John 13: 31-35 (older manuscripts without 32a, God’s Word to the Nations)
“When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and in Him God is glorified. God will also glorify Him in himself; yes, He will glorify him now. “Little Children,” Jesus said, “I will be with you just a little bit longer. You will look for me, but as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.”
“I am giving you a new commandment: Love one another! Love one another as I have loved you. By your loving one another everyone will know that you are My disciples.”

God’s Ultimate Gift – old things new again

I have always passed over the glorification part of this reading in John. This time as I read these words, I couldn’t stop reading them. Initially I was trying to understand, why Jesus said, “I leave you with a new commandment. Love one another.” The disciples had to know that this was no new commandment, the words had been issued as law in Leviticus.

So why did Jesus call it a new commandment?

Jesus is with his disciples after Judas has left on Maundy Thursday evening. He tries to warn the disciples about the troubling experiences that will start soon. But first he says that NOW the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified. NOW… Then He warns them that he is leaving and gives them a new commandment which is as old as the third book of the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:18 (the Golden rule – love your neighbor as yourself).

Now the Son of Man is glorified – how puzzling… Perhaps NOW the Son of Man is glorified and in Him God is Glorified is referring to the fulfillment of God’s plan through the ages to show the world how much he loves us. Now God is glorified in the Passion of the Son of Man. God is glorified and Satan has been defeated as Jesus shows that even death cannot separate us from the love of God. Further, Jesus puts a new spin on an old commandment. “Love one another as I have loved you”. Love one another as the person who is about to DIE for you has LOVED you. This isn’t loving your neighbor as yourself, this is loving your neighbor more than yourself.

This no longer is about just showing brotherly love to others. God’s glorification through the passion of the Son of Man will show the radical depths that God is willing to traverse on our behalf. Now there is new power in these words – “Love one another, Love one another as I have loved you. By your loving one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

Jesus’s disciples seemed to take his message to heart. Many of them made the ultimate sacrifice to prove their faith in Jesus. The following, based off a book “The Signature of God” by Grant R. Jeffrey is based on the early history and traditions of the church.
“The apostles were continually threatened and pressured to deny their Lord during their ministry; especially as they faced torture and martyrdom. However, none of these men who spent time with Jesus chose to save their lives by denying their faith in Him.

Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia,

Mark died after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead.

Luke was hanged by idolatrous priests on an olive tree in Greece as a result of his preaching.

John was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome, miraculously he was delivered from death and sentenced to the mines on the prison island of Patmos, where he wrote Revelations and later died peacefully.

Both Peter and Andrew were crucified on an x-shaped cross

James was thrown a hundred feet down from the southeast pinnacle of the Temple. He survived and then was beaten to death.

James, son of Zebedee, was beheaded at Jerusalem. (end –You get the picture…)

Bartholomew, also know as Nathanael, was flayed to death by a whip in Armenia

Thomas was stabbed with a spear (lance) in India during a missionary trip

Jude, the brother of Jesus, was killed with arrows when he refused to deny his faith in Christ.

Matthias, the apostle chosen to replace Judas was stoned and then beheaded. “

About now, you should probably be getting nervous. Where is this sermon going? I don’t believe we are all being called to martyrdom. Let’s just make that clear. But what is Jesus saying when he says to “love one another as I have loved you”? Are we supposed to look out for each other? Look out for our neighbors? Look out for the poor, the sick, the oppressed? At the end of John, Chapter 21 Jesus asked Peter three times if Peter loved him. Three times Peter answered “of course Lord, you know I love you”, and each time Jesus said “Feed my sheep.”

I would like to share an old story – perhaps you have heard it before. In my mind it is worth repeating because it shows the power of Jesus’ promise to us in following this new commandment. Too often we don’t show the love of Christ and extend it to our brothers and sisters around us even among a community of faith. What difference would it make for us if we could learn from Christ to follow this command? What difference would it make to the community around us, if they could clearly see that we were followers of this radical love?

The Hermit’s Gift (Adapted from M. Scott Peck, The Different Drum)

There once was an old monastery that had fallen upon hard times. It had once been a thriving monastery where many dedicated monks lived and worked and had great
influence on the realm. But now only five monks lived there, and they were all over seventy years old. This was clearly a dying order.

A few miles from the monastery lived an old hermit who many thought was a prophet. One day the monks decided to visit the hermit to see if he might have some advice for them to help save the monastery.

The hermit welcomed the five monks to his hut, but when they explained the purpose of their visit, the hermit could only commiserate with them. “Yes, I understand how it is,” said the hermit. “The spirit has gone out of the people.”

“Is there anything you can tell us,” the abbot inquired of the hermit, “that would help us save the monastery?”

“No, I’m sorry,” said the hermit. “I don’t know how your monastery can be saved. The only thing that I can tell you is that one of you is an apostle of God.”

The monks were both disappointed and confused by the hermit’s cryptic statement. For months after visit, the monks pondered the significance of the hermit’s words.

