

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, May 10th 2015

No one has greater love than this...

Within a few days we will have read all of chapter 15 in John's gospel – but not verse by verse. Throughout the chapter, back and forth, in and out, John calls our attention to the fundamental theme of all the gospels - LOVE. Maybe with this or that verse, I will hear Jesus's repeated invitation to fall into Love, to live in Love.

To know, taste and feel the strength of Love – all in the midst of my humanity, my life.

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J. once wrote about being covered with fingerprints- God's fingerprints. Fingerprints are unique. Using proper equipment the owner of the fingerprint can be identified. Whose fingerprints are these? Who was here? Who disturbed or intruded? Who ventured in to clean up the mess, to set things right? Who went through my personal possessions? Who rifled my heart? Whose fingerprints cover me? How would anyone know?

Recently 3 of our youngest grandchildren came for a visit. Twin 15 month old boys and their 4 yr old sister. Holy, sacred, blessed chaos reigned from the moment they entered through the front door until the moment they left through the back door. Laughter and tears, peaceful sleep and restless sleeplessness, exuberance and exhaustion - life was especially lifey, rich and abundant in our home that week. A garden of earthy delights!

They left and our home was eerily silent and still, yet vibrating, smeared and sticky with their presence. Children and grandchildren, left prints – theirs and God's -everywhere! Colored chalk on the driveway, mud where James finger-painted the side of the house. Thomas' footprints on budding plants. Chocolate where Penelope dripped icing onto the linen cloth. Fingerprinted hand-blown Easter eggs drowned in dye – keepsakes now. The cat's nose smudges on the breakfast room's window. She lived in a constant state of vulnerability as she watched their every move. Little and big fingerprints on glass doors and windows, on walls and furniture – everywhere. The intentional ink mark on the hall closet door indicating each one's growth. How they grown! There is even a print of a morning dove that flew into and bounced off a kitchen window. No permanent damage to the bird or the window and we had our own Holy Advocate!

My favorite prints are the translucent ones on the glass backdoor. As the sun shines through, each fingerprint glistens and each little line vivid and vibrant. I see not only the print, but my heart warms

to presence – theirs and God’s. In being who they are meant to be they leave a print – on the window, in our home and in my heart. Each print is meaningful. I feel James’ off-hand swipe, delight in Thomas’ pudgy little hand reaching to hold mine, and Penelope’s offering the stem-less flower bud. Their death-grip good-by hugs bring tears of joy. The love letter Maggie wrote to her deceased Great-Granny fills me with deep gratitude. All freely given and joyfully received. Whose fingerprints are these? The children’s of course, but God’s most definitely. They have Love smeared and stuck all over them.

I like to think, and I pray God’s fingerprints are on me and the prints I leave behind are just as noticeably God’s prints. These children make leaving behind a trail of God’s loving fingerprints seem so easy. For me, leaving behind a trail of God’s fingerprints is not easy, but God’s prints are readily identifiable. It is God who intrudes and rifles my heart. It is God who sets things right. God dwells among us. God dwells in me. God’s fingerprints are everywhere.

The Good-News: God’s love-ly fingerprints are smeared and permanently stuck to me. I just have to stand where the light can shine through.

No one has greater love than this...

Joan Blandin Howard-Christian Spirituality Program