

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland
Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 9, 2021

Welcome and Introduction – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Hymn 366, stanzas 1-2

Holy God, we praise thy Name

Opening Sentence: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Confession

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and have done those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults,
restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

Absolution

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Invitation to Venite and Psalm

O Lord, open thou our lips,
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Venite - seated

*O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
and the strength of the hills is his also.*

*The sea is his and he made it,
and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.*

Psalm 98 – see lesson insert

First Lesson – Acts 10:44-48 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Second Reading – I John 5:1-6 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God*

Hymn 656, stanzas 1-2

Blest are the pure in heart

The Gospel - John 15:9-17 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

The Apostles' Creed - standing

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer - seated

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Suffrages - seated

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in thee can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let thy way be known upon earth;
Thy saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collects for Sundays, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, and Moms

O God, who makes us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Grant us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the days to come may be spent in your favor, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Dear Lord, we pray this day for our mothers and all mothers. For those with you now, we thank you for embracing them and giving them peace. For those with us now, we thank you for being by their side as they raise us and help us raise a new generation. Help us never to take their love for granted, and always to make them proud. We give special thanks, Lord, for Mary, your mother, a model of life unto death and beyond. *Amen.*

The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*

Announcements and America

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them. Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 522, stanzas 1-2

Glorious things of thee are spoken

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia.

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, May 9, 2021, Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day.

It's Mother's Day. A day to recognize what moms do so well. Namely, lift us up. Make us feel better. Not only when we're sick and need some tender loving care, but when we're down on ourselves for whatever reason. A hug, a kiss, a word of encouragement. Thank you, Mom, for always being there when I need you. You seem to know when encouragement is in order. And, even when you're not feeling well, you make me feel better.

Today's Psalm (**Psalm 98**) could have been written by a mother:

"Sing to the Lord a new song.
Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands.
Sing to the Lord with the harp and voice of song.
Let the sea make a noise.
Let the rivers clap their hands."

Likewise, today's Epistle (**I John 5:1-6**).

"And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith."
Not my faith, not your faith, but our faith. We're in this together.

And the words from John's Gospel (**John 15:9-17**) couldn't be more mother-like:

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

Now, it is true that not every mother-son, mother-daughter relationship is of this nature. But somewhere in that mother-child bond, even if not evident to the child, is a parent's love and hope for the well-being of the child.

And, of course, this is true for fathers as well. But we have our own day, don't we, so let's stay for the mother theme. It's their day today. And, if truth be told, a father's love is at some level different from a mom's love. There's something about carrying and bearing a child that sets moms apart.

Allright, Father Rowins. Enough schmalz. Get on with it. It's the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Do your job.

Okay, here we go. Let's focus today on the last verse of today's Gospel. "I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

Why am I raising you the way I am raising you? So that you may love one another? Why not so that you will be famous or wealthy or successful in the field of your dreams or recognized for greatness? Why not wish for an outcome that has more teeth to it than "so that you may love one another"?

If we were asked to set a target for our children or grandchildren, would that target be something as nebulous as "love one another," or more specific as in "a good education, a successful career, a happy marriage, a long and healthy life"?

As far as we know, Jesus didn't say much, if anything, about education or career. He spoke of "loving one another." There's no advanced degree specified. There's no job specified. There's no public recognition specified. There's no income projection.

Indeed, "loving one another" probably isn't a deal-maker or deal-breaker for children. For example, how much if any "so that you may love one another" conversation takes place in college counseling, either on the part of the counselor or the student?

As you know, one of the most critical ingredients in the college application process is the recommendation that the college counselor or other senior staff member provides. I would hope that a positive assessment of the applicant's concern for others is one of the areas addressed. However, whether it is received with the same strength as other personal characteristics is another matter.

For example, does "caring for others" have the same weight as an off-the-chart standardized test score? Maybe in some cases, but probably not in most.

The point is simply that over the long haul, over a career, over a life-time, the ability to love one another is important, perhaps more important than any other

factor in maturation. It deserves attention. In today's lesson from Acts (**Acts 10:44-48**), Peter asks "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people" In other words, the desire to love one another needs nurturing. By nature, moms take this role seriously.

When we find our children or grandchildren down in the dumps because they perceive that their lives are not moving as they had hoped, we're not tempted to say "Get a job," but rather "Look for someone to help." Love one another is a tried and true recipe for helping oneself as well as others.

Do I sound like a mom? Well, I must confess, I sound like my mom. I have no idea how many times I disappointed my folks, but I know how many times they disappointed me. And that would be zero. They always found a bright side even when outcomes were other than I had hoped and maybe they had hoped.

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

As Jesus reminded the disciples that they were loved by God (**John 15:9-17**), so we as parents have an opportunity and a responsibility to remind our children that they are loved, not only by their parents, but by the Creator of the Universe. How neat is that! And as recipients of that divine love, all of us have an obligation, and the joy, to share that conviction with others.

Whatever career, whatever path, whatever opportunity afforded, will be enhanced many fold if we love one another. This is not theoretical. This is actual. As adults, we know this to be so. As parents and as teachers and as friends, conveying this conviction to young people is itself an act of love. Remember the words of Jesus in today's Gospel (**John 15:9-17**): "I have said these things to you so that your joy may be complete."

So, moms, thank you for everything, but especially for reminding us that the love you have shared with us is intended not just for us, but for others. We are to love others as we have been loved. And, if, for whatever reason, we question our mom's love for us, that reality doesn't nullify our responsibility to love others in a manner that our Lord would be proud of.

It's never too late to say to our mom, "Thanks for the love, and thanks for the reminder, sometimes stern, to share that love with others."

Today's Collect contains this phrase: "Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises." Oh yes, we are offering this prayer to God, but, with all due respect to God, we can apply this language to our parents. They have hopes for us. They sacrifice for us. They stick by us. In response, we can return "the hug, the kiss, and the word of encouragement."

Happy Mothers Day. *Amen.*

Lessons for 6th Sunday of Easter – May 9, 2021

Collect: O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Psalm 98

Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.
With his right hand and his holy arm
has he won for himself the victory.
The Lord has made known his victory;
his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.
He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel,
and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands;
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.
Sing to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and the voice of song.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy before the King, the Lord.
Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it,
the lands and those who dwell therein.

Let the rivers clap their hands,
*And let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord, when he comes to judge
the earth.*

In righteousness shall he judge the world
and the peoples with equity.

Second Reading: I John 5:1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Gospel: John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called your friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

Hymns for Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 9, 2021

Hymn 366, stanzas 1-2

Holy God, we praise thy Name

Holy God we praise thy Name, Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth thy scepter claim, all in heaven above adore thee;
Infinite thy vast domain, everlasting is thy reign.

Hark, the loud celestial hymn angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and seraphim, in unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord: holy, holy, holy Lord.

Hymn 656, stanzas 1-2

Blest are the pure in heart

Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs, their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with us, our pattern and our King.

Hymn 522, stanzas 1-2

Glorious things of thee are spoken

Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God;
he whose word cannot be broken formed thee for his own abode;
on the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded, thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See! the streams of living waters, springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, when such a river ever will their thirst assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver, never fails from age to age.