**May 6, 2018 – Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**Fr. John Edmunds, ST**

We who are gathered in this Church today know what is what — it’s there in our epistle. “God is love and love is of God.” We know that. But things in this old crazy world are working to make us doubt what we know. The crazy world tells us all those wants and needs and desires inside of us will go away if we just fill up with this food or that drink or some stuff you put on. We know what we want is God: for God is love and love is of God. The crazy world tells us that our hurts and griefs and wounds will ache just a bit less if we hit someone back. But we know what cures us is God for God is love and love is of God. The crazy world tells us to look out for number one and devil take the hindmost. But we know better for God is love and love is of God. The Bible tells us what is what. We’ve got to hold on to what we know and not let the craziness get to us.

We know something about love and so we know about God since God is love and love is of God. One example, love is a mother or father caring for their child. Now a child doesn’t ask to be born so the parents have to love the child first. Even when the little baby doesn’t know enough to love back, the momma loves that baby. Even when junior won’t eat his broccoli, the daddy loves that child. That’s the way God loves us — first, before we do anything. “Love consists in this: not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us.” We don’t have to do anything to get God to love us. God loves us already. And nothing we can do can change God’s mind about us. We will always be loved by God. Do you remember the way Alice Walker puts it in The Color Purple? “People think pleasing God is all God care about. But any fool living in the world can see God always trying to please us back.” The Bible tells us what is what — God loves us and nothing can stop God from loving us.

There’s another kind of love we hear about all the time — romantic love. This love is important because it lets us know we are lovable. Do you remember the fairy tale about Rapunzel? A witch had imprisoned Rapunzel at the top of a tower with no doors and only one window. When the witch wanted to get in she would say, “Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your long hair.” And Rapunzel would unwrap her braids let them down, and the witch would climb up on the hair. Well, one day Prince Charming comes by and sees this happening. After the witch leaves he tries the same trick. “Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your long hair.” Sure enough the braid came down and the prince climbed up. When he got into the tower and looked at Rapunzel they fell in love. She said, “The witch allowed no mirrors. I didn’t know that I was beautiful until I saw my reflection in your loving eyes.” That’s how it is with God’s love. When we find that God loves us just as we are, we discover that we are lovable, that we are beautiful. Peter points that out in the first reading. “I begin to see how true it is that God shows no partiality.” God isn’t partial to the rich people, or the smart people, or the church-going people. God isn’t even partial to the good people. God loves us all and thus makes us lovable. Our eyes reflect the love of God. The scripture shows us what is what — that each one of us, just as we are, are the ones whom God loves.

There’s another kind of love we know about — the love between friends. If parents’ love rocks the little one in their arms, if romantic love gazes into the eyes of the beloved, friends’ love is more shoulder to shoulder. You love your friends because they laugh at your jokes. You love your friends because they know what you mean even when you can’t say it. You love your friends because if you’re cut, they bleed. You love your friends because no matter what you say to them, they’ll still love you. The amazing thing is that God’s love is like that too. Jesus says, “I call you friends since I have made know to you all that I heard.” Even though God seems so much bigger or better or far away from us, we can love God as a friend. Maybe you can’t find the right words when you pray. You can just sit in silence with God who is your friend. Maybe you’ve really blown it big time. Since God is your friend you know you can go and find acceptance. Maybe you feel the load is just too heavy, you can’t go one more step. Your friend God promises to be there to help. The gospel tells us what is what — we are the friends of God, God loves us hand in hand, arm in arm. What a friend we have.

The Bible tells us what is what. God is love and love is of God. The challenge for us is to act on what we know. Let’s not believe the craziness the world sells. What we know is that God loves us first. What we know is that we are lovable just the way we are. What we know is that we are the friends of God. When we act on what is, we can overcome all the needs, all the hurts, all the fears we’re filled with because the God who is love has loved us. The commandment Jesus gives: “that you love one another” is merely our way of showing that matters is love. Nothing can take away the love that is given us in God. That’s what is. No wonder we’re supposed to “sing joyfully to the Lord, break into song, give praise.”