

## They who have my commandments .... are those who love me

commandments except the one found in today's Gospel selection, the commandment of **LOVE**:

**'They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them.'**

The Lord's new commandment is love, and for many of us it is the hardest to keep. It is also what defines the life of a Christian and, says Christ, is what determines the love we have for him and the Father's love for us.

One of the pagan Roman Emperors is quoted as saying, perhaps in both disgust and admiration, "See how these Christians love one another!"

## Easter Season Blessing

May almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of his blessing. **AMEN.**

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make you holy and worthy to be united with Christ for ever. **AMEN.**

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true and lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring you to your eternal inheritance. **AMEN.**

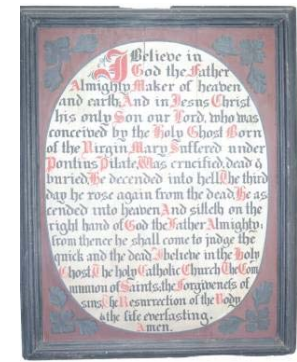
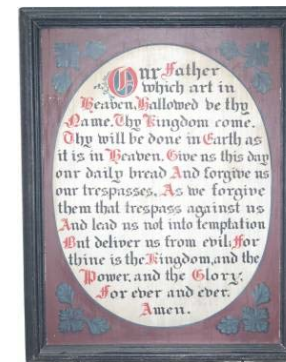
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **AMEN.**

**Please prepare Saint John 15:9-17 for next Sunday**

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ment or in an act of war, our culture and many other cultures permit the killings. Multiple wives (and at one time multiple husbands) are permitted in many traditions. Stealing, when it is salvage of other peoples property on the high seas, is permitted under some maritime laws.

## THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



**Church of Saints Mary and Saint Luke**  
**13th -18th centuries**  
**Shareshill Church, Staffordshire, England.**

The church has several "boards" on its walls; notably, the *Commandment boards*, which is the collective term for the posted copies of the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer and the 10 Commandments. Such boards were at one time mandated in English Churches. They supplied the needs of congregations when few people had a prayer book. (In earlier centuries prayer books were not normally supplied in the pews.) Although such liturgical apparatus had become a dead

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issue by the 20th century, these Commandment boards were designed by Gilbert Barrows Sully on April 6th, 1903. Judging from similarities in design it would be reasonable to suppose that he also designed the Creed and Lord's Prayer boards.



## Bruton Parish Church Williamsburg, Virginia

This is the third church on the site. This structure was built in 1715, replacing earlier churches. The first structure had been built in 1660. The three Commandment boards grace the reredos behind the altar.

## Today's Gospel St. John 14:15-21 [Year B, Easter 5]

✠ JESUS SAID, 'IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL KEEP MY commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see

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me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them.**' [© NRSV]

## The Basic Message of Jesus

In earlier years there was regular recitation of the 10 Commandments both in England and in what then was the colonies. In the area we now call the United States the English 1662 Prayer Book was in use until 1789, (although it was edited by some clergy during the Revolution and after it to adapt the mandated prayers for the crown into prayers for the provisional government of the colonies/states). In those days the 10 Commandments were directed to be recited at every Eucharist. This custom continued in the first American Prayer Book of 1789, but the mandated frequency of recitation was gradually reduced in the subsequent editions of 1892, 1928 and 1979. Today many parishes use them on the Sundays of Lent. They are part of the optional Penitential Order that begins the Liturgy. See pages 319 ff. and 351 ff.

Commandments *One* through *Four* are unique to the Judeo-Christian tradition but *Five* through *Ten* are universal. Why? Well, Theologians cite the concept called **Natural Law**; the recognition that wherever mankind is and in whatever culture humans are found, the basic laws are the same. Looking at the natural world around us we observe that there are moral laws of civility that are intrinsic to life: For example,

**Murder** is as invalid in Cambodia as it is in Caracas or Celebes or Chicago. **Adultery** or **Stealing** or **Lying** is detested everywhere in the world.<sup>1</sup> Jesus Christ did not teach any new

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<sup>1</sup> But we should recall that human cultures permit such acts under certain circumstances. Thus, Murder (the taking of human life) when done in self-defense, or in the defense of a loved one, or in the line of duty or when done as capital punish-