

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Today's Gospel mentions the word *glory*. Jesus says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him." This is a word that we quite often see in the Bible. Many Christian hymns also use that word. The prayer *Glory be to the Father* ... is familiar. And during this Easter season, special focus is given to the *glorious* mysteries of the Rosary. We also describe the risen body of Jesus as glorified. It's a good word, but if you ask many Christians what it means, you might get almost anything as a reply. All that people will agree on is that it has something to do with God. We might sometimes use this word to simply describe something wonderful, as in having a *glorious* day or another kind of satisfying experience.

Glory refers to a manifestation of God's presence or a situation where the involvement of God is at hand. When it's glory time, it's "God-Time." God is there and God is active. When we are invited to give God glory, it means that we affirm and are grateful for what God is doing. We affirm God's interest in whatever it is that's being considered. To give God glory means to give God his place, the primary place. In the passage quoted above, Jesus is saying that God's work is being realized through him and with all that happens to him, God is the reason. Acknowledge God's work. Be conscious of God's wondrous accomplishments in you and around you. And most, of all give thanks and love extravagantly. That is what it means to live in glory.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 13:31–33a, 34–35

The best way to give God glory is to first, accept and affirm all that God has done for us. Giving thanks to God is the Christian's primary prayer of glory. Greatest among God's gifts is the gift of life, both human and divine. This wondrous gift includes being related to God as the One who deeply loves us. God's love is shown most fully in the death and Resurrection of Jesus. Through Jesus, we are united to God in the closest of imaginable relationships. Knowing this in faith is far from easy. We are challenged, day by day, to deepen our appreciation of this fundamental truth: we are loved by God. That's why we were created and that's why God remains with us now and will do so forever. This is a thought that we need to remind ourselves of often.

Jesus' new commandment is in today's Gospel. "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." This is a hard one to follow, especially when we're not in the mood to love, especially ourselves. Still, there it is like a billboard sign in front of where we live. Love one another. Simple? Never! The ones close to us are first on the list of ones to love. But we *know* these people. We know their faults and mistakes. We know they often fail to measure up to our expectations. He or she might be a spouse whose looks are sagging, and his or her shortcomings are written all over them. They may be our children who rarely get it right, and are always testing our thin veneer of patience. Maybe we can say that we love them, but sometimes that's just because we feel that we have to. Given the choice, we sometimes don't feel very loving. Maybe it's more like tolerating or enduring. Still, there it is, love one another. And don't fake it. God knows our hearts.

Parent Survival

Let's stay with that idea of loving yourself. We're not talking about what the psychologists call self-absorption or narcissism where *all* you think about is your own needs and desires. Rather, healthy self-love is when you take into consideration yourself as you do the same for others. Also in the Bible is that line to love your neighbor as yourself. If we have a healthy love and appreciation of ourselves, we will be better for others.

Parenting can be extremely difficult. It can wear us out. That's when we can often use an infusion of self-love. Being good to ourselves can also be as simple as taking a short walk while enjoying the outdoors, or relaxing while expressing our love for God in quiet prayer. Each of us knows (or should know) what we need to restore some sanity to our hectic lives. The trick is to recognize when we are on the edge, and then take practical steps to find balance. This too gives glory to God. Maybe you never thought of it that way, but why not?

Car or Meal Talk

Have a simple conversation in which each family member is invited to give a personal comment on what Jesus said, "As I have loved you, so should you love one another."

One-Line Prayer

Holy Spirit, open our hearts to see your love present in our family. Amen.