

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, May 22nd 2014

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.”

Poets, artists, writers, crooners and lovers have tried time and again throughout the ages to describe love. Everyman has done her best. Each of us speaks from our own intimate experiences of something we call love. We proclaim love's attributes: “Love is patient, love is kind...rejoices with the truth”. (Paul's letter to the Corinthians) Another describes the attitudes of love: “I love thee freely...I love thee purely...I love thee with passion”. (Elizabeth Barrett Browning). Another considers what love is not: “... not envy...boast(ful)... proud...self-seeking...keeps no record of wrongs...”. (Paul's letter to the Corinthians). Elizabeth Barrett Browning tries to count the ways, “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.” (Sonnets from the Portuguese 43)

In the depths of our collective hearts there is something - an emotion, an experience, a pull, a drive, an invitation, a fullness, an emptiness – something beyond any other human experience. Unfathomable and ineffable. Yet, we continually strive to articulate poetically and academically love's essence; to capture in muted tones and graceful line love's fragility; to remember in our tissues love's comfort and strength; to relive in the tremble love's challenge; to delve love's mystery. At times I forget the words to love's song, but my heart never forgets love's melody. I am ever held in Love and by Love.

In love, I kiss and caress, I hold you – tender vulnerable infant. In Love, I stand with, I hold you – smelly, dirty, homeless wretch. In love, I rescue you, I hold you – tear streaked frightened friend. In love, I honor you, I hold you – petrified convict. In love, I enjoy you, I hold you – lovely lady. In love, I reach out to you, I hold you – abused and abandoned. In love, I play with you, I hold you – orphan child. In love, I support you, I hold you – wife and mother. I befriend you, I hold you – wondering refugee. I cloth you, I hold you – naked stranger. I rejoice in you, I hold you – healthy and strong. In love, I anoint you, I hold you – dying.

I love you. I hold you.

In our mutual emptiness may I hold you? Will you hold me? In our mutual joy, may I hold you? Will you hold me? May I love you? Will you love me?

“As the Father (holds) me, (may) I also love (hold) you.”

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