

Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara

Diocese of Broken Bay

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 17 – 5 – 20
'The season of glad song has come' (Song of Songs 2:12)

This week: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; 1 Pet 3:15-18; Jn 14:15-21
Next week: Acts 1:1-11; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20

John's Gospel often uses the terms 'Spirit' and 'the world' as opposites, as enemies. But we have to be careful lest we equate John's use of 'the world' as simply meaning 'the world around us.'

John's community lived in a time of persecution and the word 'world' for him has a special meaning – the world which is blind to and opposes the Holy Spirit.

But the key thing is that it doesn't simply mean *the world as such* – as though everything outside of the Church is bad.

Because the simple fact of the matter is that many good people and many good things exist outside the Church – sometimes, sadly, better people and better movements than within the Church.

If we simply oppose 'the Church' and 'the world' then we become *blind*, blind to what goodness lies beyond our own walls – **and above all blind to the challenges that the world offers us.** To presume we own and hold a monopoly on the Holy Spirit is a gross spiritual arrogance and our challenge is to recognise the work, the promptings and the challenge of the Spirit wherever they may occur.

Fr Colin



Great News – the (partial) return of public Mass



As of Friday 15th May the NSW Government has permitted the resumption of public liturgical celebrations **with a maximum of ten people.** Subject to the public complying with remaining health restrictions and the infection rate not climbing, this number will be increased with time. Following Bishop Anthony's permission for public Mass to resume within these restrictions the following arrangements will begin in our parish **commencing this Monday 18th May:**

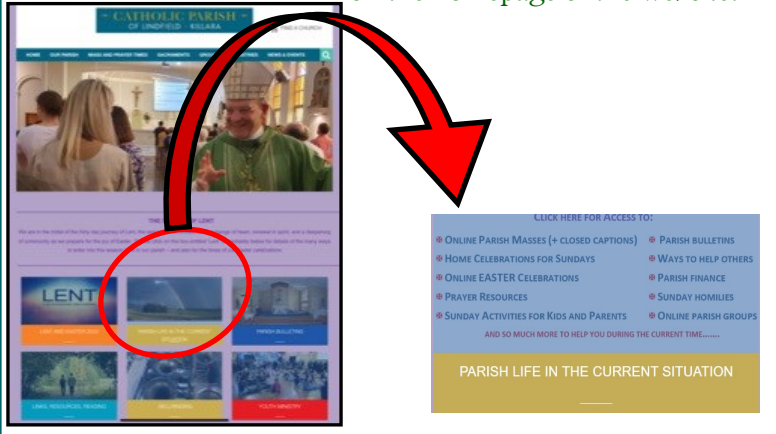
- our way of sharing in the Eucharistic celebration will be twofold: for Sundays we will continue to provide Mass online with a small choir; on weekdays we will provide either one or two Masses each day at which ten people can be in attendance on each occasion. These will be simple weekday Masses.
- It will thus be necessary **to register** to attend Mass so that a maximum of ten people are in attendance on each occasion. The NSW Government requires us to maintain a register of who is in attendance at each Mass—which would assist in tracking should someone later be found to be unwell.. **To book in for Mass please go the special hotlink box on the homepage of our parish website . Please read all the instructions before booking.**
- In this way hopefully everyone in the parish will be able to attend the celebration of Mass and share in Holy Communion once every several weeks. And of course everyone can take part in the online Sunday Mass.
- Keeping in mind the restriction that four square metres at a minimum should be kept for each person, we will mark the pews which are able to be used for Mass to ensure maximum separation of those participating. Sadly if there was a failure to comply with this arrangement Mass would not proceed as our first concern is of course for the health and safety of all. Hand sanitiser will be provided at the doors for use upon entry and departure.
- Our churches will now return to being open each day for personal prayer, though they will be locked when Mass is being celebrated as we must comply with the rule of a maximum of ten people.
- There will of course be no physical sharing of the Sign of Peace at Mass and we will have arrangements to ensure the safe reception of Holy Communion. In our parish Holy Communion will not be given on the tongue—this is a conscientious decision by Fr Thomas and myself for the sake of our own health and the health of the community.
- As you know our parish finances have been greatly affected by us not having our weekly collections and so the facility to contribute to both First and Second Collection will be available at all these Masses - for health reasons we will not pass around the baskets but boxes for the First and Second Collections will be available at the doors. And at Lindfield church the Tap and Go machines will also be available.
- At this stage our weekly Mass roster will be: **Mondays** - 10am and 7pm at Killara; **Tuesdays:** - 10am at Killara; 12 noon at Lindfield; **Wednesdays:** 10am and 12 noon at Lindfield; **Thursdays** - 10am usually at Killara, though at Lindfield this Thursday; 7:00pm usually at Lindfield, though at Killara this Thursday; **Fridays** - 10am at Lindfield; 7pm at Killara; **Saturdays:** 10am and 12 noon at Killara.
- Baptisms may now be celebrated with a maximum of 10 people and only one family at a time. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available for ten minutes after each of the Mass celebrations listed above.

