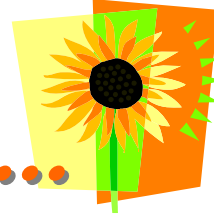




**EARLY MISSIONS — Acts 14:21-27; Psalm 145:8-13; Revelation 21:1-5; John 13:31-35**

## *It is necessary for us to undergo hardships...*



hope and expectation for our heavenly home. Not only will our lives be different—the entire world will

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another.

As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”

**REFLECTION:** *Behold, I make all things new. (Revelation 21:5)* In the beginning, God created a world free of sadness and pain. And in that world, he placed man and woman, calling them to serve him and one another. But then humankind turned inward to self-seeking ambitions and desires. Thus, sin and corruption entered the world. And from the first moment of our fall from grace, we have had to live with the result of this sin.

But the story doesn't end with our fall into sin and separation.

God has made it possible for us to live in harmony, peace, and perfection once again. He

gave up his only Son so that this kind of life could be ours—eternal life in heaven. The problem is that we can be so distracted with the demands of life in this world that we spend little time reflecting on our true home.

Let's agree to let the Holy Spirit open our eyes. Then we will find him filling us with the desire for more of Jesus. We will find a new sense of

change for the good!

Jesus deeply wants to make all things new. He loves to take what is “old” in our lives—habits of sin and lack of belief—and replace them with the newness of his love, his power, and his joy. He loves you and is completely committed to making you ready for heaven. He is completely committed to making you into part of his wonderful,

new creation. This is something he does in each of us as he lifts us up and gives us glimpses of the heaven he has prepared for us. He knows that the more fully we see his perfect plan for us, the more deeply we will want to be with him—and the more readily we will repent of anything that hinders that plan.

*“Almighty Father, I hear your call to join you for eternity. I praise you for your goodness and your mercy toward me!”*



*After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch (Acts 14:21).*

Wed, May 5

*Acts 15:1-6; Psalm 122:1-5;  
John 15:1-8*

I am the vine, you are the branches. (John 15:5)  
What a perfect image for our relationship with Jesus! It tells us that Jesus wants to suffuse us with life—his life, one that looks very different from the life we experience when we are not being nourished by the Lord.

So just what is it that Jesus gives us that we can't get on our own? It's not that we haven't been endowed with natural gifts of creativity, curiosity, or intelligence. Through education and perseverance, we can develop these gifts and accomplish many good things. But being connected with Jesus, being nourished by him, fills these gifts and talents with new meaning, excitement, and purpose. It also means that we have divine life within us—and that involves even greater, spiritual gifts.

For example, as we stay connected to the Lord, we will find that our relationships are even more fulfilling. We will find divine strength to help us get through a difficult situation. We have greater clarity about challenging situations like difficult relationships or problems at work. We find ourselves being more generous, more willing to forgive, and more compassionate and caring. We will find a joy that comes from deep within us, no matter what our circumstances. And above all of this, we will find a peace “that surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

All these blessings come to us as we are attached to Jesus. God has made us resilient and resourceful, but he wants to

Sts. Philip and James

Monday, May 3

*Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.* (1 Corinthians 15:3) Little is known about Philip and James, the apostles whom we commemorate today. According to the Gospel of John, Philip came from Bethsaida, “the town of Andrew and Peter,” and may have been a friend or business partner of theirs (John 1:44). Before the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus asked Philip how they should feed the crowd. Philip, a businessman, calculated what it would cost and concluded that it simply could not be done (6:5-7). Philip was just as straightforward in persuading Nathanael to meet Jesus. When his friend doubted Jesus' credentials, Philip simply said, “Come and see” (John 1:46). Other than a few other limited references, however, Philip appears nowhere else in the New Testament. (He is not the same Philip who was a deacon in the early church—Acts 6:5; 8:6.) We know even less about James, the son of Alphaeus. He is even called “the younger” or “lesser” to distinguish him from the other James, who was John's brother. Some traditions consider him to be the same James who led the early Jerusalem community (Acts 15; Galatians 1:19; 2:9), but his identity still remains obscure. It shouldn't surprise us that even though little is known about these men, they are still considered apostles and saints. Jesus didn't choose them because of their leadership abilities or theological prowess. He called regular people with jobs, homes, and families. They had met the

