

Advent Reflection
December 12, 2020
LOVE
John 15:12-17 NRSV

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

Reflection by Michele R.

In this scripture, Jesus commands us to love one another as he loves his disciples. To command means to give an authoritative order. It is not just a nice idea or a suggestion. Jesus' love transcends all boundaries, even death. That's a tall order for most of us!

It's easy to follow the command by loving people we like and those that are "like us." The challenge is loving those that are different from us. How can we accept and love someone who doesn't think like us, look like us, act like us, vote like us, or share the same faith as us?

Jesus' entire life was an example of unconditional love. He made a point to reach out to people often shunned by society to show they too had worth. No one was excluded. There was room for everyone at His table with no exceptions. It was a radical idea then (and even now), but he was living proof that God loves everyone.

How then do **we** accomplish this? How do we love **everyone**? On our own, it seems impossible. But nothing is impossible with God. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit and with prayer and practice, we can learn to look past differences and extend grace to others, especially those with whom we disagree or fail to understand. As Christians, we need to remember this is a commandment and not an option.

Lord, we pray that in this season of Advent we remember your commandment and ask for your help and guidance in living up to the challenge of loving others as you loved your disciples. Amen.