



# PLUNGED Into God's Love

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Year B

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 4-5

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

### Gathering

*(Three unlit candles and a clear glass bowl of water rest on a table covered with a white cloth. One candle will be lit at the beginning prayer. The second candle is lit when the gospel is first proclaimed. The third is lit when the gospel is read again later in the session.)*

Our Easter rejoicing continues. We celebrate the mystery of love as proclaimed in this week's gospel. We reflected last week on God's pruning action in our lives that we might bear greater fruit. How did your life bear fruit this past week?

### Prayer

Leader: Let us begin as we begin all good things with the sign of the cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*(One candle is lit. Members join in singing, "Love One Another". The song*

*may be found on the Internet. When the song is complete, the community pauses for a time of quiet attention to God's presence.)*

## HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

*(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)*

*When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. The leader then poses these questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After additional time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)*

### Reflection

Think about the last time you jumped in a pool before testing the water. Feel the shock, the rush, the bubbles all around you, the sense of pushing through the water with your hands and feet as you get back to the surface.

Through our baptism, we are *plunged* into the paschal mystery of Christ. That means being plunged into Christ's love. As the people of God plunge the catechumen or the infant into the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit does the plunging into Christ himself through the sacramental action of the church.

We, who are baptized, are already immersed into this deep, even bottomless, mystery of Christ's love. This love has great power, in fact, it *is* the greatest power: the Spirit of the living God bursting forth in Jesus. This special love, the love of the Crucified, is the love that does not seek its own advantage (1 Cor. 13:5). The love of Christ surrounds us; it is all encompassing; it embraces us all, even those who have not yet been to the pool.

The light of Christ spreads throughout the Easter season because two things work in harmony: Christ's love and our response. He is our teacher of perfect love, the model of love, love itself. The love that Christ gives us,

and the love that we give to one another in him, contains a power beyond our own capabilities. The power within that love is the Holy Spirit. In union with his Father, filled with the Spirit, Jesus could lay his life down for all of us. *Plunged* into the Spirit of Jesus, we are *empowered* to lay down our lives for others.

## Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ Reflect about the feeling of love's power in your life.
- ◆ What kind of sacrifices have you made to love someone?
- ◆ Think of a time when it has been very hard to love someone.
- ◆ When have you felt *plunged* into the love of God?
- ◆ Where have you seen the fruits of the love you have shown to others in your life?

## HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

*(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?" "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)*

## Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Go to a Mass or special service where baptism is being celebrated.
- ◆ Contact Birthright International ([www.birthright.org/htmlpages/getinvolved.htm](http://www.birthright.org/htmlpages/getinvolved.htm)) to see how you could help in their mission to care for women with an unexpected pregnancy. You can also reach Birthright by phone at 800-550-4900.
- ◆ Go swimming this week. Take the plunge.

## Prayer

*(After a brief pause, the gospel of the week is re-proclaimed by a member*

*of the community. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five, perhaps even seven, minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members without additional conversation simply to mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally.*

*Following this sharing, all pray the following.)*

All: Gracious God,  
We thank you for bringing us together this day.  
As we ponder the depths of your love,  
help us to enter in more deeply into the mystery of your  
Son’s death and resurrection,  
that we may love one another as you love us.  
With the Holy Spirit’s power,  
we ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