Son of God, and their lives would never be the same again. The Greek word *apostolos* means “one who is sent forth.” The amazing thing is that each of us has been called and sent forth to announce his gospel. Jesus has a special plan and calling for you, just as he did for Philip and James. And that plan begins with the promise that you can know his love deeply. After all, you can't give what you don't have! So today in prayer, quiet your heart and mind, and let Jesus show you his love. As he does, he will also show you his calling. **“Lord, as I spend time with you today, show me your loving kindness, and empower me to witness to others who need to know your love.”**

Tues, May 4

*Acts 14:19-28; Psalm 145:10-13,21; Jn 14:27-31*

Do not let your hearts be troubled. (John 14:27) The disciples had more than enough reason to be troubled. Jesus was about to leave and that the “ruler of the world” was on his way (John 14:30). But while the disciples were troubled, Jesus was happy: He knew that his departure would bring them peace. With Jesus at the Father's right hand, he could pour his Spirit into their hearts, and the Spirit would then reveal God's love to them in new and deeper ways. Thus would their anxious hearts be put to rest. So how can we come to know God's love in the same way that the disciples came to know it? How can we experience the peace that Jesus promised them? The key lies in dynamic prayer. The Catechism of the Catholic Church

tells us that prayer should engage “thought, imagination, emotion, and desire” (CCC, 2708). Mobilizing our God-given faculties in this way can bring the truths of our faith to life and lead us ever deeper into the Father's heart. Prayer works when we ask the Holy Spirit to lift up our natural imagination and give us spiritual insight. St. Ignatius of Loyola often relied on his imagination when he prayed. With a Bible before him, he would picture the setting and time of whatever story he was reading and then imagine himself in the scene. In his imagination, he would pay close attention to the details in the scene and ask Jesus questions about what was going on. Ignatius especially liked to imagine himself at the Last Supper, at the Sermon on the Mount, or at Calvary as he watched Jesus give up his life for us. Try it yourself. Imagine yourself at one of Ignatius' favorite scenes—or one of your own. What is Jesus saying and doing? What is the expression on his face? What does his voice sound like? Now, imagine Jesus talking right to you as the scene is playing out. What message does he have for you today, and how can you best respond to him? It's amazing how much peace you can experience! Jesus really has calmed your anxious heart, just as he did for the disciples at the Last Supper! **Father, I want to know you more! Show me your majesty, your love, and your joy. Let the knowledge of you remove my anxieties and fears.”**

*The Glorified Christ  
in our Midst! Pray  
unceasingly!*

give us more. He wants to give us divine attributes that are fruits of his own Spirit, attributes that allow us to live a heavenly life, even as we go about our earthly duties.

So let's seal the image of a vine and branches firmly in our minds. Let's picture this branch as being strong and vital, bearing abundant fruit year after year. Let's allow this image to encourage us to keep on abiding in Christ. As we do, we will find our lives changing—in the way we think and act, in our relationships, and even our outlook on life. This image, fixed in our minds, can even help us say no to temptation simply because we don't want to lose the flow of divine life in our hearts.

***“Lord, graft on my heart the image of you as the vine and me as the branch. May I never forget how much I need you!”***

## Thurs, May 6

*Acts 15:7-21; Psalm 96:1-3,10; John 15:9-11*

I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. (John 15:11)

Lots of people would pay a fortune for the secret to “total” joy. It's a good thing that in today's reading, Jesus gives it away for free!

You will have joy that is “complete,” Jesus tells us, if you “remain in my love.” And how do you do that? “Keep my commandments ... just as I have kept my

Father's commandments” (John 15:9-10).

So there is a catch. Doing God's will is a chore. Well, not really. Instinctively, we all sense that we're happy when we are doing what God

wants—even when it is difficult. If nothing else, we know this from how we feel when we aren't doing his will! Cardinal John Henry Newman made this point in one of his sermons:

Can't you recall, at some time or other, having done something you knew to be wrong? Don't you remember what a piercing bitter feeling came on you afterwards? Isn't the feeling of a bad conscience more distressing than any other? Until we blunt our conscience, it is very painful. And why is it so painful? Because God made us to be happy by abiding in him.

When we choose our way over his, we are going against our very nature. We are disrupting the flow of love that brings us life. We are stifling the longing that is deep in every human heart: “To do your will is my delight!” (Psalm 40:9).

