

May 5, 2024 - 6th Sunday of Easter "B"

[Acts 10, 25...48; 1 John 4, 7-10; John 15, 9-17](#)

H o m i l y

In last Sunday's Gospel, Jesus said to his disciples : *"I am the true vine and you are the branches"*; and He reminded them that only the one who remains in him bears fruits. In today's Gospel, which is the continuation of that discourse, Jesus expresses the same preoccupation to see his disciples bear fruits. *"I have chosen you and established you, so that you go and bear fruit and that your fruit remain"*

Jesus' revelation about the nature of the relationship between Him and His disciples has however moved to another level. He no longer speaks simply of a relationship similar to the one between the vine and its branches, but of an interpersonal relationship of friendship. *"I no longer call you servants... I call you friends"*. And it is not simply a question of the affective bonds between Jesus and his disciples becoming more intense when the time of his death is getting near. It is rather a new revelation about the love that unites Him to his Father and to His disciples.

What is revealed here is a chain of friendship: The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father as He is loved by Him. Likewise, He loves his disciples as He is loved by His Father and as He loves His Father, and He asks His disciples not only to love Him and to love His Father, but also to love each other with the same love.

It is when we let ourselves be caught without any restriction in that web of friendship that we can have with God a relationship of friend to friend, like Moses who used to speak with God face to face as a friend with his friend.

To that dance of love, all, without exception, are called because, as it was manifested to Peter when Corneille sent someone for him, *"God does not make acception of persons"*. That theme is classic and we find it throughout the Bible, including in the Old Testament. (Dt 10,17; 2 Cr 19,7; Sir 35, 13; Rom 2,11; Gal 2,6; Eph. 6,9; Col 3,25; 1 Peter 1, 17). We are all the object of God's fatherly love; and if at times we are privileged it is because we are then more in need.

Another aspect of the revelation made here by Jesus, is the one about the relationship between love and knowledge. As the

Apostle John will express it later, in his First Letter, *“God is love; and who does not love does not know God*. Already in the Old Testament, we see God revealing his secrets and his projects to his servants the prophets. Likewise, Jesus tells his disciples that, since they are his friends, he has revealed to them all that he has learned from his Father. Between friends there is full trust and no secrets.

Moreover, the friendship about which Jesus speaks here is not a sentimental friendship. It is a very demanding one. Immediately after saying : *“Love one another as I have loved you”*, Jesus makes a reference to the Cross, saying : *“there is no greater love than when someone gives his life for his friends”*. We are therefore all called to love each other to the point of giving our lives for one another.

There is our model; there also is also the source of our joy. It was on the day before he died that Jesus spoke of his joy, saying to his disciples that he has revealed all these things to them so that the same joy would be in them and that they would be filled with it. May we also find the fullness of our joy by giving ourselves totally to God in a life of mutual service, accepting all the demands of true love.