate of his master and whose main role was that of doing his bidding and the duty entrusted to him. Never could a master ask his opinion or expect a slave to give his opinion when there was a problem. At the eyes of the master, a slave did not exist as a human person, but as a thing to use for his needs. Unlike a slave, a friend is a confident and a trustworthy ally to whom someone can open his heart and talk about his plans and projects of life.

When our Lord says that he calls us his friends and not slaves, it means that he has put us in a relationship of confidence and trust. He has brought us into his intimacy because everything of what he heard from his Father, he has communicated to us. He has opened his heart to us and told us the whole truth about our salvation. Only one thing is needed to truly remain in that friendship, namely obedience to our Lord's commands. That is the challenge we all have in front of us.

Let us pray that Our Lord may help us to love one another as he loves us. Let us ask him the courage to be obedient to his commandments. As we celebrate Mothers' Day today, let us pray for all our mothers, dead and living, that the Lord be with them. To the dead may he give his eternal life and to the living his abundant blessing.

Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4: 7-10; John 15: 9-17



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