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24 Thursday

THURSDAY, Week 5 of EASTER

Acts 15: 7 - 21

Ps 95: 1-3, 10

John 15: 9 - 11

Yesterday's gospel gave us one of the most beautiful images that Jesus used to describe the unity and communion between Himself and His disciples/friends. Like a vine and its branches, He said. And His Father like the one who tends and cares for vine and branches. In the next verses (today's reading), He reveals how His love for His friends is just like the way His Father loves Him. It's an extension of His Father's love, drawing us all into the life of God Himself. Jesus urges His friends to "abide" ('live', 'remain') in His love. And the way to that is by keeping His commandments, just like His own love for the Father is expressed by His doing His Father's will. But the 'commandments' He tells us to keep are not just a list of rules or duties (as people sometimes complain), but to love Him and love each other. It's as simple as that. So simple that maybe we don't really believe it, and find it hard to accept the simplicity. We complicate things, asking questions about how to love, and who is my neighbour, and how often do I have to forgive etc. Jesus told His disciples about His love for them in order to share His love, and especially to share the joy He had in being loved by His Father and in loving us. 'Joy' is perhaps the most important word in all this, for love surely implies joy and rejoicing in the one we love and are loved by. There is no joy in merely keeping rules, but Jesus wanted our joy to be complete.

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