

So That Our Joy Be Complete

6th Sunday in Easter year B

John 15:9-17

Jesus goes rather deep.

It seems to me that discourses such as this particularly reveal what is amazing in the Christian experience: divinity transforming the very fibers of humanity...

As I was reading, however, a question arose for me. Jesus speaks of *keeping the Father's commandments*. What commandments does *Jesus* keep? It seems odd that the Father be commanding the Son. Has Jesus been given a set of rules? It sounds so bizarre.

This merits

- an important distinction
- some clarification regarding commandments

There is no commanding in the Trinity.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit are perfectly one, in perfect love.

God the Son become flesh, *in His humanity*, does yield in love, does "obey".

Why? Because he is free.

Jesus freely chooses to love, to lay down His life.

It is also important to note that we must be careful not to do what we so often do: reduce *commandment* to that status of *rule*.

We so often reduce the Christian life to rules.

Rules are not life-giving.

The Christian life is *life!* The Christian life is about *being alive!*

Rules are relative to being alive.

Jesus, in this discourse, reveals precisely what the Christian life is.

There are commandments.

More precisely, there is a "new commandment", but, strictly speaking, it is not a *rule*.

Let us see what Jesus says,
and, if I may, let us do so in reverse order of the text.
Towards the end, Jesus declares that He has chosen us.
Everything begins with Jesus' choice of us, of *me*.
Jesus chooses me.
Do I really believe it?
“Wait, God wants me personally?”
“Does He not have anything better to do?”
Apparently not!
Jesus chooses me not because He is bored or incomplete.
Jesus chooses me because He is love.
It is a choice of pure, gratuitous love.

In choosing me, He draws me to Himself.
In drawing me to Himself,
Jesus shares with me “everything that the Father has told Him”. (v. 15)
In other words, Jesus shares with me the secrets of God.
How utterly amazing! Such is friendship.
Thomas Aquinas so wonderfully states
that the sharing of secrets is what characterizes friendship.
We share our secrets with *friends*.
We normally do not go on national television or online
to share our secrets with perfect strangers—*normally*.
Of course, in our society this has become fairly commonplace.
But it is actually weird. It is a sad distortion of the experience of love.

Jesus shares with us the secrets of God, thus making of us friends.
We are no longer slaves, i.e. persons who simply wave and obey from afar.
We have been drawn into God's intimacy.
The secret that is ultimately shared
is the love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If this is true, then the commandment that Jesus gives:
“Love one another as I love you” is normal (and clearly not a rule).
We have been given divine love.
How can it be kept, and not communicated if, by nature,
it is communicative?
To be true to the love we have received, to be true to the God-man,
we *must* love one another.

It is true that Jesus is ordering us to do this.
Why? Because we would probably never go there of our own initiative.
It is not a rule with legal consequence for those who disobey.
The consequence for those of us
who do not seek to fulfill the new commandment is *sadness*.
Jesus reveals to us the secret to *complete joy*.
Jesus indicates that if we go this route, we will know complete joy.
Again, it is not the joy that comes from a job well-done.
“I loved my neighbor, and now I feel good about myself.”
It is the joy *of God* that comes when the love of God flows through us.
All we must do is *choose*.
“Yes Lord, I yield to the love that You deposit in me.
Lead me to love whomever You will.”
Complete joy is within reach for us.
Let there be love. Let there be joy.