

'INCLUSIVE LOVE' – HOMILY 14 AUGUST 2016

This week we have celebrated National Vocations Awareness Week.

The vocation of being loved by God and called in different ways - living out our charisms and gifts.

Luke 12: 49-53 is a hard Gospel passage to take in.

It can be tempting to water it down, but it is meant to be challenging.

By the time that Luke's Gospel was written – it was a time in which families had one or more family members disowned, or reported to the Roman authorities by a parent or child, for being a disciple of Jesus.

It is difficult, not just then, but in different ways today.

Jesus calls us to follow.

In different passages we hear about commitment, sharing, almsgiving, urgency, carrying the cross. And in this passage about our family relationships.

When do we ever make such an overwhelming commitment?

Let us look at the marriage vows.

One option says:

"I, ... take you. ..., to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life."

Not just in good times, not just when healthy.

Not just when comfortably financial.

Also in the bad times, times of sickness, challenges.

A commitment, founded on love and on honouring your partner.

So too when we respond to God.

We commit to God.

We declare our love for God.

We honour God.

Not just when times are good or comfortable.

So deep a love, that it is even stronger than love for a particular parent or sibling.

God's love is not exclusive. God loves us all.

We reflect that love,

Loving God while loving our family.

Inclusive.

We love God, even if a family member tries to prevent us from loving God.

We love God wholly, even if family member tries to minimise our love for God.

We love God unconditionally, even if a family member tries to put conditions on our love for God, or tells us not to believe in God.

Today's Gospel names these efforts to prevent our love for God,

Or minimise our love,
Or putting conditions on our love of God,
As “division”, as lack of peace.

Just as in a marriage relationship, partners need to find time for each other,
So too in our relationship with God, **we need to find time for God.**
God already has time for us.

**As God’s love for us is inclusive and deep, God commits to us.
God is faithful to us.**

But sometimes we are so distracted,
So preoccupied with something else, that we fail to notice, feel and enjoy God’s love.

We are called to be lovers.
Called to respond in love to God’s love for us.
Called to be committed.
We carry the cross in love.
We work in love, for a more just and peaceful world.
We pray in love, being honest with God about how we are going.
In love with God, we seek the truth in our world, in our workplace, in our families.

As some poets and commentators have said through the ages, it is the fire of God’s love.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – ‘Inclusive Love’ – 14 August 2016]

[Readings <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/081416.cfm>]