The truth is, obedience is just the opposite of wearisome duty. It's the golden key that unlocks room after room of spiritual treasures. Every saint knew this. Even when obedience was painful and costly, they held fast to God's will because they knew it would open the way to the deepest longing of the human heart—to be with Jesus. As Cardinal Newman said, living like this isn't burdensome. Instead, it brings “indescribable joy and gladness.”

What does obedience mean for you? Does your key need a little dusting off?

***“Jesus, help me to walk through this day with the key of obedience in my hand so that I can open the doors of holiness and intimacy with you. Show me the delights of obeying your will.”***

## Friday, May 7

*Acts 15:22-31; Psalm 8-10,12; John 15:12-17*

You are my friends. (John 15:14) A good friend is a great joy and blessing, and Jesus' compassion was like a magnet drawing people to him. That's why outcasts like the adulterous woman described in Luke 7, the cheating tax collector Zacchaeus in Luke 19, and the “good thief” in Luke 23 all approached him.

At the Last Supper, Jesus knew that his disciples would abandon and betray him, and yet he called them his friends (John 15:15). He even showed them the true mark of friendship by declaring that he would lay down his life for their sakes. Now glorified in heaven and reigning over all of creation, Jesus still calls each of us his friend. And he invites us to join him in laying down our lives for the poor, the needy, and the neglected. They are all around us: in our parish community, in our neighborhood, in the stores where we shop, on the streets that we travel.

Sometimes, laying down our lives entails nothing more than taking the time to offer a warm smile, a friendly greeting, and an open heart to someone.

George is a good example. He recently befriended a man from his parish who had struck him as feeling lonely and overburdened. This fellow was touched that someone took an interest in his concerns and decided to invite him to meet his family, including his mother, who was struggling with alcoholism, and his two adopted boys, who lost their mother to AIDS. George was amazed at the warmth in this family and their willingness to accept him as one of their own. What began as an act of



The **HouseHoldServant** is published by Couples for Christ (Washington DC), a 501c3 tax exempt non-profit organization, for CFC Foundation for Family and Life In the United States.

The **HouseHoldServant** observes Catholic doctrines and is strongly recommended for all Christians for their devotional, bible study groups, clergy planning for weekly liturgy, catechists and individuals seeking daily wisdom and inspiration.

Permission is granted to distribute The **HouseHold-Servant** Newsletter as is, at will but without any charge. But it cannot consent to being quoted since copyright restrictions may be in force.

The **HouseHoldServant** newsletter relies solely on the free will gifts of its readers to maintain this work. Love offerings may be sent with your name and address, to:  
**Couples for Christ WDC, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave. NW #180, Washington DC 20006.**

Copyright 2009. USA.  
All Rights Reserved. Website: [www.cfcusa.net](http://www.cfcusa.net) Email: [webservant@cfcusa.net](mailto:webservant@cfcusa.net)

charity on George's part blossomed into a new network of relationships that ended up blessing him far more than he expected. He reached out to this fellow in order to give even more. Even with our busy lives and rushed schedules, we can make room for the people around us. And when we do, we find that we are touching not just a lonely person but Jesus himself!  
***“Lord, teach me how to be a friend to the people around me. Open my eyes to see you in the lonely, the burdened, and the needy.”***

*After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch (Acts 14:21).*

### Saturday, May 8

*Acts 16:1-10; Psalm 100:1-3, 5; John 15:18-21*

They tried to go on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. (Acts 16:7)

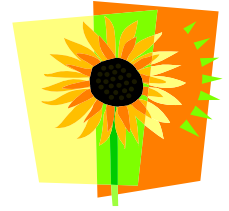
When we read about St. Paul's travels, we frequently come across times where the Holy Spirit "prevented" him from going to a certain place. Does this mean that, while going down the road, Paul had a blinding flash of insight? Did he hear the voice of God telling him to change course? Was there some other kind of supernatural sign to guide him? Maybe. But it just as easily could have been something much more ordinary.

The Holy Spirit often speaks to us through everyday situations. Maybe Paul found a road washed out by an unexpected flood. A severe storm may have prevented travel to a certain part of the world. Or perhaps one of his traveling companions was taken ill suddenly, and they had to make a detour. We really don't know what caused Paul to rethink his travel plans.

When faced with such obstacles, instead of trying to force his original plan, Paul accepted the change of plans with grace and confidence that the Holy Spirit would guide him. Often, Paul discovered that the new paths he took because of those obstacles brought better results than his original plan! Look at today's reading as a prime example. Paul might not have gone to Macedonia in response to his dream if he was already on an arduous journey toward Bithynia. But then the Macedonians would have missed out on all the blessings that came from that missionary trip.

