

## A New Commandment

### John 13: 31-33A, 34-35

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”

**Background:** The *new commandment* is the theme of the Farewell Discourse that takes place at the Last Supper. As they are gathered together, Jesus declares that one of the disciples will betray him. The Passion begins when Judas leaves them to do Satan’s work. This opening introduces us to the Farewell Discourse of Jesus, which continues to John 17. On Good Shepherd Sunday, we said that the distinguishing mark of Messianic Good Shepherd is that he lays down his life. No one has greater love than to lay down his life. Here Jesus gives the disciples a new commandment, which is the distinguishing mark of true discipleship: love for one another. Jesus says, “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” On one level, this hardly seems like a new commandment. The Mosaic Law says, “You should love your neighbor as yourself.” So, why does Jesus express it as something “new?”

**A New Commandment:** Though enunciated in the Old Law, this precept of Jesus is “new” because Jesus sets the standard so high by telling his followers to love one another as he Himself loved them. This puts Jesus on par with Yahweh, which is the point of last week’s reading: “The Father and I are one.” In other words, the Father and the Son of Man are one. There is no separation. The Son of Man is glorified by the Passion and Death. The ultimate humility. And, God is glorified in him. This strange phrase only makes sense when you realize that the Father and Jesus are one and the same being in relationship to one another. They are not two beings with the same divine will. They are the same being with the same divine will. Jesus also has a human will because he is fully human. The glorification process begins when we conform our human will to the divine will. In true discipleship: love for one another.