

Ancient Commentary



(Fifth Sunday of Eastertide - Year C)

The Liturgy Letter

A Selection of Church Fathers on John 13:31-35

Augustine: Scripture often speaks of the things signifying as if they were the things signified. And so, the Lord makes use of the words “Now is the Son of man glorified” in order to indicate that, in the completed separation of that arch sinner from their company and in the remaining around him of his saints, we have the foreshadowing of his glorification when the wicked shall finally be separated and he shall dwell with his saints throughout eternity.

Augustine: But the glorifying of the Son of man is the glorifying of God in him, because he then adds, “And God is glorified in him,” which he proceeds to explain. If God is glorified in him—for he came not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him—God shall also glorify him in himself so that the human nature that was assumed by the eternal Word shall also be endowed with eternity.

Augustine: For this they hear and observe, “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another,” not as those who are corrupt love one another or as human beings who love one another only in a human way. Instead, they are to love one another as those who are God’s. All of them are to love as children of the Highest, who are siblings, therefore, of his only Son. They are to love with that mutual love by which he loved them when about to lead them on to the goal where all sufficiency should be theirs and where their every desire should be satisfied with good things.

Augustine: But do not think that that greater commandment that requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul and with all our mind is overlooked.... For, if we understand the two commandments correctly, each is implied in the other. One who loves God cannot despise his commandment that he should love his neighbor. And he who loves his neighbor in a heavenly spiritual way, what does he love in that neighbor but God? That is the love that our Lord distinguishes from all human love when he adds, “As I have loved you.” For what was it but God that he loved in us? Not because we had him, but in order that we might have him and that he may lead us on ... to where God is all in all... And so, let each of us so love the other in such a way that by this working of love we make each other the dwelling place of God.

Chrysostom: His glory will appear immediately while he is still on the cross. And indeed, the sun was darkened, the rocks split open, the veil of the temple was parted in two, many bodies of saints that slept arose, the tomb had its seals, the guards sat by, and while

a stone lay over the body, the body rose...This happened not through the agency of angels or archangels, not by any other power, but by himself.

Tertullian: It was the Son of God who was in the Son of man that was betrayed, as the Scripture says afterward, “Now the Son of man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.” Who is here meant by *God*? Certainly not the Father, but the Word of the Father who was in the Son of man—that is, in the flesh in which Jesus had been already glorified by the divine power and word. “And God,” he says, “will also glorify him in himself.” In other words, the Father shall glorify the Son because [the Father] has [the Son] within himself. And even though the Son is prostrated to the earth and put to death, [the Father] would soon glorify [the Son] by his resurrection and make him conqueror over death.

Chrysostom: “Where I go, you cannot come.” He shows that his death is a removal and a change for the better to a place that does not admit corruptible bodies. This he says both to excite their love toward him and to make it more fervent. You know that when we see any of our dearest friends departing from us, our affection is warmest, and the more so when we see them going to a place to which it is not even possible for us to go. He said these things then, terrifying the Jews but kindling longing in the disciples. This is such a place that not only they, but not even you, my most beloved, can come there. In this statement, he also makes clear his own dignity [since he can go there].

Origen: For in that “little while” in which they would not see him, they would seek Jesus, and for this reason they would weep and lament, although their grief would change to joy when the saying was fulfilled, “And again a little while and you will see me.” But to seek Jesus is to seek the Word, and wisdom, and justice, and truth and the power of God, all of which Christ is.

Chrysostom: Passing over the miracles that they were to perform, he makes love the distinguishing mark of his followers... Miracles do not attract unbelievers as much as the way you live your life. And nothing brings about a proper life as much as love.