

## HOMILY EASTER 6B 13 MAY 2012 HT-W/XII-PC

Last weekend in Weston we observed the final Walk to Remember. Most know that this has been an annual event the past several years to commemorate soldiers from Missouri & Kansas who have been lost in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We remember these veterans with much solemnity, because, as the saying goes, all gave some, but they gave all. This slogan echoes the gospel passage today, where the Lord tells his disciples that there is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. So at the Walk to Remember, we remember the fallen, because they have demonstrated the greatest love for their country by laying down their lives in her service. We memorialize these departed soldiers in order to acknowledge their love and to express our gratitude for what they have done.

We remember the fallen because they loved us and we love them in return. But we grieve because our love can do no more. We celebrate the memory of the departed; we console the bereaved and bind up the wounded. But with that, our human efforts reach their limits. During this Paschal season, we Catholics also recall another fallen soldier, if you will, another one who has given his all in the service of his beloved. At Easter, our Church commemorates the Lord Jesus who laid down his life for his friends. Christ refers to this sort of love and this kind of death in today's gospel. Now the Lord's love is unique, not so much in its sacrificial dimension, for many good people have laid down their lives for their friends. Rather, his love is unique for its salvific power. For Christ lays down his life for his friends, but as he elsewhere says, he has power to take up his life again. We remember Christ not so much as the one who has fallen, but rather as the one who has risen. That is, he lays down his life on the cross, but he raises it up again at the resurrection. And so Christ's love is unique because it is not overcome by death. His love is the only love that is stronger than death, for it is the love of the undying, invincible God.

Easter is the season when we celebrate the love of Christ, that divine love which is stronger than the grave. During Easter, we rejoice in this love which has conquered death. And during this joyful time we give thanks that even now we take part in this love. By faith and sacrament, this love is made present in our hearts, sowing within us the seeds of immortality.

Finally, the love given us by Christ is meant to be shared with others. The Lord's commandment is to love one another as he has loved us. And so the Eucharist and other channels of love should motivate us to lay down our lives in service to others. In this way the love of Christ is made more actual in this world. In other words, we Christians are, by faithful service to God and neighbor, bringing heaven down to earth. Let's pray that this Holy Communion will inspire us to love one another as the Lord has taught us, so that everyone can share more fully in the peace and joy of the risen Christ.