**Fifth Sunday of Easter, Cycle. C. 2019**.

**We love our sports-teams and rock-bands** and we are proud to be identified with them. So we wear **T-shirts and hats and even sometimes uniform**s. Jesus wanted us to be identified with Him and His team. Since there were no uniforms, habits, badges, banners, bumper stickers, T.-shirts or caps during His time, He made it very simple for His followers. **He said that people would know we are His followers if we would love one anot**her. All will know we are His disciples **by this special identification**. No special hats or uniforms are needed. Our identification is our love for others. Making others happy in our homes, work places and at school is how the kingdom of God is built.

**Loving others sounds simple. But it is so difficult to att**ain. An American journalist, watching Mother Teresa as she cared for a dying, filthy man commented: “***I wouldn’t’ do that for a million dollars”***. Mother Teresa responded immediately, “***Neither would I. I am doing it for the love of Christ”.***

A soldier was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam. He called his parents from San Francisco. “***Mom and Dad, I am coming home, but I have a favor to ask, I have a friend I would like to bring home with me***. “Sure”, they replied, “we would love to meet him”. “***There is something you should know***”, the son continued, ***He was injured pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on landmine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come and live with us”***. I am sorry to hear that, son. May be we can help him find somewhere to live”. “No, Mom and dad, ***I want him to live with us”***. “Son, said the father, “you don’t know what you are asking. Sometimes with such handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can’t let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He will find a way to live on his own”.

At that point, the son hung up the phone. **The parents heard nothing more form him**. A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide. The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francesco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. **They recognized h**im, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn’t know, **their son had only one arm and one leg.**

Mother Teresa remarked that the greatest disease in this world is not tuberculosis, leprosy or even A.I.D.S, **it is being unwanted, uncared for and unloved.** It is easy for us to love those who are good-looking, fun to be with, smart or not giving us any problem and not causing us any troubles. We would rather stay away from those who make us feel uncomfortable and annoying.

**We very often hear the excus**e that he/she has been unloving and grumpy all his/her life. It cannot be true. He/she was not always like that; it is a choice he/she has made. Therefore they can change if they wish. **Love can be re-learned. We can be re-educated, re-formed and rene**wed. You don’t have live in misery and un-wantedness. You can change your life; it is a matter of decision from your part. A word, **“sor**ry” can change your whole life forever. Try that truth with your partners and friends and see how life is going to bear fruit.

**There are three steps**: 1. Not to love and not to be loved- this seems like **hell on ea**rth.2. To love and not to be loved in return- this though painful, is better than the first.3. To love and to be loved. **This is the best blessed state Jesus enjoyed and asks us to practice.**

There are at least five kinds of love. They are utilitarian love, romantic love, democratic love (based upon equality under the law), humanitarian love and the fifth kind is **Christian lov**e summed up in the commandment of Jesus: “***Love one another as I have loved you”.*** It expresses itself in service, affection and self-sacrifice. We all are familiar with the Golden Rule: “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*”. In other words, treat others as you would expect to be treated. We can all agree that it is reasonable and practical. But Jesus calls us to a higher standard or way of thinking-one that is not just in keeping with human expectations, reason and demands, but one that that aligns with God’s ways. Hence Jesus says, “***As I have loved, so you also should love one another”.*** Its a command, not an option - a mandate for every Christian. Our behavior in all aspects of our life must strive to be Christ-like, not merely reasonable or convenient but modeled on Christ. And it is this love that we are called to imitate in all its fullness, its faithfulness and, even at times, its impracticality. **Christ-like love is the hall mark of a true Christian.**

**During World War II.** A prisoner escaped from a labor camp in Auschwitz, a Nazi concentration camp in Poland. To discourage such escapes, the Nazis randomly picked ten prisoners to be killed. One was the father of a family. As the guards marched the victims away to be executed, a priest stepped up from the rank of prisoners and volunteered to take the man’s place. The Nazi officer in charge was stunned, but he regained his composure and said, ***“Accepted***”. That priest was not just any priest. He is the well-known **Franciscan father Maximillian Kolbe- now St. Maximillian Kolbe**. His heroic act of love for a fellow prisoner is a faint reflection of Jesus’ love for us and the Father’s love for Jesus. Let us try to attain this kind of love.