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6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER - YR A --- Two points that stands out in John's gospel today is the deep love, as Christians we should have for God the Father and his son Jesus, and the effort going forward in keeping the commandments. If we love the Lord with our whole heart and soul, then we will make a profound effort to abide by God's laws. The two go together, love of God and obedience to the commandments. That's the test of true love for Jesus is to do his will, just as he has always done the will of his Father. So, our Love is measured by what we do than what we feel. We can't measure our love for God by our feelings. But Jesus does give us a way of letting us know whether we truly love God: Jesus said, "if you love me you will keep my commandments," And in return, the gospel points out, the unlimited and unconditional love of Jesus being poured out to mankind. How we can emulate that love in return to others, especially to our families and those who are close to us? One good way I can think of, is the love and care we pour out to our sons and daughters. We will sometimes go to any length or whatever expense to care for our offspring. Another way to show our love is to treat each person with respect and kindness, just the way we would like to be treated. When we love others with an agape love, we are willing to go out of our way for them, be concerned about them, spend some time with them. If they need our help we are willing to help. We even treat our pets this way, by the way we care for them. When I grew up in parochial school we were taught by the nuns to stay close to Jesus and to share his love with others by showing love and respect to everyone, and that would be sufficient to carry us through the day. The catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, "to love is to will the good of another." It goes on to say, "All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good." This advice from the Catechism that I received years

ago reminded me of an incident about a mother and her daughter who were traveling on a train to a distant city. As night drew near, they proceeded to the Pullman car to get ready for bed. The mother told her daughter she could sleep in the top bunk because she would be closest to Jesus and his loving care and he would watch and protect her on the journey. It became very quiet on the train except for the clip clap of the train rails. After a while the little girl became frightened of this new experience. She called out, mommy are you there? The mother answered, yes dear, go to sleep, Jesus is watching over you with his love. A couple more times she called out to her mommy, and a man in one of the adjoining bunks cried out, yes your mommy is still here and so am I, so go to sleep. It became quiet again, and the little girl was wondering, so she cried out to her mother; "mommy was that Jesus I heard?" Sometimes it nice to think of the world and dream as we did when we were young. Looking at the 15th verse of John today tells us that Jesus has promised to us if we love him ,and keep his commandments, than both the Father and the Son will come to us and live in us--- they will make their home with us. Those are the word of Christ, so we can be assured of his promise. But thinking of the number of people in the world who without a doubt are looking for true love and peace in their lives and some don't know where to turn to find it, Some may say they seek love in Jesus, but they are not loyal to his commandments. Jesus said, "whoever loves me will keep my word." We only need to look at what Jesus calls the greatest of all the commandments; " Love the Lord with all your whole heart, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." For some this is not as easy as it sounds, especially the second part about your neighbor. This part about loving your neighbor brings to mind an experience I had a while back. A man came to my house and was inquiring about the ad in the

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newspaper I placed about some tools I was selling. Before I could go into detail about what I was selling, he turned to me and said, see your neighbor there, that's my brother's house and he started telling me in some very strong language how he hated his brother. When he said this, I was taken back and I didn't know what to say. He started to explain into detail about his hatred, because his brother owned him a pretty good sum of money, and he hadn't spoken to him in forty years. The only thing I could think about at that time, was how many times family troubles and money problems rise up between people and what Jesus said about loving your neighbor in the most important sacrament of all. Recently I saw the message on a sign in front of Friend's church right across the street which said, "love your neighbor, no exceptions." If we are Christians who follow what Jesus commanded, then that is a strong message for us. If we can truly say from our heart we love everyone that comes into our life, and we have no one who we hold a grudge against, we are following the Lord's most important commandment pretty much to a tee.