



DARE TO DREAM

6th Sunday of Eastertide – Bear Fruit

Week Beginning 9th May

Before you begin the prayer...

A story was once told of a king who knew he was dying. He longed for a son to be his heir so that his throne could be passed on and so he advertised for one. He invited young men to apply to be considered for adoption into his family and ultimately to become the heir to the throne. To qualify all they had to do was to love God and their neighbour. A poor peasant saw the notice but thought that he would stand no chance because he only had ragged clothes to wear. He decided to work extra hard and saved the money to buy some new clothes. Once he had these, he set off to the palace to present himself to the king. On his way there he encountered a cold and vulnerable beggar. Feeling sorry for him, the young boy took off his new clothes and swapped them for the ones that the beggar was wearing. Although he thought that it was now pointless to continue his journey, he decided to go on as he was so close. When he arrived the palace courtiers laughed and jeered him. Nevertheless, he was admitted to meet the king. The boy felt that there was something vaguely familiar about the king and suddenly realised he was wearing the clothes that he had given the beggar. The king stepped down from his throne and embraced the boy warmly, saying, 'Welcome, my son.'

The young boy had given everything he had to care for the 'beggar' on the road. He had shown his love and his generosity. He had fully lived the commandment to 'love one another' and his reward was a place at the heart of the King's home. We often think in terms of the ten commandments, but at the heart of all are the great commandments to love God and to love one another. When we love, we receive love. When we love, others grow in their own capacity to love. Today we are being commissioned like the disciples to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last, the fruit of love. As a Church our mission is to witness to this command – how well are we doing?

Video - Watch and listen to Fr. Frank Wainwright

Prayerfully read this passage from the Gospel of John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another.

- Take some time to ponder on the words you have just read.
- Notice if there is anything, a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- Read the passage again and then reflect upon all or some of these questions: if you are doing this as a family or a group, make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak.

Personal Reflections

- How does it feel to know that you have been chosen by God?
- In what ways do you bear fruit in your life?
- Who are the people who experience your love?

Now thinking about your parish and local community

- It is said that as Christians we will be known by our love – where is this especially evident in your parish community?
- Is the love of your community inward looking or does it bear fruit in the wider community?

- Our diocese will soon have far fewer active priests stretched between potentially three or four parishes. How will your community respond to this? What will become important for you?

Action

- As a group or individual, re-read 'Dare to Dream' and identify what your community can do to respond to the challenges and opportunities not just of our parishes but the wider world?

Finish with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for the grace to respond.

