



## Wednesday Prayer

6th Sunday of Easter

To love through acts of justice

***Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” John 14:23***

In last week’s lesson, Jesus gave us a new commandment, “To love one another as I love you.” (John 13:34). It seems simple enough, just as Jesus’ words this week do, “Those who love me will keep my word.” But what does it mean to love like Jesus loves? And what does it mean to love Jesus and keep his word? It’s easy to love your neighbors, when you’re referring to those who live in your immediate proximity who look like you, talk like you, have the same values as you. But Jesus reached out way beyond his proximity, to the Samaritan, and to the woman at the well, which was a *much* bigger deal in first century Palestine than it is today. He loved the unlovable, the untouchable, even those who were out to hurt him. He loves us even though we’re sinners and we don’t always keep his word.

Jesus loved and loves by doing justice and he calls us to do the same. People who are at risk for or who have survived sexual exploitation may be led to believe they are today’s untouchable and unlovable people. They’ve been robbed of their self-esteem and dignity, and sometimes their freedom, and may act very differently than those of us who have been spared that trauma. Some may steal or fight because they’ve had to for survival. Some may drink or use drugs to drown the hellish nightmares that haunt them when they try to rest. We are called to provide Jesus’ love through our acts of justice.

In the book, *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly* (New York; Paulist Press, 1986), Walter Bruggeman says “The way the Bible thinks about justice is: *justice is to sort out what belongs to whom, and return it to them.*” We can act justly in supporting survivors as they find what has been taken from them, as they regain their dignity and self-worth. We can pray and advocate for them, educate ourselves and others about how to prevent exploitation from happening, and restore life and hope to those whose lives have been torn apart by it. The best way we can keep Jesus’ word is to share it with others, in all that we say and do.

**Send your Holy Spirit, Lord, to burn in our hearts and pour out through our words and actions toward others. Let others know your love by how we work toward justice in your world. Amen.**

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