“One of us is an apostle of God,” they mused. “did he actually mean one of us monks here at the monastery? That’s impossible. We are all too old and too insignificant. On the other hand, what if it’s true? And if it is true, then which of us is it? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone, he probably meant the abbot, our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand, he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Brother Thomas is a holy man - a man of wisdom and light. He couldn’t have meant Brother Elred. He gets crotchety at times and is difficult to reason with. On the other hand, he is almost always right. Maybe the hermit did mean Brother Elred. But surely he could not have meant Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, so shy, a real nobody. Still, he’s always there when you need him. He’s loyal and trustworthy. Yes, he could have meant Phillip. Of course, the hermit didn’t mean me. He couldn’t have meant me. I’m just an ordinary person. Yet, suppose he did? Suppose I am an apostle of God? Oh God, not me. I couldn’t be that much for you. Or could I?”

As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one of them might actually be an apostle of God. And on the off, off chance that the monk himself might be the apostle spoken of by the hermit, each monk began to treat himself with extraordinary respect.

Because the monastery was situated in a beautiful forest, many people came there to visit. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed the aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive even compelling, about it. Hardly knowing why, people began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought their friends.

As more visitors came, some of the younger men started to talk with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another. Within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the hermit’s gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality throughout the realm.

Jesus asks several times in John (13 and 17) for his disciples to love each other and show that unity of love to those around them and to be recognized as his followers by this love. He asked that all of us might be ONE so that the world could believe in HIM. He asks us to put aside our
differences, our grudges and our defenses. He asks us to sacrifice all of those things to show the love of God. Our Golden Rule is not just the Golden Rule of the world – be nice to each other. It goes much further than that. Our commandment is to love ourselves, our neighbors, our community and our world - so that God’s love can reach all peoples. Wow – what a gift. Let’s go out and help each other be a gift from God.
Holy Communion
Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Prelude “Praeludium in D Major” by Dieterich Buxtehude
Marilyn Schempp, organist

Welcome/Announcements
Invocation
Psalm 148
Hymn “Earth and All Stars” ELW  #731 vv. 1, 4, & 5

Scripture John 13: 31-35

Sermon “God’s Ultimate Gift – Old things new again”
Steve Matzner and Jetty Duffy-Matzner

Hymn “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee” ELW #836 vv. 1 & 3

Holy Communion
Dialogue
Words of Institution
Lord’s Prayer
Distribution “Jubilate Deo” by Robert A. Harris
Angelus, accompanied by Deanna Wehrspann

Blessing
Benediction
Postlude “Swing Down Chariot” arr. by Mac Huff
Angelus, accompanied by Deanna Wehrspann
Lisa Grevlos, Dir.

Dismissal

The Common Ground/Outreach Bonanza will be held out on the Green on Friday, May 10th from 6:00pm to Saturday, May 11th in the morning, to celebrate a great year of fellowship and get excited for next year; ALL are welcome! Friday evening we will be playing games, singing songs, enjoying a bonfire, eating snacks and star gazing. Big group events will end that evening but the option is available for people to spend the night on the Green; Augie Outdoor Club will be providing some camping materials (sleeping bags, etc.) but consider bringing your own sleeping bags/blankets/etc.

Taize at Pine Ridge, May 24-27. Any students interested in going to the Taize International meeting at Pine Ridge in May are encouraged to meet with Pr. Paul. We want to spread the word widely about this rare and exciting weekend of solidarity with our Native neighbors! Sign up sheet is on the Narthex table. Students interested in attending the May 24-27 Taize weekend at Red Shirt Table please sign up in the narthex_, or speak to Pr. Paul.

Want to learn more about Taize?? Come to the chapel for conversation and worship on Wednesday, May 8, 7-9pm. Brother John and a team of friends from Taize, France will be present as we learn about what Taize is and the impact this movement is having on young adults around the world. All are welcome.

Bread for the World's National Gathering will be held June 8-11, 2013, in Washington DC. In addition to inspiring workshops and advocacy training, there is an opportunity to meet with our South Dakota congressional delegation to personally discuss hunger issues locally and globally. BFW-SD would cover transportation, registration fees, and lodging. If you are interested or know of someone who is interested, please contact Nancy Olson, 605-332-4350, s10andyw@sio.midco.net for further information and to request an application before April 15, 2013. You can also find information about the event at www.bread.org

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Fri., May 4th Morning Worship, 10 am - Erin Schoenbeck, Sr. Spkr.
Sun., May 6th Morning Worship, 11 am - Shane LeClaire, Sr. Spkr.
Mon., May 7th Morning Worship, 10 am - Jenny Gubbels, Biol.
Tues., May 8th Catholic Mass, 10 am - Fr. Kevin O’Dell
Wed., May 9th Holy Communion, 10 am - Pr. Ann
Fri., May 11th Morning Worship, 10 am - Katie Hjerpe, Sr. Spkr.

Mondays for the remainder of the semester will focus on vocation in an Easter series we are calling, “Called to Live.” Pastor Paul began the series last Monday and then Professors Julie Ashworth, Joel Johnson, Jenny Gubbels - 5/6, and Patrick Hicks - 5/13 will reflect on their faith, disciplines, callings, service of neighbor and community.

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

South Dakota Synod Assembly, ELCA will be June 7-8 at Our Savior’s. Our student congregation may send one male and one female delegate. Please see Pr. Paul or Pr. Ann if you are interested. Preference is given to students from South Dakota.

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