

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**May 6, 2018**

**Acts of the Apostles 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48**

**1 John 4:7-10**

**John 15:9-17**

**This Sunday we celebrate First Eucharist with eleven of our young people. Over the past two weeks, I sat down with each child and together we talked about Jesus coming to us in the bread and wine. I then asked them to say the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and once in a while someone will know the Glory be.... These prayers pretty much identify us as a Catholic people. Yet, the recitation of these prayers is only a part of what needs to happen. This exterior recitation has to touch something within.**

**There is a classic Jewish story where a villager does not take his son to synagogue services because the boy is too slow to learn the Hebrew prayers. Since he cannot learn the prayers, it is assumed he cannot worship. However, on the feast of atonement, the father brings the boy along with him. He is afraid if he leaves the boy alone, he will inadvertently eat and break the sacred fast. The father does not know that the boy has a shepherd's pipe hidden in the pocket of his jacket.**

**During the service the boy begs his father to let him play his pipe. The father refuses and tightly grasps the pocket with the pipe. But the boy prevails in pulling out the pipe and puts it to his lips and lets out a blast. The congregation is startled. The Rabbi officiating at the service tells the people that this "blast from the pipe of the babe" brought "all their prayers to the throne of God before the gates of heaven closed." The blast from the pipe brought together the inner awareness with the outer expression. This I would say, is what I am aiming toward with our young people. This is what we are aiming toward, that is, an inner awareness.**

**Within the sacred word today, the inner awareness is a result of the movement of the Holy Spirit within the people listening to the apostle Peter. The inner awareness is the love that is found within the lives of believers. The second lesson from the Letter of John describes this love as coming from God and filling the lives of human creatures. This love, we are told, is the clear indicator that we are begotten of God for God is love. You and I do not find or create love but rather love is poured into our human lives from our very first breath. All that we need to do is to become aware of that love and permit that love to flow within, through, and around us.**

**This movement of love from God into our human lives has become more clearly defined and identified in the life and the teachings of Jesus. This love is so embodied in Jesus that Jesus says the Father and I are one...if you see me you see the Father...if you hear me you hear the Father..if you walk with me you walk with the Father. This ongoing steady relationship Jesus has with his Father is what Jesus shares with us, "that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."**

**Perhaps it would be helpful to ponder that this love that comes from God through Jesus is always freely given, even to those who do not deserve it. This might well give us an insight into why "this is my commandment." It is interesting that love of its very nature can only be freely given. No one can make us love someone. No one can force us to love them nor can we force anyone to love us. If love then is a free act, and if love is the fundamental command of God, then we must shift our understanding of this concept of commandment. With Jesus there is certainly a shift away from master and slave, from the boss telling the worker what to do. Rather the commandment that Jesus gives is a pathway to God's desire, God's longing, and God's very nature. God invites us to come into this love and once we are indeed secure in that love we will be an instrument of that love to**

**others. The heartbeat of God that flows through us is meant to flow into the lives of others. The heartbeat of God longs to transform our troubled human family.**

**So much of what we do when we come here is a recitation of responses and prayers. Yet, the hope is that more often than not, something is touched within us. We strive for a deeper relationship with the Lord and one another. May the shepherd's pipe be within reach!**