

6 Sunday Year B – Recognising and Responding to Love

At every Mass we celebrate the love God has for us and the love into which we are called as followers of our Lord Jesus. Today the Scriptures very specifically invite us to ponder on the love we have received in our lives and to ask God for the strength we need to love as God wants us to.

This celebration must **begin in our hearts**. It is there that we should first dwell on the gifts of love which have enriched our lives. Then, having awakened gratitude within ourselves we can come to express our thanks outwardly in the words and actions, the prayers and hymns of the Liturgy.

The Gospel reminds us that **we are among those chosen by Jesus to be his close companions**, to be within the fellowship of his disciples. It is right for us to ponder on the graces of belonging to the society of his friends:

There is the support we receive in the trials of our lives from the strong faith of others.

There is the direction and shape that is given to the confusion of events in our personal history through the teaching of our Lord and his church.

Perhaps we can recall moments of light when we were consoled or inspired by a heightened sense of the Divine Presence.

Or we may remember times when we have received from beyond ourselves a strength, or a courage to cope with our situation, or face what lies ahead.

There may have been opportunities unexpectedly presented to us; or perhaps we have found our needs supplied in the blessings of Divine Providence.

Each of us has our **own story to reflect upon** and to recognise within it the gifts of **God's** grace. We are invited today to rejoice in this remembering and give our thanks to God: *Be glad my soul, for you have seen the glory of God.* (Psalm)

We should also have gratitude in our heart for **those who hearten us** by their loving kindness to us: a partner in marriage, a dear friend, a concerned parent who loves us for who we are and, on occasion, despite what we are.

For all those persons in our lives who care about us, who encourage us, who bear with us, who give us a sense of being worth something.

Such people are a gift to us and as we thank God for them we should pledge ourselves also to finding practical ways of expressing our appreciation.

So in our Liturgy we celebrate the **love we have received**. We also rejoice in the **power to love that is being offered to us** by Jesus in this Sacrament:

Each of us finds ourselves within the context of a number of relationships which tax the resources of our human hearts.

At times the demands others make seem beyond our ability to cope with.

At other times our faithfulness is challenged and tested by the arrival of someone whose very presence, or their affection for us, tears at our hearts.

In our Eucharist we turn to the Lord of love. We give thanks for all the love we have received. And we ask for the grace we need: for generosity, for faithfulness, for courage, for hopeful persistence.

Jesus has chosen us *to bear fruit, fruit that will last.*

We remember his promise: *The Father will give you anything you ask for in my name.*

We can be confident he will help us in our loving by further gifts of his own.