

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 21, 2006

Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4: 7-10; John 15: 9-17

Homilist: S. Cecilia Canales, OP

## God Has No Favorites

I can remember that as a child I asked my mother which of us three children was her favorite, hoping she would say me! She disappointed me when she said that she loved us all the same, but then I realized how crushed I would have been if she had said my brother or sister was her favorite. Then I was consoled!

St. Paul tells us that God shows no partiality—has no favorites. He is referring to the fact that God gives the Holy Spirit to anyone who responds to the gift of faith: rich and poor, Jew or Gentile, and today we would add regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. God does not care about such distinctions, because “God is love.” This was revealed to us in Jesus who invites us into the love he has for the Father: “As the Father loves me, so I also love you.” Can that be true? We share in the love God has for Jesus, a love that is total, unconditional and complete. I can do nothing to deserve it, nor to lose it!

But do I believe it? Jesus says, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete.” If I can believe this is true, than it can change my whole life! My joy won’t depend on what I have or what I do, but solely on knowing myself as loved. And how do I respond to this love? Once again Jesus provides the answer: “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.” Here is the rub! And perhaps the reason why more people do not accept this incredible truth about being loved.

It is in the nature of love to love in response. I remember when my sister first realized she was in love with her future husband. His love for her filled her to overflowing with love, and she commented to me that she felt so loving of other people—it just sort of came out of her naturally as a result of being loved. I have found this to be true in my own life. When I know someone loves me, it unleashes the power of love in me. I want others to experience the joy that I have in being loved.

What if all of us recognized God’s love in our life and were moved to be loving people in response? Imagine what the world would be like! How can I help this to be true even for a day? Perhaps we are back where we started. What if today I tried to love without playing favorites, no conditions, just the way God loves me in Jesus? Wouldn’t I be happier and the world around me a better place? Jesus commissions us to do so: “I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.” Let’s try it!