It's wonderful that we can at least from time to time now come together as smaller parts of our community to celebrate the Eucharist together. Fr Thomas and I look forward to being with you at these precious gatherings. Fr Colin

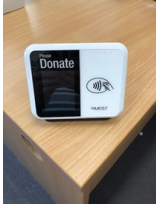
OUR PARISH LIFE ONLINE

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Please keep visiting the special part of our parish website (www.lindfieldkillara.org.au) where we keep expanding the resources for you online: Mass in our parish, helps for prayer, home Sunday liturgies, helps for leading the kids through a Sunday reflection and much much more. All accessible through the hotlink box 'Parish Life in the Current Situation' on the homepage of the website:



TAP AND GO is accessible again. The two machines (one for the First and one for the Second Collection) are now fixed against the glass wall of 'The Basement' at the rear of and underneath Lindfield church. Tap donations to both collections can be made at any time, night or day, by tapping against the glass.



We of course are not encouraging unnecessary excursions from your home, but if this works in with your daily exercise or your visit to the supermarket the devices are there for you.

The machines will also be available within Lindfield church during the celebrations of Mass with ten people (see page 1).

INFORMATION ON SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES:

CatholicCare is the social care and support agency of the Catholic Church across the Diocese of Broken Bay. Contact CatholicCare if you need:

- Counselling, Psychology or Allied Health support.
- Financial counselling.
- Housing support.
- Domestic violence supports.
- Emergency relief – to support those in immediate need.

CatholicCare can connect with you via phone or video link so you do not have to travel. Anyone can access support from the safety of their home. P: 1800 324 924 or visit

www.catholiccaredbb.org.au for more information.

Services for over-65s: Ku-ring-gai Council, Lifeline and others have provided a comprehensive directory of local organisations which can provide services such as deliveries of meals (and toilet paper), shopping-by-list, pharmacy and spectacles prescriptions pick-up, emergency food and essentials, and library books to your front door; there are also services for online relaxation and fitness, help with using IT for communicating with family and friends and much more. Go to: http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/Services_facilities/For/Seniors/Useful_information_for_seniors

If you're not too IT savvy and would like help accessing this information please contact Alison via our Parish Office and she'll be happy to help you. And please pass this information on to others.

CHARITABLE WORKS FUND



At this time the third and final appeal for the CWF for this Financial Year takes place. The good news is that due to good support from the first two appeals and an extremely generous

donation from a parishioner for the current appeal we only need to raise \$680! We hope that, with your help, we can close that small gap.

To donate please go to:

<https://www.givenow.com.au/cwf>

Please ensure that you tick our parish of Lindfield-Killara as you complete the donation online form.

Donations to CWF are 100% tax deductible.

J-Walk for young adults 18+

OUR NEXT MEETING IS ONLINE!

SUNDAY 17 MAY, 7PM

Contact us via our webpage:
<https://lindfieldkillarayouth.weebly.com/contact.html>
for more information on how to join in the meeting!

