

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**APRIL 24, 2016**

**"LOVE ME, JESUS"**

**THE REV. MARK P. BRUESEHOFF**  
**ST. JOHN, OCEAN CITY, NJ**

Our simple EASTER PRAYER for today: *LOVE ME, JESUS!* After all, if we are going to be *WALKING WITH JESUS* through this Easter season, we need to know that we are *CONNECTED* in the best way possible. And how does Jesus respond? He says, *"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."* When we call, He answers! When we come together, He is with us! Every day is a celebration of Jesus in our lives. Every Sunday is a celebration of Jesus resurrection. Every day is a day to say: *CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!*

A line from the *Prayer Of The Day* deserves to be heard again: *"Pour into our hearts Your most excellent gift of love."* And from the Book Of Revelation we hear: *"The one seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'"* If we had to come up with a definition of "ALL THINGS NEW" I guess the words of the Prayer Of The Day might be as close as we'll get in this lifetime. It is LOVE that leads to GOODNESS and PEACE! And that would be NICE and NEW for a change!

In the Book of Revelation we find additional material to work with. A loud voice announces from the throne, the covenant that God made with His people from the very beginning of time. *"I AM YOUR GOD! YOU ARE MY PEOPLE!"* But then He adds some important information. *"God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more."* Now we're talking! That's beginning to sound like something new! We might even call that "RADICALLY NEW!" But then "RADICAL" is one of those things that we need to be careful with as well. So think about it, LOVE TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW! IF ONLY, it didn't sound so far away. IF ONLY, it didn't sound so impossible.

How would we describe "ALL THINGS NEW?" A more beautiful day? Better weather? A great meal? A special event? Good News? Children? Grand Children? A day at the beach? In today's Gospel Jesus describes ALL THINGS NEW with just one word: LOVE! *"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."* Love is where life takes a new direction. Love is where life comes together. Love is God's work in our hands. And for all practical purposes that could be the end of this sermon. All things new ***IS*** the love of God in our hands.

But because we are who we are, and because we do what we do, we need to take this picture to another level. If "ALL THINGS NEW" is the LOVE OF GOD in our hands, then let's compare that to THE RULES OF THE ROAD. ALL THINGS NEW and TRAVELING THE ROAD OF LIFE. We all know what will happen in just a couple of weeks. Everyone will be talking about driving in Ocean City. That conversation will center on DRIVERS and PEDISTRIANS and BICYCLES and PARKING and RULES OF THE ROAD and, well, the bottom line: COMMON SENSE. Since we must share the road with others, let's start with a better attitude.

A STORY! A police officer pulls a driver over to the side of the road. "What's wrong officer?" the driver asks. "I did not go through that red light. And I certainly was not speeding." "No you were not!" Says the officer, "But I saw you flashing the one-fingered salute as you swerved around the lady driving in the left lane. And I noticed your angry face as you shouted at the driver of the truck who cut you off. And I watched as you pounded your steering wheel when the traffic came to a sudden stop." "Is that a crime, officer?" "No, but when I saw your bumper sticker, *'Jesus loves you and so do I,'* I thought, 'This car has got to be stolen.'"

Sharing the road with one another is no easier than sharing life with one another. Let's look at a few comparisons. Inside that car there is more than just machinery. Inside that car is a child of God. It's so simple: *"Love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples."*

Here are 5 very simple RULES FOR THE ROAD OF LIFE AND LOVE.

#### #1 CHECK YOUR BLIND SPOTS

Do we blindly make changes in our life, taking no notice of who might be hurt in the process? Check the blind spots; there are children of God who need to be loved at every turn.

#### #2 YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS

Do we live as if it never matters who gets in our way? Do our choices hurt those around us? Do we feel as if someone, or everyone, is trying to run us down? Look both ways when traveling down the road of life. The love of God needs to be extended in every direction.

#### #3 WATCH AND WAIT WHEN MAKING TURNS

Do we live as if we are the only one who matters, believing we will never get hurt? If we are at a crossroad of life, do we feel vulnerable, threatened, exposed? Look both ways when traveling down the road of life. There are people out there who are loving us from every direction.

#### #4 USE TURN SIGNALS

Do we make sudden changes in life without communicating? Do people around us make unsettling moves without telling us? We need to remember the importance of SPEAKING and HEARING the words "I LOVE YOU." The signals of love can never be given enough.

#### #5 COME TO A FULL STOP

Do we ignore the signs of the time? Do we look the other way when we see the hungry and homeless? Do we turn our heads from the signs of neglect and abuse? Once in a while we need to come to a full stop! Not just to take in the sights and the sounds, but to take in the lack of peace and justice, where love does not exist.

There's a bumper sticker that reads: *"In fact, I do own the road."* Some people do not see the need for the rules of the road. Some people do live as if they are the only ones that matter. Some people have no idea what it means to LOVE and TO BE LOVED. Jesus did not say, *"I own the road!"* Jesus said, *"Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them. And remember, I am with you always."*

Jesus was pretty clear about the rules of the road. He wants His disciples to know how to behave. It is important enough to Him that it was some of the last words He spoke: *"By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

If we are serious about bringing about something NEW, if we are serious about the love of God in our hands, then we should follow these 2 simple and timeless commands:

LOVE God above all things and LOVE our neighbor as we love ourselves.

The question is: Has this been a sermon about LOVING or DRIVING? And the answer is: YES!

Love is God's work in our hands. Love will make all things new. LOVE ME, JESUS!

And all God's children say,

Amen.

**Sola Deo Gloria!**