ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT: LOVE ONE ANDTHER

JOHN 13:34

Pastoral Team Rev. Fr. Fredy Angel Pastor Deacon Ray Brown Deacon Steven Mancuso Sunday Masses English: 10:00AM Spanish: 11:30AM <u>Daily Mass</u> Monday-Wednesday: 9:30AM <u>Confessions</u> Sunday before Masses or by appointment

OFFICE HOURS Monday - Thursday 9:00AM - 3:00PM

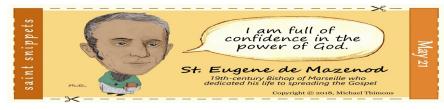
AN OCEAN NAMED RALPH

Human nature confronts newness in a variety of ways. While some bold individuals avoid routine and actively seek out unusual experiences, a great many of us, fearing the unfamiliar, resist change. Jesus knows perfectly our human nature, and understands the common reluctance to mess with routine. Nonetheless he proclaims, "Behold, I make all things new." During the Last Supper, he even goes so far as to pronounce a new commandment: "love one another." To the observant Jews who are Jesus' companions, receiving a new commandment might feel as shocking as hearing about a second moon orbiting the Earth, or a fifth ocean named Ralph.

NOT ONE IOTA

Mysteriously, the revolutionary newness of Jesus flows out of his profound obedience to fixed tradition, to God's law. In the fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus promises that he will destroy "not one iota," not the smallest part of the Hebrew law. Instead, Jesus says, he has come to "fulfill" the law. With his perfect obedience to God's plan, Jesus fulfills the letter of the law. At the same time, he demonstrates the spirit of the law by freely giving his life for us, out of loving concern for our eternal well-being. As St. Paul tells the Romans, "Love is the fulfillment of the law." God has given us rules to protect us and help us order our lives properly, but Jesus shows us that love makes the law all but unnecessary. A mother who loves her children has no need to remind herself of the commandment "Thou shall not kill." Because of her loving instinct to nurture her children, she not only follows the Fifth Commandment, but transcends it, fulfilling it by wanting to go further than it demands. She not only avoids murder, she protects and sustains life. Jesus' revolution of love challenges us to meet each moment, each person, as a new opportunity to sacrifice ourselves in love, doing more than the law requires.

Today's Readings: Acts 14:21–27; Ps 145:8–9, 10–11, 12–13; Rev 21:1–5a; Jn 13:31–33a,34–35 Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.



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TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

Frequent fliers today have many ways to accrue air miles, so one doesn't always have to endure long hours in cramped seats to earn free hours in cramped seats. In St. Paul's day, there were no such perks, nor would there have been any legal system for him to protest the shipwrecks he endured. He had other rewards in mind. The churches that he established in the catalogue of cities from today's first reading must have been very different from one another. Language, culture, customs, religious history, obstacles to community, social challenges, the places where they met, their clothing, their bread and wine, all distinct, particular to the area.

There were social customs as well: in a Christian household, the only place where a slave would be able to stand legally as an equal with the master would be at the table of the Lord, because at that table a new world of reconciliation was imaged. While Paul revered local customs, he was relentless about challenging the ways that people lived their Christian lives and how their worship reflected them. It is much the same today, as a global Catholic Church seeks to respect local customs and culture, allowing for differences in many things, yet always giving expression to the underlying presence of Christ, who binds us all together into his body.

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