THIS WEEK'S LETTER FROM OUR BISHOP ANTHONY RANDAZZO



Bishop Anthony's letter for the fifth week of Easter can be found via the link box on the special page for the current situation on our website.

OUR CHURCHES

ARE ONCE AGAIN OPEN FOR PRAYER

Following the NSW Government's announcing of the first phase of the easing of restrictions our churches can now be re-opened for personal prayer—though the restriction remains in force of a maximum of ten people at any one time and maintaining a distance of a minimum of 1.5 metres from other people. Hand sanitiser will be available in the foyer—please use it upon entering and leaving the church.

The opening hours for our churches will be:

	Killara	Lindfield
Mon.:	11am - 4pm	Closed
Tues.:	11am - 4pm	1 - 4pm
Wed.:	Closed	1pm - 4pm
Thur.:	11am - 4pm	9:45am - 4pm
Fri.:	9am - 4pm	11am - 4pm
Sat.:	1pm - 4pm	1pm - 4pm
Sun.:	11am - 4pm	11am - 4pm

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Fusion Sunday Social
Online!

Join us for some fun online activities and games!

Years 7-12 invited

SUN 17TH MAY
6 - 7:30PM

Go to the Blog page to find out how to join us! Don't have the password? Use the Contact page to let us know.

Hey BLASTers!

We hope it won't be long until we're together again!

In the meantime, check out the BLAST challenges on our web page.
Every week a new challenge!
Every week a new winner!

BLAST
just for kids



Many thanks to members of our parish youth groups who helped delivered Mothers' Day cards to our senior mums in the parish.

GETTING TO KNOW THE WONDERFUL JULIAN OF NORWICH

....PART 1

Although Julian of Norwich is an anonymous woman who lived over 600 years ago, seekers and scholars return to her "showings" again and again. Author Veronica Mary Rolf describes why Julian's wisdom is perennial, valuable, and needed whenever there is confusion and suffering, which is to say, in every time and place. Rolf writes:

Perhaps the best answer to the question "Why Julian now?" is that in our age of uncertainty, inconceivable suffering, and seemingly perpetual violence and war (not unlike fourteenth-century Europe), Julian shows us the way toward contemplative peace. . . . In a world of deadly diseases and ecological disasters, Julian teaches us how to endure pain in patience and trust that Christ is working to transform every cross into resurrected glory. . . .

Moreover, across six centuries, Julian's voice speaks to us about love. She communicates *personally*, as if she were very much with us here and now. Even more than theological explanations, we all hunger for love. Our hearts yearn for someone we can trust absolutely—divine love that can never fail. Julian reveals this love because, like Mary Magdalene, she experienced it firsthand. . . .

Precisely because she had the courage of her convictions, Julian of Norwich became the first woman ever to write a book in the English language. . . . Even more, this "unlettered" woman developed a mystical theology that was

second to none during the fourteenth century and that continues to break barriers in our own time. . . .

Julian is also emotionally raw, often tempted by self-doubt and discouragement, yet constantly renewed in hope. She does something extremely dangerous for a layperson living in the fourteenth century: she discloses her conflict between the predominant medieval idea of a judgmental and wrathful God and her direct experience of the unconditional love of Christ on the cross. . . .

Why is Julian so appealing today? I think because she is totally vulnerable and transparently honest, without any guile. She is "homely"; in medieval terms, that means down-to-earth, familiar, and easily accessible. She is keenly aware of her spiritual brokenness and longs to be healed. So do we. She experiences great suffering of body, mind, and soul. So do we. She has moments of doubt. So do we. She seeks answers to age-old questions. So do we. Then, at a critical turning point in her revelations, she is overwhelmed by joy and "gramercy" (great thanks) for the graces she is receiving. We, too, are suddenly granted graces and filled to overflowing with gratitude. Sometimes, we even experience our own divine revelations.

