

LOVE ONE ANOTHER [Matins Med.]
[written in oral form]

John 15:9-17; I John 5:1-6
Easter 6, Year B

May 6, 2018
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A Few highlights from the First John passage are:

- the importance of believing that Jesus is Christ;
- we are to love God and obey the commandments, and our faith is the key for success.

Similarly, the highlights from the Gospel of John text are:

- abide in Christ's love, which requires believing in Christ;
- keep the commandments
- Love one another as Jesus did;
- the greatest act of love is to give one's life to a friend;
- we are to bear fruit that will last, and all this is presented so that we can love one another.

Simple. ?? And, with our tradition and years of indoctrination, we assume that we know exactly what all this means.

But, I wonder if we truly do. ???

Which commandments to keep? All of them?

And, how?

What does it mean to bear fruit that will last?

And, how do we love as Jesus did?

With so much ambiguity in relationships, and in life, I think we too often seek to find comfort in certainty. It has become important to own and proclaim our "correct" theology, in order to get it right. Yet, certainty is the opposite of faith, and certainty does not cohabitate very well with relationships. Too often we think we know, but we do not.

For example, we may think we can recognize when someone is drowning, and I mean literally drowning in water.

Knowing the actual signs can save someone's life.

This year, nearly 1,000 North American children will die from drowning, and most will be in sight of their parents.

We assume the telltale signs are screaming, thrashing and splashing, but that is incorrect.

[Source: *On Scene* magazine (coast guard): Fall 2006 page 14]

Those making an aggressive, loud demonstration are suffering from aquatic distress. They may be in trouble, but they are not drowning.

When people are drowning, they are quiet.

Drowning people are physiologically unable to call out for help. The respiratory system was designed for breathing. Speech is a secondary function. Breathing must be fulfilled before speech occurs.

Drowning people's mouths alternately sink below and reappear above the surface of the water. The mouths of drowning people are not above the surface of the water long enough for them to exhale, inhale and call out for help. When the drowning people's mouths are above the surface, they exhale and inhale quickly as their mouths start to sink below the surface of the water.

Drowning people cannot wave for help. Nature instinctively forces them to extend their arms laterally and press down on the water's surface. Pressing down on the surface of the water permits drowning people to leverage their bodies so they can lift their mouths out of the water to breathe. They look like they are trying to climb a ladder, yet their legs fail to obey and don't help. Moreover, they cannot reach for a piece of rescue equipment. In contrast, someone with aquatic distress can assist with their own rescue.

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Drowning is a quiet, desperate and subdued struggle. Drowning people can only struggle on the surface of the water from 20 to 60 seconds before submersion occurs.

It is critically important to truly know the symptoms of drowning and to respond, quickly and appropriately in order to save that person.

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If we want to save the world and live as Jesus did, then we'd be wise to focus on those who are quietly disappearing.

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Too often, our attention and energy is given to those making a ruckus. Perhaps, we could toss them a rope, and move on.

I think bypassing the rambunctious to get to the quietly drowning is the way of Christ and a true act of love.

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I confess that there have been times that I aggressively defended what I interpreted as peace and justice commandments. In the process, I upset, even hurt, friends and family.

I thought I was right, but I was very wrong....because my behaviour was not Christ like. Verses 14 and 15 of John 15 are essential for us to understand and embrace, if we seek to live in faith and love.

Jesus said, two times, "You are my friends." He also added that he openly shared all that he learned from God.

Friends are equals.

True friends know each other, and are authentic with each other, even with doubts and fears. Friends
respect each other, including if it means affirming another's radically different theology.

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Let us live in mutual love..... as friends.

And, may God's love enable us to be as Christ.

May we recognize and reach out to those quietly sinking into the abyss.  
The world needs more unqualified, undefined Love.  
May we have the faith to respond, even when we don't understand.