

## Homily - Easter 7 - May 13, 2018

Did you really hear that second reading? “Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God dwells in us ... God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” There you have it. Love is a non-negotiable command. Hmmm....I can already hear the “Yes, buts...”

I love courtroom shows, including the queen of courtrooms, Judge Judy. So, let's look again at this quote from John and pose our objections to Judge Judy acting on behalf of God. Objection: Those love quotes make it sound simple. Judge Judy: objection sustained. You're right they do sound simple. Objection: Love is not easy and doesn't feel natural sometimes. Judge Judy: I see you're catching on. Objection sustained: love is not easy, in fact, it's downright painful....but...it's the law. Objection: Those words sound like you just make a decision to start loving, and it will happen. Judge Judy: You've been doing your homework. Objection sustained. Those quotes do make it sound easy. Objection: So, we can pretty much ignore this passage and move on to something more enjoyable. Judge Judy: Oye; and I thought you were beginning to get some smarts. Objection overruled. Sit down!

If love were not important, do you think that Jesus would have spoken so much about it? Love is essential, important, necessary, required, obligatory. How many ways can we say it? Love is very easy when we think about God, about his son, Jesus, about our love for our children. The boss, the annoying neighbor, the pesky sloganeer wanting to win me over to his cause, the demanding coach, the pushy teacher, and the snippy cashier at the grocery store - they are the tough nuts. Do I have to love them? In the words of Judge Judy: You'd better believe it.

Love is sometimes quite easy, sometimes quite impossible, sometimes somewhere in between. The breathtaking reality is that God first loved us. God created us out of love. God breathed life into us. God gives us his Spirit. Does that not then mean that, since we are products of love, we must also love? Yes, the breathtaking reality, the spirit taking reality is that we are products of love. We cannot earn God's love, but we can definitely refuse to respond to that love. Love always, always means wanting what is best for the other. Any action or thought short of wanting

what is best for the other is not love even though it may masquerade as love.

Love sometimes means saying no to what a child wants. Love sometimes means saying yes to what we do not want to do. We may love doing certain things, but love also says that some things must be done even if we do not enjoy them. Love must bring life and joy to the other. God never said that love would give us warm fuzzies.

If aliens invaded our earth and wanted to discover our concept and practice of love what would they conclude? If they watched TV to find out what would they learn from “Two and a Half Men,” the Secret Circle,” “Glee” and the latest from Betty White?

I close with another quote from that second reading: “If this is how God love us, then we should love another.” I hear no objections. Case closed. Judgement in favor of those who love God and neighbor.