Sometimes discernment is a process where we hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us clearly. It might be like the heavenly lightning bolt that we often imagine. At other times, though, changing circumstances or detours may well be the "voice" God uses to help us reformulate our plans. Of course, we should never let circumstances be the only things that dictate our choices. We should always be open to the ways God may be leading us. As we accept changes and embrace new itineraries that come from the Lord, we will find—like Paul—that the new paths we follow often bring greater blessing and are more fruitful! ***"Holy Spirit, teach me to recognize the ways you speak to me. May I not ignore your voice in the ordinary events of my day. Open my ears to your direction."***

## Gospel Challenge



IN EXILE

BY RON ROLHEISER

The gospels point out that, before his conversion, Zacchaeus was a short man, someone lacking in height, but that, after his conversion, the tall man gave back what the small man had stolen. Meeting Jesus, it seems, made Zacchaeus grow bigger in stature.

That's what goodness does to us, it makes us grow taller. For example, a friend of mine shares this story: He has a neighbour who frequently drops round to drink coffee and chat. The neighbour is a good man from a wonderful family and has been blessed with lots of love and good example in his life. But, like the rest of us, he has his weaknesses; in his case, gossip and occasional pettiness. One day, as he was sitting with my friend, he made a very racist remark. My friend, instead of accusing him of being a racist or shaming him with the inappropriateness of his remark, called him instead to his own essential goodness: "That comment surprises me," he said, "coming from you. I've always considered you and your family big-hearted people, with class, never petty. I've always envied your family for its goodness and understanding. That remark simply doesn't sound like you!"

The man's reaction was instant, positive. Immediately he apologized: "You're right," he said, "I don't know why I sometimes say stupid things like that!" Like Zacchaeus the taller man gave back what the smaller man had taken.

It's interesting to note that the word "Gospel" means "good news", not "good advice". The gospels are not so much a spiritual and moral theology book that tell us what we should be doing, but are more an account of what God has already done for us, is still doing for us, and the wonderful dignity that this bestows on us. Of course the idea is that since we are gifted in this way our actions should reflect that dignity rather than what's less lofty and more petty inside us. Morality is not a command, it's an invitation; not a threat, but a reminder of who we truly are. We become taller and less petty when we remember what kind of family we ultimately come from.

In essence, we all have two souls, two hearts, and two minds. Inside of each of us there's a soul, heart, and mind that's petty, that's been hurt, that wants vengeance, that wants to protect itself, that's frightened of what's different, that's prone to gossip, that's racist, that perennially feels cheated. Seen in a certain light, all of us are as small in stature as the pre-converted Zacchaeus. But there's also a tall, big-hearted person inside each of us, someone who wants to warmly embrace the whole world, beyond personal hurt, selfishness, race, creed, and politics.

We are always both, grand and petty. The world isn't divided up between big-hearted and small-minded people. Rather our days are divided up between those moments when we are big-hearted, generous, warm, hospitable, unafraid, wanting to embrace everyone and those moments when we are petty, selfish, over-aware of the unfairness of life, frightened, and seeking only to protect ourselves and our own safety and interests. We are both tall and short at the same time and either of these can manifest itself from minute to minute.

But, as we all know, we are most truly ourselves when what's tall in us takes over and gives back to the world what the short, petty person wrongly takes. John of the Cross, the great mystic, made this insight the center-piece of his theology of healing. For him, this is the way we heal:

We heal not by confronting all of our wounds and selfishness head-on, which would overwhelm us and drown us in discouragement, but by growing to what he calls "our deepest centre". For him, this centre is not first of all some deep place of solitude inside the soul, but rather the furthest place of growth that we can attain, the optimum of our potential. To grow to what our deepest DNA has destined us for is what makes us whole, makes us

# The Johannine Theory of Glory

## Reading I: Acts 14:21-27

On the homeward leg of the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas revisit the communities they had established on their outward trip. Current scholarship tends to regard the ordination of elders (presbyters) in Acts 14:23 as a Lucan anachronism.

In Paul's churches, if 1 Corinthians is typical, the ministry was charismatic (1 Cor 12:4-11, 27-30). Here Luke describes an ordination service as he knew it in the Church of his day.

