

Easter 6, 10/5/2015, Holy Trinity

John 15:9-17

Have you given much thought to the many dimensions of the Christian's life?

The short answer is probably not to any degree and yet they are essentials in our formation as Christians.

Some of these dimensions are before us Sunday by Sunday, day by day.

Last Sunday we were involved in the most important dimension of BAPTISM, an infant baptism and what an occasion that was!

To-day we are involved in the dimension of the EUCHARIST, the reading of the SCRIPTURES and PRAYER, each of which is an essential dimension in the Christian's life.

In last Sunday's Gospel reading we had Jesus saying that he was the vine and we are the branches.

The essential dimension to come out of this is one of ATTACHMENT.

Attached to Jesus as the vine "the real vine", "the true vine", we have life and will produce fruit, the fruit of love.

All of these essentials in our formation as Christians are centred in LOVE.

It is in love that Jesus gave us baptism and the Eucharist and in love we respond to them.

Likewise in the Scriptures and in prayer, given in love and responded in love.

Now for to-day's Gospel reading in which Jesus lays his heart bare to his disciples and friends.

"I have chosen you," he tells them, "you didn't choose me."

He makes it quite clear who is in charge and this goes further than even Jesus.

It goes back to God the Father who is the source of all this love.

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you."

Like any love it needs to be reciprocated.

We have a relationship that is three-sided: God the Father loves the Son, who passes on that same love to you and to me to which we

respond with love for the Father and the Son and we pass on that same love to others in response to Jesus' command to "love one another."

These words are mighty powerful and could well bring us to our knees in gratitude to God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for the love in which we are surrounded.

Jesus says, "Abide in my love."

Stay, remain within it, live in my love.

"Abide" in English has continuing connotations.

God's love for you and for me is not a short-lived experience: this is for life.

It is an essential part of formation in the Christian's life.

It is essential for you and for me.

It does not come, however, in isolation.

It is closely connected with a requirement that Jesus makes into a condition for love.

"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."

This comes down to obedience and this is not a popular concept for many people.

For many obedience is a sign of weakness whereas disobedience is a sign of strength "I did it my way and to do as you are told is not 'my way'.

But knowing how people react, Jesus keeps referring to himself.

His life was one of total obedience to the will of the Father.

Anyone, who knows of Jesus' life, could not call him weak.

In all things he was obedient to the will of the Father.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, in the crucifixion he still obeyed because he knew that despite everything the Father loved him.

What then do we have here for us to-day?

First, our formation in the Christian life is a great adventure in which we are to keep on growing as we are challenged not to stay still: get out of your comfort zone and launch out one step further.

There is another mountain to climb and we are able to do this because we have a personal relationship with God, the Father, Jesus, the Son and the Holy Spirit in love, obedience and loyalty.

The test of that love, obedience and loyalty is contained in that simple, profound, dangerous and difficult command: love one another.