

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, May 14th 2024

Today's Gospel is about love and selection. God chooses whom he loves. On the feast of Apostle Matthias, who was chosen to take the place of Judas who killed himself after betraying Jesus, the Church gives for our reflection the theme of love and choice. It takes us to the heart of Christian life. The Gospel first speaks to us of the commandment, the only commandment: "that you love one another as I have loved you". But, can love be a commandment, a law, or an order? Can we be commanded to love? In reality, love is something that comes from within a person and it cannot be ordered or commanded. In the military, the commanders give orders and the subordinates obey. The same thing happens at a workplace – the employers give orders to the employees. But no one can order us to feel what we have to feel!

God who is love, created us in love, to live and to remain in his love. That is why the Gospel is categorical: "Remain in my love." We have not totally understood the source of our lives and love. And love of God is manifested only through one's love of one another.

God loves and cares for us. From that experience, our own love, our capacity to love and to give life to those around us, spring forth. It is something similar to trying to convince someone that not going to Mass on Sundays is a sin. It is much better to invite them to come to our community, to make them enjoy the celebration of the Eucharist with songs, with brotherhood, with the encounter with Jesus. It is possible that he or she will come back. But if we threaten with sin, it is very easy for them to turn away.

With love, something similar happens. Love cannot be demanded or forced. If you want to have more members coming to your Church community, make them feel loved and welcomed. If you find members of the Church not coming to the Church anymore, do not blame them, instead do an introspection to see if your behaviour has driven them away from the Church. In practice, this is what it means to be a Christian.

For your reflection

What concrete and practical signs do I have of that love of God? Is it possible that the love I receive from those around me is the best sign of God's love? How do I transmit that love of God to those around me?