Again, and again, Julian reassures each one of us that we are loved by God, unconditionally. In her writings, we hear Christ telling us, just as he told Julian, "I love you and you love me, and our love shall never be separated in two."

(to be continued)

We're here, we're online:
and here are some ways to join in ONLINE parish gatherings.....

These linkups take place using Zoom – the organisers will simply send you an email which provides you with a link to click on at the appropriate time, along with a 'Meeting ID' and a password which you enter when requested. Then off you go.

I. OUR PARISH CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP is now gathering online and invites anyone to join them for a short time of prayer **each Wednesday at 8am.**

If you haven't tried Christian meditation before don't worry – our lovely group will help you to get introduced to this gentle way of praying.

If you'd like to join the group please email either Kay (Kay.Hunt@optusnet.com.au) or Catherine (catherinecwillis@gmail.com)

II. OUR PARISH SCRIPTURE STUDY SESSIONS

are also taking place online—both the daytime group and the evening group. If you're not already in either or both of these groups and would like to be please contact Fr Colin (94167195) or email (colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au).

- The daytime Scripture Group gathers online on the first & third Thursdays of each month at 11am. We are studying St Paul's Letter to the Romans.
- The evening Scripture study group gathers online on the second & fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:30pm.

III. PARISH BOOK CLUB This year exploring the theme of Hope.

Meeting time: Last Wednesday of Month, 10:00—11.20 am.

The book for Wednesday 27th May is 'The Moment of Lift' by Melinda Gates.

If you'd like to be added to the email list receive details of how to take part in the online gatherings and to receive updates about further online gatherings in 2020 please contact either Catherine Willis (catherinecwillis@gmail.com) or Elizabeth Reedy (elizabethreedy@msn.com).

IV. YOUTH: Please see page 3 for details of an another online gathering for FUSION YOUTH—our high school youth group—today Sunday 17th May, and for details of fun online activities for BLAST (Years 3-6).

V. SUNDAY MORNING TEA ONLINE: every Sunday at 10:30am - see p.1.

VI. CATHOLICISM: A FAITH DEVELOPMENT COURSE a renowned audio-visual faith development course coming from the legendary Fr (now Bishop) Robert Barron on the **first and third Wednesdays** of the month at **7:30pm** via Zoom . If you'd like to join in our parish online sessions contact Fr Colin for details.

VII. YOUNG ADULTS ('J-WALK') are gathering online for a fun evening online very few weeks. Next gathering is TODAY Sunday 17th May at 7pm. See page 2.

IF YOU NEED HELP in learning how to take part online in any of these activities please call (9416 7195) or email (colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au) Fr Colin and he'll be happy to help you to master the technology (it's not hard at all!).

WOULD YOU LIKE A CHAT?

Things can get stressful or lonely during the current social restrictions.

We have a number of parishioners who are happy to phone and have a chat.

If you'd like to arrange to have someone call please call 9416 3702 Monday-Sunday (leave a message if the phone isn't answered and we'll get back to you) or email alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au



The Parish Office is continuing to operate, though only one staff member is there at a time—the rest of the staff are working from home. For public health it's not possible to visit the office so please make contact by phone or email and the staff will assist you. The Parish Office is functioning from Tues-Fri.



As disciples let's lead the way in helping protect public health and save lives. Download the CovidSafe app so that as social restrictions slowly are changed we can help to keep our communities safe.

CAN YOU HELP US?

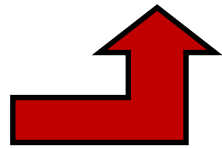
We have incurred another extra expense in these very different times. We have had to purchase a program to take the bookings for our twelve weekly 'Masses with ten people' (see page 1).

The cost of the program was \$165. If you could help us with that expense please contact Alison at accounts@lindfieldkillara.org.au or call the Parish Office.

Some of this week's parish online gatherings on Zoom ...



THE PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE had its work cut out for it in the current situation when it met last Tuesday evening.



THE EVENING SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP continues to expand—last week we were up to 24 participants!



Would you like to gather for a chat and a cuppa with fellow parishioners?



