Homily for 6th Sunday Easter 2015
May 10, 2015
Readings: AA 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Ps. 98; 1 Jn 4:7-10; Jn 15:9-17
Place: Alumni Chapel, 11am and 7pm
Theme: God is love.
Mood: Reflective, prayerful

Love. St. John’s Gospel focuses on love. Scripture scholars refer to this fourth gospel as the Gospel of Love. Among the four gospels, if we add all the times that the word “love” appears, we discover that two-thirds of the usages are found in John’s gospel. In this morning’s gospel, Jesus extends us an invitation, “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.”

All of us talk about love a great deal. We say, “Love makes the world go ‘round.” Since the beginning of humanity, love has served as a popular topic for poets, song-writers, novelists, homilists and theologians.

What is love? … Everybody experiences love in various ways and degrees. Everybody needs love in various ways and degrees. … We constantly yearn for love, and we are satisfied generally but never satisfied absolutely by love as long as we live on earth.

For yourself, what is love? … Webster’s dictionary defines “love” as “a deep and tender affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons, or something.” Webster’s continues with two dozen more definitions and descriptions which extend for the length of an entire page. Interesting, how much the word “love” pervades our language, and has so many interpretations and applications. The New Catholic Encyclopedia defines “love” as “an affective accord or union with what is in some way grasped as congenial. … This definition has the merit of indicating the dynamic and relational character of all love and of suggesting that its function is to promote wholeness.” St. Thomas Aquinas provides a very succinct definition: “love is the desire to do what is best for the other person.”

For St. John the Evangelist, what is love? Not in his gospel but in his First Letter, John says simply, “God is love.” (1 Jn 4:8) Since God is the source of love, and since the Book of Genesis informs us that we have been created in God’s image and likeness, when we love, we participate in and express some degree of God’s divine life. When we act from the motivation of love, in an expression of love, we reveal the image of God within ourselves. In a very real sense, we make God’s life present in the world through ourselves. In a certain sense, we are sacraments of God’s love. We know that a sacrament is “an outward instituted by Christ to
give grace.” Each person is created by God to reveal some part of the personality of God. Think about the ways and times that you best reveal God, who is love. ...

How do I define love? Love is a mysterious gift from God, which resides in our personality and is developed by our spirituality. Its essential element is self-giving, self-sacrificing activity. Mystery means not only negatively that we can’t understand something, but also positively that the reality is so profound that we can never confine it or exhaust it. Its supply and satisfaction is limitless. Gift means it freely given to us by God and others. Personality and spirituality: personality is God-given at conception, and is developed in the womb and in life through our spirituality. Because love essentially is self-giving, self-sacrifice, the greatest embodiment and expression of love on earth is embodied in the person of our Lord Jesus.

Today is Mother’s Day. Make sure that you thank God for your mother, living or deceased. Along with God and your father, she has loved you into being. She generously gave of herself in giving you life and in sustaining your life. She has given you the priceless gift of life and love, and the opportunity to reveal through your life, the image of God, who is love.