But whether it is the charismatics of the Pauline age, the elders of Luke's time, or the threefold ministry of the second century and after, the function of all these ministries is to keep the Church on the foundation laid by the original apostles.

When the apostles return to the church in Syrian Antioch, they report, not what they had done, but what "God had done with them." It was he, not their own missionary strategy, that had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

## Resp Psalm: 145:8-9, 10-13

This is another psalm of exuberant joy. The psalmist exults in God's mighty acts in creation and in salvation history.

In the earlier part of the Old Testament, the kingdom of God is a timeless truth. Later it seemed that God's kingship was

tall—humanly, spiritually, and morally.

Thus, if John of the Cross were your spiritual director and you went to him with some moral flaw or character deficiency, his first counsel would be: What are you good at? What have you been blessed with? Where, in your life and work, does God's goodness and beauty most shine through? If you can grow more and more towards that goodness, it will fan into an ever larger flame which eventually will become a fire that cauterizes your faults. When you walk tall there will be less and less room for what's small and petty to manifest itself.

To walk tall means to walk within our God-given dignity. Nothing else, ultimately, gives us as large an identity. That's useful too to remember when we challenge each other: Gospel-challenge doesn't shame us with our pettiness, it invites us to what's already best inside us.

denied by the disasters that had befallen his people, and, as a result, the hope arose that God would eventually reestablish it. He was always king de jure, but at the end he would become king de facto.

The New Testament message is that this has now happened—by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So the deeds and works that the Church celebrates are comprised in the salvation history of Christ's death and resurrection.

God's kingdom is now inaugurated de facto through the Easter events.

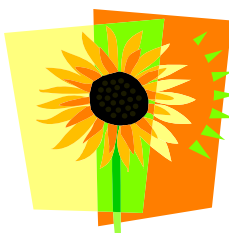
## Reading II: Revelation 21:1-5a

This is John the Seer's vision of the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem. These "new things" have been established in principle through the resurrection, and they are anticipated in the life of the Church.

Now God does indeed dwell with his people, though only in the veiled

form of the word and the sacraments. Here there is a foretaste of that joy. But not until the end will all tears be wiped away from the eyes of his people.

Mourning and crying and pain are certainly not unknown in the Church, but faith knows that even now all things are being made new.



## SCRIPTURE IN DEPTH

BY REGINALD  
H. FULLER

## Gospel: John 13:31-33a, 34-35

It helps make sense of the opening passage, with its five bewildering references to the glorification of God and the Son of man, if we regard it, with some recent commentators, as an early Christian hymn.

It celebrated the enthronement of Christ as Son of man at his exaltation and looked forward to his coming in glory. This explains the shift from the past tense to the future:

Now is the Son of man glorified,  
and in him God is glorified [at Christ's exaltation];  
if [since] God has been glorified in him [at the exaltation],  
God will also glorify him in himself  
and glorify him at once [at the parousia,  
expected shortly].

In taking up this hymn, John has shifted the tenses backwards. The past tenses now refer to the glorifying that has taken place through the Son's revelation of the Father during his incarnate life, while the future tenses now refer to the glorification that will take place at once in the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son. Thus, the hymn becomes an expression of the basic themes of the Johannine theology of glory.

At his departure Jesus leaves his disciples a new "commandment" (see the covenant that Jesus bequeaths in Luke 22:29 and the institution of the Last Supper in the Synoptists).

Some have criticized John's concept of love for being more restricted and introverted than that of the Sermon on the Mount. The Johannine Christ speaks of the mutual love of the Christian community, not of the love even of one's enemy.

Could it be, though, that the command of love, which, as we have suggested, parallels the institution of the Last Supper in the Synoptists, is speaking explicitly to the agape meal of the early community? For the agape meal was the focal expression of love within the community.

# Time & Eternity

## Questions for Bible Study

BY ANNE OSDIECK, SAINT LOUIS CENTER FOR LITURGY

“A new heaven and a new earth.”

The chairman of the philosophy department at Creighton University, John Patrick Murray, was telling me how Augustine’s Confessions had deeply affected him during his semester’s teaching. We were in a diner near the St. Louis airport during his four-hour layover en route back to Omaha. So as the world spun on about us, jets overhead carrying thousands to temporary destinations, the two of us sat in a booth discussing eternity.

Augustine, if you give him your mind for a while, writes with such focused intensity about the things of heaven that by the time you get to the last books of the Confessions, you cannot help but wonder: Does the eternal extinguish the importance of the temporal? Do created goods pale, even disappear, in the light of God’s resplendence?

