

Service for Week 29th April- May 5th

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, before we ever loved you, you loved us; before we looked for you, you were seeking us out.

In love you offered your life and in love you continue to reach out to each of us. To you be praise and glory now and for evermore.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.*

Amen

Bible Reading John 15: 9- 17

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be

complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

It is generally agreed that the books of the New Testament in the Bible were originally written in Greek. This was the scholarly language current at the time, and it is interesting that in the Greek language there are different words for 'Love'. Different words to describe the different types or aspects of love.

There is Eros which means "love, mostly of sexual passion" or "intimate love". It is where we get our word 'erotic' from. Philia which means "affectionate regard, friendship", family or "brotherly love. Storge that means the natural love and affection we have

for family members especially of parents and children.

Philautia which means "self-love" or self-esteem. Another form of love is Xenia which is an ancient Greek concept of hospitality, "guest-friendship", or "ritualized friendship".

Then there is Agápe a word used in ancient texts to denote "unconditional love" and "charity" the love of God for person and of person for God. Also, the unconditional love one person can have for another. Agape Thomas Aquinas explained this type of love as "to will the good of another."

It is agape love that Jesus is urging us all to have for one another in our reading from John's gospel. Jesus was preparing the disciples for the time he would no longer be with them and says that 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.' And he gives them this command: Love each other as I have loved you.

It was unconditional love – it is a love so strong that one would risk and even give up their own life in order to save the life of their friend. This type of unconditional love Jesus had for his disciples, his disciples had for him and God through Jesus has for each one of us.

It is this type of unconditional love that we try to nurture and encourage in our

churches, church groups, community groups and to each other today.

As Jesus says, before we chose to follow his example Jesus chose us. Chose us because he has an unconditional love for each and every one of us. He asks us to share this same type of love which at times will not be easy. There are those we may not get along with. Those that may be different from us and we find it hard to find anything in common with. Those perhaps that have different values and a different way of life than we do. We won't necessarily have to agree with them or accept their way of life but we can still offer our love as Jesus commanded.

Because Jesus' command to his disciples and to each of us today is this – Love one another.

Amen

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you summed up the law in one simple word 'love'. Forgive me that although I often talk about love I rarely show it in practice.

Forgive me everything in my life that has denied that love; the angry words and comments, the thoughtless deeds and careless actions.

Help me to look to you who showed love in action- and help me to realize that unless I have that, then all my words, faith and religion count for nothing.

Amen.