We can't do that physically of course but we can do it online.

Every Sunday there is online morning tea at **10:30am** using Zoom.

To join in just put this link in your internet browser (and don't pay any attention to the conspiracy theorists who distrust Zoom!):

<https://zoom.us/j/93474637065?pwd=R2hHLOtvZ2xPRUdhS3hER3pDNEFKZz09>

(or just go to the special part of our website ('Parish Life in the Current Situation'), scroll down to Resource 11 and click on the link).

and if requested enter the following Meeting ID and password:

Meeting ID: 934 7463 7065 Password: 611969

Make a cuppa, settle into your lounge or garden, and have a catchup with fellow parishioners for half an hour. *Fr Colin*

五月十七日
復活期第六主日

讀經一（伯多祿和若望給他們覆手，他們就領受了聖神。）

恭讀宗徒大事錄 8:5-8,14-17

那時候，斐理伯下到撒瑪黎雅城，給眾人宣講基督。群眾留意斐理伯所講的話，都同心合意地聽教，並看見他所行的奇蹟：有許多附了邪魔的人，邪魔從他們身上，大聲喊叫著離開了，又有許多癱瘓的人和跛子，也被醫好了；為此，城裡的人皆大歡喜。

在耶路撒冷的宗徒，聽說撒瑪黎雅接受了天主的聖道，便打發伯多祿和若望去他們那裡。伯多祿和若望一到，就為他們祈禱，使他們領受聖神，因為聖神還沒有降臨在任何人身上；他們只是因主耶穌的名受過洗。那時，宗徒便給他們覆手，他們就領受了聖神。——上主的話。

（默想片刻）

答唱詠 詠66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16,20

【答】：普世大地，請向天主歡呼！（詠66:1）

領：普世大地，請向天主歡呼！請歌頌他聖名的光榮，請獻給他輝煌的讚頌。請你們向天主說：「你的作為是何等驚人！」【答】領：普世都要朝拜你，歌頌你；全球也都要歌頌你的聖名。請你們前來觀看天主的作為；他對世人所做的一切，實在令人敬畏。

【答】

領：他曾使海洋乾涸，使人徒步走過江河，叫我們因他而喜樂。他以自己的大能，永遠統治萬邦。【答】

領：凡敬畏天主的人，請你們前來靜聽，我要敘述他為我靈魂所做的一切。天主應受讚美，因他從未拒絕我的哀禱，也從來沒有從我身上，撤回他的憐憫。【答】

讀經二（就肉身來說，基督被處死了；但就神魂來說，他卻復活了。）

恭讀聖伯多祿前書 3:15-18

親愛的諸位：

你們要在心裡尊崇基督為主；如果有人詢問你們心中所懷希望的理由，你們要時常準備答覆，且要以溫和、以敬畏之心答覆。要保持純潔的良心，好使那些誣告你們在基督內有良好品行的人，在他們誹謗你們的事上，感到羞愧。如果天主的旨意，要你們因行善而受苦，這總比因作惡而受苦更好，因為基督也曾一次為罪而死，且是義人代替不義的人，為將我們領到天主面前；就肉身來說，他固然被處死了；但就神魂來說，他卻復活了。——上主的話。

（默想片刻）

福音前歡呼

領：亞肋路亞。

眾：亞肋路亞。

領：主說：誰愛我，必遵守我的話，我父也必愛他，我們要到他那裡去，並要在他那裡，作我們的居所。（若14:23）

眾：亞肋路亞。

福音（我也要求父，他必會賜給你們另一位護慰者。）

恭讀聖若望福音 14:15-21

那時候，耶穌對門徒說：「如果你們愛我，就要遵守我的命令；我也要求父，他必會賜給你們另一位護慰者，使他永遠與你們同在。他是世界所不能領受的真理之神，因為世界看不見他，也不認識他；你們卻認識他，因為他與你們同在，並在你們內。」