Book Nine of the Confessions presents Augustine and his mother, Monica, discussing the meaning of death just hours before she herself will depart from earth. She seems so willing, even eager, to let go of this life. They share a vision of eternal wisdom, so splendid as to wash out all other sights, so vast as to dwarf all lesser joys. God, in eternity, would ravish, swallow, and engulf us in eternal blessedness. “Son, for my part, there is nothing now in this life that gives me any delight. . . .”

Why then the “mighty grief” that flowed through Augustine’s heart and poured into his eyes when she died? “My soul was wounded, my life rent in two.”

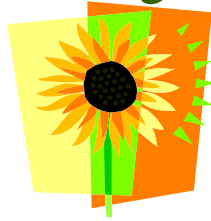
Being here, alive, amounts to so little, and so much. We know our dreadful lack only because we cherish our lavish gift. It is all so passing, yet so precious.

And so I mull over my own life, its bounding joys, its wrenching tears. In my mid-fifties, I often feel ready to go, especially if it means a union with everything my heart has ever desired. Yet I cling to this little life, its sweet goodness, its faces, laughter, and song. Embarrassing as it is to admit, a simple cold can trigger fears of mortality now too close.

I am stabbed today with news of a young cousin and his death, at the age of five, on an icy road. A life is so terribly fragile and ephemeral; its loss so devastating. Nothing I might say can ease the anguish of his father and mother. St. Paul advises me, as he did his disciples: “We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the reign of God.”

Yet I, with Augustine, am disconsolate. Being here on earth is wondrous and the threat of losing it is grievous. I hesitate to believe fully the dream of the Book of Revelation. “The former heavens and former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city beautiful as a bride. . . . This is God’s dwelling. . . . He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people, and he shall be their god who is always with them. He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away.”

Will the tears of loss be gently dried, the pain dissolved in celebration? Will God indeed make all things new, bright, beautiful and alive again? Will all the good and grace of a young unfinished man or the enfeebled ancient be preserved?



**THE WORD ENGAGED**  
BY JOHN KAVANAUGH

### Acts 14, Verses 21-27

1. Paul and Barnabas traveled around the country spreading the good news. Who was responsible for opening the door to the Gentiles, according to them? Who is in charge of your ministry? How deep is your belief about that?

2. Luke refers to some hardships in this reading. Could they be connected to the “new commandment” mentioned in the Gospel? Have you discovered hardships in your own life connected to loving your neighbor? Even though God opened the doors, what still must take place before faith is received

### Revelation 21, Verses 1-5a

1. What is the connection between the holy city in the reading and God’s dwelling with the human race?

2. God and human persons dwell together. Where is this visible? Is it in the Lord’s legacy of selfless love? Where is the comfort in this reading for someone who is suffering?

### John 13, Verses 31-33a, 34-35

1. Did Jesus give us edicts, rubrics or canons? What one rule did he give us over and over again? What teaching of the Church do you think will bring all people to Christ?

2. “As I have loved you, so should you love one another.” How far did Jesus go in loving us? Are you ever asked to give more than you planned? How do you handle that?

It is our love that clings to the present, that cherishes all the disappearing goods. Our love, as Augustine says, is part of the love which makes all things to be. The works of time, even our very lives, were from the beginning pronounced not only good, but very good, very lovable. It is only natural that we should love them, even in their frail state. Our very love for the goods of this earth draws us to the good whose self is love. And the God who loved all goods into being abides in that love for all eternity.

Was this the glorious message of Jesus? That the good, and our love of it in all its forms and faces, is the final as well as the first word? That the child’s unfettered laughter rings forever, charming the earth yet enduring beyond it? That the wise and gentle endurance of the old will not dissolve as the body falls away? That the love evoked from us would last, and that the love he came to give us is for this life as well as eternity?

Yes. It is our faith that God made all things and makes them all anew in the risen Lord who gave us this command: “Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other.”

When we fear and grieve, time seems to drag cruelly. We delight, and it hurtles by, uncaring. We shall never grasp the meaning of time and its preciousness, or eternity and its promise, if we do not learn to love.

There is a verse, so common it is attributed to many authors, which goes:

*Time is too slow for those who wait.*

*Time is too fast for those who fear.*

*Time is too long for those who mourn.*

*Time is too short for those who rejoice.*

*But for those who love, Time is eternity.*