

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
6th Sunday of the Easter Season
2021—B Cycle



Image found at [Kelly Snelgrove](#)

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

Opening Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

Heavenly Father, you show me love
every second of every day.
Thank you for your blessings,
especially the blessing of my friends.
Help me to be the kind of friend
who will put them first.

Give me the opportunity and willingness
to serve their needs.
If it comes down to the very end,
give me the courage
to lay my life down for them.
Amen.

Source: [Daily Prayer Guide](#)

Sixth Sunday of Easter Season Readings

Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48 “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.”

Psalm 98: 1-4 “Sing to the Lord a new song.”

I John 4:7-10 “Beloved, let us love one another.”

John 15: 9-17 “As the Father loves me, so I also love you.”

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48)

Following his dream/vision, “Peter was about to enter when Cornelius went to him, fell on his knees and bowed low. Peter lifted him up saying, ‘Stand up, for I, too, am a human being.’

Peter then spoke to (Cornelius’ family), ‘Truly, I realize that God does not show partiality, but in all nations he listens to everyone who fears God and does good.’

“Peter was still speaking when the Holy Spirit came upon all who listened to the word. And the believers of Jewish origin who had come with Peter were amazed, ‘Imagine! God gives and pours the Holy Spirit on foreigners also!’

“For indeed, this happened: they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter declared, ‘Can we refuse to baptize with water these people, who have received the Holy Spirit, just as we have?’ So he had them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. After that, they asked him to remain with them for some days.



Peter baptizing Cornelius
by [Francesco Trevisani](#), 1709

Personal Reflection

This intervention of the Holy Spirit called Peter and the new Christian Movement to venture beyond the restrictions imposed by Jewish law. [Cornelius](#), a Roman [centurion](#), believes in the one God of the Jews but cannot gain formal status within the Jewish community. Peter’s vision invites him to eat forbidden unclean animals. This confirms for Peter that he must not hesitate to stay baptize Cornelius and accept his hospitality. We do not know if Peter, on his own initiative, would have baptized a non-Jew. The Holy Spirit’s intervention convinced him. As a statement to the entire early Christian community, Peter welcomes a believer of another race and baptizes him into Christ! Later, St. Paul would devote his entire ministry to conversion of the Gentiles.

Today, Christian churches (including our own) face the temptation of reducing themselves to closed groups of “true (likeminded) believers,” thereby becoming exclusive and antiquated. Only the intervention of an angel convinced Peter to break the barrier between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

— *If I were a Jewish Christian at the time of Cornelius’s petition for baptism, what might I have thought, said, or done? Before accepting an “outsider,” what pros and cons would I have had to consider?*

— *How open am I to welcoming into my inner circle of friends a Catholic whose ideas about how to be faithful differ somewhat from my own?*

Responsorial Psalm 98 (1-4)

Orchestra of praise to Yahweh, King of the world.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving powers.

Sing to Yahweh a new song,
for he has done wonders;
his right hand, his holy arm,
has won victory for him.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving powers.

Yahweh has shown his salvation,
revealing his justice to the nations.

He has not forgotten his love,
nor his faithfulness to Israel.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving powers.

The farthest ends of the earth
have seen God's saving power.

All you, lands, make a joyful noise to Yahweh,
break into song and sing praise.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving powers.

Personal Reflection

In verse 1, “Sing to the Lord a new song,” the post-exilic psalmist understood that Israel had not yet reached the final note in Yahweh’s symphonic repertoire. In the “fullness of time,” Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Yet we still pray, as he taught us: ‘Your kingdom *come*.’ He accomplished the work of our redemption, but we still pray for that salvation to be perfected throughout the world. And so it will remain till the end of time.

“Sing to Yahweh a new song.”

— *What “new song” am I singing to Yahweh today? If it’s the same as yesterday’s (old) song, what can I do to change that? How might I remind myself that each new day demands its own (new) song to Yahweh? (Suggestion: Write “sing a new song” on a Post-It note and affix it to a place where I’ll see it every day.)*

“The farthest ends of the earth, have seen God’s saving power.” At the time this was written in last half of the millennium before the birth of Christ, the map of the world had not yet filled in. Masses of undiscovered regions of the globe teemed with people of all kinds and colors, each with their own understanding of divinity and afterlife.

