

HOMILY 6TH SUN EASTER YRA 2017

How many of you have seen the movie or play *Fiddler on the Roof*? It is set in 1905 in a Jewish settlement in Russia. It was set in a time when people had arranged marriages, the idea of fall in love and get married did not exist. After 25 years of marriage Tevye asks his wife Golde:

Tevye: Do you love me?
Golde: Do I what?
Tevye: Do you love me?
Golde: Do I love you?
For twenty-five years, I've washed your cloths,
cooked your meals, cleaned your house.
For twenty-five years, my bed is his.
If that's not love what is?
Tevye: Then you love me?
Golde: I suppose I do.
Tevye: And I suppose I love you too.

In our culture we have this romantic idea that we fall in love, get married, and then live happily ever after. But that it does not work that way. If you do not work at your relationship, love and serve one another for years, and develop a deeper love and respect, your marriage is not going to stay together for 25 years. Tevye and Golde did not fall in love and then get married, but they did develop that deeper love over 25 years.

In the Gospel reading, Jesus speaks of how we are to love him. He says: "If you love me you will keep my commandments." He is not referring to the 10 Commandments. He is talking about love. He wants us to love him the way He loves the Father. This love has nothing to do with a warm fuzzy feeling. Jesus and the Father are one. They love and serve one another in a perfect way. And Jesus makes three promises to us to help us to do just that.

First of all, he tells us he will send us an "Advocate to be with you always." He is referring here to the Holy Spirit. One of the ways that I think of the Holy Spirit is like that

batteries that keep us charged. When people are discerning what they should be doing I sometimes suggest that they pay attention to what they have a lot of energy around. That energy may very well be coming from the Holy Spirit. You may very well be using your charisms, your gifts of the Holy Spirit, to love and serve others. That is how you should love him.

Jesus also tells us the he “will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.” Jesus is referring to the Eucharist. That is how he comes to us in a physical way. When we gather together to worship Him and receive his body and blood, we become more like his and better able to love him.

Third, whoever keeps my commandments “I will love him and reveal myself to him.” In the majority of the decisions we make, we do not need a major discernment. We need to pray about it and just do the right thing. We are never called to do evil. The decisions that we need to discern are when we have to make a decision between two good things. The more we are loving God by doing the right thing, the more God will reveal himself to you and the better you will be able to discern what God is calling you to do. One major role of discernment is that no one can discern for you. Other people can help you by listening to you, discussing issues with you and asking questions, but everyone must discern for themselves.

Jesus is telling each one of us today. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” You will love me the way I love the Father. This is a lifelong task involved in the spiritual journey. We can always better live the Gospel. We can always love better.