

## Fifth Thursday of Easter ~ 5/10

"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. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:10-11)

Wild, sweet honeysuckle is the fragrance of joy for me. Catching sight of the powder blue wings of a bluebird in flight reminds me that joy is experienced in the present moment and we need to be aware if we are to recognize it. The sound of joy is the Hallelujah chorus sung on Easter morning, and joy feels like the tiny kitten wrapped up asleep in my hands. Joy is best understood in those experiential words that engage the senses and the soul. Yet our encounters with joy on earth are so fleeting and elusive that we have to pay attention or we may miss them. Like the child who blows bubbles and giggles at their shape and size and then is crestfallen when they pop and disappear, we too, know when the experience of joy seems to have hidden behind the clouds of life. We search for joy but may only find happiness instead. As good as happiness is, there is something heavenly about the mysterious experience of joy. When I think of the power of joy in my life I cannot imagine what it would be like to live in complete joy, but I am bold enough to want to experience it and I am delighted that Jesus promises this gift to all faithful lovers.

Keeping commandments does not seem to lend itself to poetry and descriptive language, does it? But Jesus' law revolves around love. There has been more poetry, more artwork, and more songs written about that particular aspect of Christian life than any other mystical quality. Everyone has something to say about love! We know what it feels like; we know what it looks like. We know how it feels if love is absent in our lives. We know that it is as simple as looking into the eyes of another and at the same time more complex than any mathematical theory. And loving truly and purely as Jesus' loved, gets very, very messy at times. We describe it as an ache sometimes and sometimes like a burst of sunlight. For every color of the rainbow there is a corresponding experience of love. We peruse love and run from it, and we face great danger for it. And when it is right, when it really fills our hearts to overflowing then perhaps we will begin to understand what the completeness of joy might be like.

Any fool can try to capture love but only fools for Christ's will abide in love. They will not hold on to it for dear life but will let go for dear life and for the sweet fragrance of honeysuckle joy.

### *Questions for Reflection*

- 1. What images describe joy for me?*
- 2. What comes first, love or joy? Why?*

*Prayer: Jesus, my love, joyfully I adore thee. Let me live on in Your love forever.*