

6th Sunday of Easter (Cycle A) Homily
Mass Suspended due to Coronavirus
On-Line Homily

St. William, Champion | May 17, 2020
Acts 8:5-8, 14-17 | 1 Pt 3:15-18 | Jn 14:15-21
Deacon Bob Mintus

One of the hardest questions you can ever hear is the question “Do you love me?” Today, Jesus doesn’t pose this question directly to us; instead, he makes a statement that gets to the heart of the issue without being confrontational. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments...”

Most of us, I think, would be inclined to respond, “Yes, I’ve tried to keep your commandments, and I’ve done a pretty good job.” But maybe after further thought and reflection, we might be a little less sure of ourselves. To steal a line from Star Wars – “Do or do not. There is no try.” So - do we keep all of his commandments all of the time? Do we score a perfect 100%? Or are there some areas in our lives that we know we could do better? His statement is pretty direct and there’s no ambiguity or room for interpretation.

One of the challenges we face as Americans is that the concept of freedom is ingrained in our culture a little too deeply at times. From our inception in colonial days, we have a bit of a rebellious streak that is part of the core values we cling to. Let’s take a simple example – do we observe the speed limit? Or do we consider it to be just a guideline?

The same can be said when it comes to today’s message: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments...” Does that mean every one? Yes, indeed. The simple fact is that any time we don’t keep Jesus’s commandments, any time we sin – we love something else more than Jesus and are consciously choosing it over Him.

Now there are people who will offer up some excuses that sound pretty good. They will say that Jesus understands our weaknesses and loves us and forgives us... Granted, those are true, but think

back to the last time you received the Sacrament of Reconciliation – and its conclusion with the Act of Contrition. In that simple prayer, we do two things. We acknowledge that our sins hurt our relationship with Jesus and we state our resolve to do better in the future with his help.

So if we really love Jesus, it's not all about emotions – loving Jesus is about changing our lives, reforming who we are, working on improving our personalities and character, overcoming our weaknesses and the things that lead us to sin. It means changing our minds to think like Jesus thinks – and opening our hearts to love others as He did. It may also mean that we have to do some spring cleaning in our hearts and souls to make room. Maybe there are some ways of thinking, attitudes, and even habits we need to purge from our lives to allow us to be closer to Jesus. Maybe there are some things we will just have to obediently trust Jesus about until we can fully understand His reasons as we get to know Him better.

Jesus gives us these words of comfort: “Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me.

And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

May we respond today by loving Him through keeping his commandments, so that the love of Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit may be in our hearts.