



Wednesday Prayer

5th Sunday of Easter

Love one another

Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews, so I say to you, "Where I am going you cannot come. I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13: 33-35

At first glance, these words of Jesus spoken to his core group of disciples sounds quite simple. However, a deeper look into the Gospel text quickly reveals that this commandment to show Christ's love was anything but a mere offering of comfort during increasingly turbulent times. Rather these words were a bold and urgent cry for merciful social justice!

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was drawn to those who were on the margins of mainstream society. Those living with severe disabilities, deeply feared diseases, and many others whose circumstances caused them to be considered outcasts. His words and actions went directly against long-established social norms, often confusing (and angering) religious and secular authorities. This pattern of standing in solidarity with the vulnerable contributed to his own persecution and brutal execution. For the disciples, to be publicly known as his followers by doing likewise was a highly risky endeavor.

In Greek, there are many words for "love." For instance, *philia* refers to the kind of love and affection one may have for a family member or close friend. Here, Jesus uses the term *agape* which primarily refers to the love of God for ALL of humanity. The use of agape calls us far beyond divisive language of "us/them" into a radically unifying proclamation of "all."

Cherish All Children commits to "value, respect, and support ALL individuals, especially those who may be marginalized in our society leading to greater vulnerabilities." This work can be challenging at times. However, the willingness to be a safe, dependable, adult in the life of a youth can offer the confidence necessary to make their own informed and healthy choices.

Lord guide us by your example of unconditional love for all people. Renew the hopes and dreams of all youth daily. Strengthen those who serve as their mentors and bring us together to create a safe and supportive environment for all. Amen.

Written by Sarah McGuiness, Luther Seminary graduate, Cherish All Children volunteer, and active member of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Roseville, MN.