「我決不留下你們做孤兒；我要回到你們這裡來。不久以後，世界就再看不見我，你們卻要看見我，因為我生活，你們也要生活。到那一天，你們便知道我在我父內，你們在我內，我也在你們內。接受我的命令而遵守的，便是愛我的人；誰愛我，我父也必愛他，我也要愛他，並將我自己顯示給他。」——上主的話。

（講道後默想片刻）

華人天主教會 北區中心主日彌撒12時-牧職

修女 司徒金美修女 0419-426899

中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung @0416-118089

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

The Spirit will keep on living in you

26/14/2021

P Q I O N E O E M D J S V W O
O C T C O R K O Y U F H G K E
M G Q Z J K L S F E L O V E X
C D Z X Y N P Y T G S E E Z B
J U Y U X S C V V G L D K F S
T R U E G O R P H A N S L U F
B Z J V K K V E G V U S P X A
T F O L N Q M V A B B B R X T
N I P G Q L C O M E B A C K H
G C V X A C C E P T G M X E E
V X L Z H N C C O M M A N D R
T E P E O P L E H D F T F U X
H O L Y S P I R I T L F M L Y
O H F G B I Y Z H E L P S Z F

Try to find these words:

accept
come back
command
Father
help
Holy Spirit
love
one
orphans
people
see
true

What's happening in our online parish?

MAY

Sunday 17th	On demand 10:30am 6:00pm 7:00pm	Parish Mass online Online morning tea (page 1) Fusion youth (see p.3) J-Walk (Young Adults) (see page 2.)
Wednesday 20th	8:00am 7:30pm	Meditation Group See p. 4 'Catholicism' Session 2 See p. 1
Thursday 21st	11:00am 7:00pm	Daytime Scripture Study Gp See p. 4 First Holy Communion Parents' meeting
Sunday 24th	On demand 10:30am	Parish Mass online Online morning tea See page 1
Tuesday 26th	7:45pm	Pentecost Ecumenical Service Login details in next week's bulletin.
Wednesday 27th	10:00am 7:30pm	Parish Book Group See p.4 Evening Scripture Group See p.4

Catholic Parish of Lindfield -Killara

Fr Colin Blayney, Parish Priest

colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au 9416 7195

Fr Thomas Alackakunnel VC, Asst Priest

thomas@lindfieldkillara.org.au; 0421 406162

Parish Office

Parish Office Hours: Tue-Fri 9.30 am -4pm

Postal address: PO Box 22, Lindfield NSW 2070

Phone: 9416 3702

Email: parish@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Website: www.lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Staff

Parish Secretary:

Philita Marundan philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Office Coordinator

Child Protection Coordinator:

Alison Williams (M,W,Th only)

alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Sacramental Programme Team:

Maia Schulze

Tsang sacramental@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Facilities' Coordinator (volunteer) :

Anthony Cassidy: anthony@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Youth Ministry Coordinator (volunteer)

Jean Shatek: youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish School

Holy Family School: 4 Highfield Rd, Lindfield 2070

Principal: Mr Lou Dogao Phone: 9416 7200

Email: info@holyfamily.nsw.edu.au

School Website: www.hfldbb.catholic.edu.au

OUR NEXT ECUMENICAL SERVICE

Each year at the time of Pentecost we gather with our fellow local Churches for an Ecumenical Service to observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The great news is that we're still going to do that this year—though in an online way !

Details of how to login will be in next week's bulletin but please keep the date and time free:

Tuesday week 26th May at 7:45pm.



Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of everlasting life. Grant that life to:

Please pray for the gift of eternal life for John Yun of our parish who died during the week. John's funeral will take place at our Killara church this week though attendance is of course restricted to immediate family.

Recently deceased: Jack Biviano (brother of Mary Lo Ricco of our parish), Angela Ying Fung Yim, Patrick Fitzpatrick, Joyce Antelman, Jean Groves, John Cashman, Julie Wright, Maria Ciong KN, Joyce Murphy, Eleanor Villenor Quema,

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Nicholas Sutherland, Jesse Langford, Anthony Ellison, Ron Burke, Nena Umali, Wolfgang Liers, Cyril Ferriere, Alex Noble, William Wise, Lise Therese Ferriere, Ian Coffey, Maureen Hobbs, Russell Adams.

