

Cycle A

The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary # 79

Reading I: Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18

It is this Book of the Old Testament that we see the second part of the greatest commandment that Jesus is asked about in the gospels. Recall that a scholar of the law approaches Jesus and asks him, *Master, which is the greatest of the laws?* To which Jesus responds, the law to **love** God with our entire being, which comes out of the Book of Deuteronomy and this law from the Book of Leviticus to **love** our neighbor. Jesus in essence is saying clearly that **LOVE** is the greatest commandment and that **loving** God and **loving** your neighbor cannot be separated. In practice they are essentially the same law.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

Although this passage from 1 Corinthians does not speak explicitly of **love** as does the 13th chapter, it lays the foundation and the essential groundwork for the hymn to **love** that will occur in this first letter to the Corinthians. Saint Paul speaks of the dangers of the divisiveness that is occurring in the community at Corinth, and how that divisiveness comes about as a result of pride and position. These things are dividing the community whereas **love** will unite the community.

Gospel: Matthew 5: 38-48

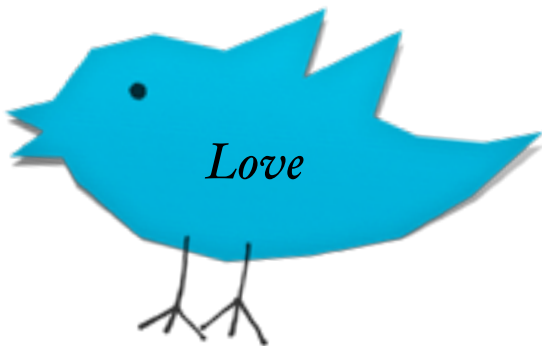
Love is the word and the action that is called of us as followers of Christ Jesus. Jesus addresses himself to the ancient law of an "eye for an eye," as the code that spoke to equal retribution for an offense. What Jesus says is that in living a life founded on the law of Love there is no room for retribution and, in fact, retribution is to be replaced by love of one's enemies. Forgiveness and love of one's enemies is one of the greatest challenges to us and it is only with being rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ that this can even become a reality.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Boy Who Grew Flowers

This story about **love** envelopes the **love** that is intended by God for all people. It is illustrated in characters that are shunned by the society they are in. It speaks to the true power of love and the transformation that can come about when **love** is authentic and lived out in actions. Rink Bowagon is a curious young boy who is shy and quiet and sprouts flowers from his head during a full moon. Shunned at school, Rink keeps to himself, until a kind and honest girl by the name of Angelina Quiz arrives as a new student at the school. She too is shunned by the class as she has a short right leg. Rink is instantly attracted to her and invites her to the school dance, painstakingly crafting her a pair of party shoes with one extra-thick right sole to balance her out. When Rink shows up at Angelina's door with the party shoes and pink roses in hand that had previously sprouted from his head, her heart flips and the story of a budding care and regard for one another emerges. It truly is a story of of individuality, love and kindness.

The Boy Who Grew Flowers

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character
education
activity

Activity

Step One: Distribute various colors of construction paper cut into the size of a playing card. Ask each child in the class to draw something that represents them as a unique image of God. You may wish to share with them an example or two. A musical note might represent the fact that someone is musical, curly hair, blue eyes, etc. Instruct them to keep the image they drew to themselves until Step Two.

Step Two: Place the students in groups of 4 or 6 and ask them to take turns guessing what image each member of the group may have drawn to represent the unique image of God that they are.

Step Three: Take all of the cards with all the images and place them on a large poster board in the shape of a Chi Rho, which is a large P with an x placed on top of the bottom part of the P. Explain that the Chi Rho is a symbol for Jesus Christ.



**Love seeks and fosters the
good of the other in the
context of our relationships
with them**

Think of LOVE more as
a verb than a noun
because love is an
action as well as a noun



case study

Look
Feel
Know
Act

What could you do today?

Think of all the different people that **love** you and start to identify the way that love is shown to you through actions. In the same way think of all the people that you **love** and ask yourself how you show them your love. You may even wish to ask the person, such as your mom or dad the question of: how can I show you that I **love** you today? Tell them that it has to be an action and not just words or a hug.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around at all of the things in creation and see that God is in every one of them, for they were all made by God and God made them out of **love**. Thank God for all of these gifts of **love**. With your mom or dad, or an older brother or sister ,or a friend read the account of God creating the world and notice that each time God creates something God sees it as *good*. This should be no surprise because God created all things out of **LOVE**.

Think of all the people that are in your life and notice how each of them has been given to you by God as a sign of God's **love** for you. Take some time now and thank God for all of the **love** that God shows you through these people.

Now that you know of these great signs of God's **love** in your life, what are some of the ways that you can show your **love** for God in your actions towards creation and most especially the people in your life?

There are many other people that you have not met and yet because we are all God's children, that makes us brothers and sisters to one another. What are some of the ways that you might show love to others in the world, especially those who do not have all that we have?

In *The Boy Who Grew Flowers* we encounter a boy who was not very much liked because he was seen as different from all the others. Yet he had something very special to offer. People sometimes are frightened by what they don't know or understand and that causes them to shun those who are different. God makes each and every person unique and when we learn to celebrate the uniqueness of each individual we can get a better picture or image of God. **Love** is the greatest manifestation of God's action in the world.

Pray that you will always allow the love of God to be reflected in your thoughts, words and actions. Ask Jesus to give you the eyes and ears to see and hear him in all those around you, especially those who seem different from you. Amen



**closing
tool**



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