



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Friday after Easter 5 2020 9.30 am

John 15.12-17

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia!

Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment: *love one another.*

Easy words, perhaps, but how do we carry them out?

Jesus says that the quality of love shown will reveal whether or not those who follow him really are his friends.

He shows his love for them by laying down his life for them and, in turn, those to whom he issues his commandment will indeed lay down their lives for those whom they will come to call friends through their preaching and teaching the Gospel – the Good News of the One who laid down his life for all so that they too could become his friends as he would be their friend.

Some people might be familiar with the widely syndicated “Love is . . .” cartoons of “Kim”, created in the 1960s. Each simple cartoon shows two figures and every drawing is

captioned with the words “Love is ... followed by a word or a very short sentence. The most famous cartoon went on to have a life of its own spawning millions of tee shirts, mugs and posters: “Love is . . . being able to say you are sorry”, a slogan picked up in the film Love Story, which was subtitled “Love is . . . never having to say you are sorry”.

Whilst there are many Christians around the world whose lives are daily in danger because of their love for Jesus, most Christians will, thankfully, never be called to lay down their lives for their friends, but we are all commanded by Jesus to love.

Our attempts at loving can, all too often, go wrong, sometimes very painfully and all too publicly. Yet, love is not weakened or cheapened or diminished by our inadequate and poor attempts at living it out; as Paul said, love is the greatest of all things and love, God’s love, will, in the end triumph no matter how much of a mess we might make of it.

Reflecting on love, 600 years ago, St Thomas à Kempis wrote this, and we all do well to heed his words:

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good. Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth. Love bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing is stronger than love, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God. Love flies, runs and leaps for joy. It is free and unrestrained. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds. Love

feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength. Love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things. Love is not fickle and sentimental, nor is it intent on vanities. Like a living flame and a burning torch, it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle. Alleluia!