And for all those affected by COVID-19.

Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. (Jn 14:21)

MEASURING OURSELVES IN LOVE

When I was younger, I was pretty confident that I knew what love meant.

After all, we all experience love in some way: being in love, loving someone, being loved by someone. Virtually everyone has known the love of somebody, a friend, a family member, an acquaintance.

But the older I get the more I wonder sometimes whether I, or most anyone else, has much sense of what that over-used word, love, really means? When we are honest, we sense our own distance from its full meaning. Why?

Because, the older we get, the more we also begin to know love's dark side. Too common are these experiences: we fall in love and think it will last forever, but then fall out of love, feel love go sour, feel love grow cold, see love betrayed, feel ourselves wounded by love, and wound others. Finally, even more upsetting, we all find that there are always people in our lives who are cold, bitter, and unforgiving towards us so that it is not always easy to feel love and be loving.

In the light of this reticence, I would like comment on Jesus' most important commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you!"

Too easily we read his command simplistically, romantically, and in a one-sided, over-confident manner. But this command contains the most important challenge of the whole gospel and, like the deepest part of the gospel to which it is linked, the crucifixion, it is very, very difficult to imitate. Why?

It's easy to consider ourselves as loving if we only look at one side of things, namely, how we relate to those people who are loving, warm, respectful, and gracious towards us. If we rate ourselves on how we feel about ourselves in our best moments among like-minded friends, we can easily conclude both that we are loving persons and that we are measuring up to Jesus' command to love as he did.

But if we begin to look at the skeletons in our relational closets, our naïve confidence soon disappears: What about the people who hate us, whom we don't like? What about the people whom we avoid and who avoid us? What about those people towards whom we feel resentment? What about all those people with whom we are at odds, towards whom we feel suspicion, coldness, anger? What about those people whom we haven't been able to forgive?

It's one thing to love someone who adores you, it's quite another to love someone who wants you dead!

But that's the real test. Jesus' command to

love contains a critical subordinate clause, "as I have loved you!" What was unique in the way he loved us?

Where Jesus stretches us beyond our natural instincts and beyond all self-delusion is in his command to love our enemies, to be warm to those who are cold to us, to be kind to those who are cruel to us, to do good to those who hate us, to forgive those who hurt us, to forgive those who won't forgive us, and to ultimately love and forgive those who are trying to kill us.

That command—love and forgive your enemies—more than any creedal formula or other moral issue, is the litmus-test for Christian discipleship. We can ardently believe in and defend every item in the creed and fight passionately for justice in all its dimensions, but the real test of whether or not we are followers of Jesus is the capacity or non-capacity to forgive an enemy, to remain warm and loving towards someone who is not warm and loving to us.

We shouldn't delude ourselves on this. It is easy to rationalise this away and, if we do, no doubt there will be more than enough false friends around who will furnish us with both theological and psychological arguments that will justify us in not loving our enemies. But the gospel is uncompromising: We are loving not on the basis of how we respond to those who love us, but on the basis of how we respond to those who hate us, and are cold, hostile, and murderous toward us.

That's the hard, non-negotiable truth underlying Jesus' command to love, and when we are honest, we have to admit that we are still a long way from measuring up to that.

There's a sobering challenge in an old Stevie Nicks' song, "Golddust Woman": she suggests that it's good that, at a point in life, someone "shatters our illusion of love" because far too often, blind to its own true intentions, our love is manipulative and self-serving. Too often, the song points out, we are lousy lovers who unconsciously pick our prey.

What shatters our illusion of love is the presence in our lives of people who hate us. They're the test. It's here where we have to measure up: if we can love them, we're real lovers, if we can't, we're still under a self-serving illusion.

Fr Ron Rolheiser omi (The Centre for Liturgy, University of St Louis)



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