— *How open am I to new discoveries—if not in territories on earth, then in science and exploration of the moon and nearby planets? How about within my own soul—perhaps the least charted place on earth?*

A Reading from First Letter of St. John (4: 7-10)

“My dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves, is born of God and knows God. Those who do not love, have not known God, for



*John the Evangelist
sculpted by [Donatello](#)
between 1408-1411*

God is love. How did the love of God appear among us? God sent his only Son into this world, that we might have life, through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he first loved us and sent his Son, as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

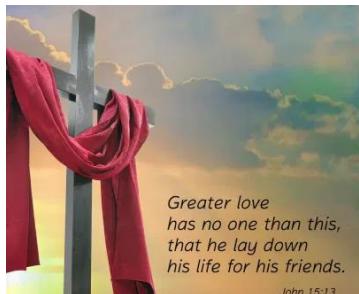
Personal Reflection

God is love. God-Love is the source of all love in the universe. This supreme revelation characterizes the Christian faith. In this beautiful text, John insists on the inseparability of love of God and love of our neighbor. Yes, we know this, but we also wonder why the world contains so many “hard to love” people.

“Let us love one another, for love comes from God.

— *Among my own inner circle of family and friends/acquaintances, whom do I find it really hard to love? Can I be specific—naming names? What can I do today to open my heart in love for that person or those persons?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (15: 9-17)



Source: [FaithIsland.org](#)

Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love! You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you all this, that my own joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you! There is no greater love than this, to give one’s life for one’s friends; and you are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants anymore, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead, I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.”

Personal Reflection

After making it clear that we depend totally on him, Jesus repeats his commandment of love. He proposes love as the essential link in building a Christian life. Each of us understands love in our own way. Sometimes we fail to put Christ at the center of our human loves. If the most we can commit to is, “I *should* love my neighbor,” we fall far short of the kind of love Jesus modeled and calls for from us. The missing link in that kind of love is . . . the *joy* of loving. In our personal lives and relationships, we need to adopt Jesus’ way of thinking about love—all in, nothing left undone . . . *joyful*. Only then can we truly know him as a person who loves us and acts in and through us.

Only then will we produce the authentic and abundant fruit of love.

“There is no greater love than this, to give one’s life for one’s friends.”

— *As I review my life as a Christian, on what occasions have I shown that “greater love”—my willingness to “lay down my life,” if needed? What occasioned that greater love on my part? To what extent do I still hold firm to that all-in commitment to love?*

In [Galatians 5: 22-23](#), St. Paul lists joy as one of the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit. Joy is an elusive human quality. Most of us never pause to discern the subtle distinction between love and joy. This can happen even to “religious” people. Perhaps we’ve known someone who had a great capacity for love but rarely seemed to exude joy in their demeanor, their facial expression, their words. . . .

— *We all love—someone, something—but would I truthfully call myself a joyful person? How would I know if I have the Christian virtue of joy?*

— *Do the people around me at home, at church, in my social and work life think of me as a joyful person? What would happen if I asked a close friend or family member: “Do you see me as a JOY-ful person?” How ready am I to hear the truth if I ask for it?*

The Week Ahead

Journaling Prompts

— *Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do regarding . . .*

*(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and
(2) my life as an emissary of the Risen Christ, committed to bringing his kind of love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

— *Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?
Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?
Why do I hesitate?*

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings about events occurring in your life today and what you see happening in the world.

For Inspirational Listening/Reading

Music:

[No Greater Love](#) by [Fr. Michael Joncas](#)

In honor of Mary’s month, treat yourself to an exquisite rendition of “[Ave Maria Pietas](#),” composed by [Daniel Vuletic](#) (2018) and sung by [Andrea Bocelli](#) and [Aida Garifullina](#) (2018).

Reading:

Adult Faith: Growing in Wisdom and Understanding by Fr. Diarmuid O'Murchu

A book for adults seeking adult answers to adult questions.

(Note: I have read this book and gave it my highest score.—AJG)

Preview of Next Week's Scriptures

Feast of the Ascension

Acts 1: 1-11 “As they were looking on, (the Risen Christ) was lifted, and a cloud took him from their sight.”

Psalm 47: 2-3, 6-9 “God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy.”

Ephesians 1: 17-23 “May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened.”

Mark 16: 15-20 “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

Closing Prayer

(edited for use here)

Father,
reduce me to love.
May the world know me by my love.

Help me to love like you!
Help me to use everything
you've given for your glory.

May I stay in the presence of your face,
until I am transformed into the image of your Son.
Since I become like what I worship,
help me to worship you in Spirit and in truth.
Take my eyes and fix them firmly on you!

May my heart break for what breaks yours.
Liberate me from selfishness.
In Jesus name, I pray.
Amen.

Source: [Francis Chan, “Thought I Knew What Love Was”](#)

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

The Sunday readings are from [*Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition*](#)

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [*Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words*](#))