



Homily for
THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
23/24 April, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

I. An old issue has resurfaced in the city of Dubuque.

As you know, a week and a half ago, something was found to be burning just down the street from us. It appeared to be two crosses and the suggestion has been made that perhaps this was a hate. Until more is revealed about the investigation we really don't know – and should probably be hesitant about drawing any conclusions.

Nevertheless – it has caused community members to discuss what this means, whether or not it says anything about hate in our community. I've heard it suggested we need to go back and educate our youth about the seriousness of this and what this means in our nation's history.

Hate crime or not – this incident is sparking a conversation in our community and telling us we don't want to live in a culture of hate. It's telling us we want a better community than that.

II. In the gospel, Jesus is giving us an instruction which can help us to build the kind of community we really desire.

It is at the Last Supper and Jesus tells his disciples, “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”

In fact these are Jesus’ last words - we know how important “last words” can be. If we are privileged to have some meaningful last words from a loved one, we often hang on to those words – we cherish them – we try to live them.

These are Jesus’ last words: Judas has just left to go out into the night and do his deed of betrayal – his crime of hate – that leaves Jesus alone with the other disciples and he now gives them his last instruction, “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

III. It is a very simple: love one another

Notice, it’s not love yourself, love others and love God – it’s not love your enemies - but Jesus pushes even beyond that and really challenges us when he says “***As I have loved you***, so you should love one another.

Jesus is asking us to love *as he has loved us* – which means sacrificially, totally and completely.

The kind of love Jesus asks us to demonstrate is not a moral imperative that comes from outside of us – something imposed upon us – but rather love should spring from within us – from our heart.

Sometimes it seems we can just make love generic: we could say to ourselves that we just sort of generally love everyone. We could even say we love our enemies by praying for them.

IV. But how about just begin by loving those close to home – those who are in our home. How about demonstrating love to those we share the bathroom with – to those whose bedroom is next door – to those we share meals with.

This is where love becomes real – loving those closest to us: to those in the same house, or, if we live alone, to those we regularly hang out with – friends, family, co-workers.

We can do that by:

- refraining from making a critical comment or something smart aleck
- taking time to listen to someone's goals
- being patient with the short comings of someone else
- being polite and courteous
- doing a simple, thoughtful deed
- offering a smile and helping hand
- spending time with a lonely person
- remembering someone's birthday

V. The love which Jesus asks of us can happen in simple, everyday kind of ways because it springs from the heart, because it is a Christian way of life.

Then we build up a culture and community of love – a practice which can spill over into other areas of our common community life. This will help us

move beyond hate.

May the feast of love we celebrate now in the Eucharist inspire us to love more fully.

Fr. Kyle's homily follows....

Jesus tells us of a new commandment in today's gospel, "Love one another". But we must not just reduce this to meaning playing nice like we learned in elementary school and just being a good person. No, the love that Jesus is asking for is a bold "in your face" kind of love that causes a ruckus in our families, jobs and world. Jesus says, "Love one another... as I have loved you". How did he love us? Being mocked, spat upon, whipped, scourged, and poured out his blood for us. It is that kind of love that impacts people around us; that kind of love that makes a difference in the world; that kind of love that people say, "this person is different, I want what they have". Do we have this kind of love.

As most of you probably know by now, I love baseball and I love the Minnesota Twins in particular. Recently I was on retreat near Chicago and decided that it would be a good idea to end my week-long silent retreat by yelling at a baseball game in the friendly confines of Wrigley field. Now most people would buy a cheap Cubs hat to wear to the game. But I'm not most people. Because I love the Twins so much, I proudly put on my Twins Jersey that I bought junior year in high school and my fitted Twins baseball cap and went to the game. At the stadium, pretty much everyone noticed the Twins jersey thinking, "There is something different about that guy". Many people commented on it; some of the comment I can't repeat because we are in church. Let's just say that this bold move made it more than apparent to everyone that I love the Minnesota Twins.

Are we willing to make a bold display of our love for Jesus in our lives? We often find ourselves in areas where people are not really a fan of Jesus. In those situations, at work, the

grocery store, the bar, do we put away our Jesus hat out of fear and just put on that hat that everyone else is wearing? It's easy to wear your Jesus hat at Church, everyone is cheering for him. But do we go out those doors and boldly show our love for one another as Christ loved us? Pope Francis, at the end of his visit to Rio for World Youth Day, told the youth that Jesus does not need weak and board people just filling up pews. He needs people on fire with Jesus love to get out in the world and make a mess.

Jesus' service and love was not always pretty. More often than not, it was a mess. And he commands us to love others as he has loved us. Are we too weak or afraid to boldly show our love for Jesus? Or are we willing to follow his command to love as he loved, to proudly display our faith, and to get out there and make a mess?