



**May 13, 2012**  
**Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
**Mothers' Day**

*"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God...—1 John 4:7*

Dear Friends;

A young woman went into a fabric store and asked a clerk if she had any kind of white fabric that would make a noisy rustling sound. The clerk went through the inventory and found two bolts of fabric that fit the description. As she was cutting the amount of fabric her customer needed the clerk got curious and asked the young woman why she wanted such an unusual and noisy cloth. The young woman replied, "I am making my wedding gown, and my fiancé is blind. When I walk down the aisle, I want him to know when I have arrived at the altar, so he won't be embarrassed."

Love knows no limits and is always willing to find new ways to express itself. Love is willing to sacrifice itself for the beloved. Love is the reflection of the holiness of God. And this is what today's readings remind us.

Originally holiness was defined as being something set apart—the pure from the impure. The God of Israel is holy because God is like none other, "Who is like you among the gods, O Lord?" (Exodus 15:11) Israel sees itself as separate from other nations; their law sets them apart as a priestly people. The dietary and ritual proscriptions were meant to distinguish them from others. Those who did not follow the law were seen as impure and unholy. Those who followed the letter of the law were righteous.

If someone did not keep all the purity laws, a non-Jew, tax collectors, Samaritans, those who had physical deformities were all deemed unworthy to enter into the temple assemblies. Jesus was notorious for challenging the categories that people used to label others as impure. He healed those with maladies and ate with those considered sinful. And when laws were meaningless or the object of obsession he ignored the rules.

So does this mean that Jesus disposed of the idea of holiness altogether? No. What we see is that the understanding of what makes us holy has changed. The old categories are now replaced with one simple rule—love. In the first reading from Acts, the Spirit of God emboldens Peter to cross the divide of Jew and Gentile and proclaim that all who act uprightly are acceptable to God.

The First Letter of John spells out right action as loving one another with the same love that God has loved us. That love is unconditional, always present, always forgives, and never ends. Love like this is the opposite of selfishness and greedy acquisition. It is this which is the new law of purity that defines one as holy or not.

The only way that we can love like this is not because of some innate ability of our own. It is the gift of God who loved us first. It is the love that we experience in Jesus that allows us to love so radically. "Love one another as I have loved you." This love demands our total self.

Today we honor our mothers. In many ways they are our first experience of God's love. They give their very bodies to give life and nurture us. They give their very life to nourish us when we first come into the world. They reflect God who as the Divine womb gives birth to all life and creation. We give thanks for mothers who teach us about Divine Love. We also give thanks this and the next weekends as we celebrate First Holy Communion. May our first communicants grow in love!

Peace,

*Fr Ron*