

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

4/28/2013 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



1451 Strachan Road SE,
Medicine Hat, AB T1B-4V3

Phone: 403-527-6933 Fax: 403-526-2482

email: contact@holyfamilymh.ca

website: www.holyfamilymh.ca

Office Hrs: Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 4:30pm

Closed on Statutory Holidays

Calgary Diocesan: www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca

ANNUAL FINANCE MEETING

MAY 8, 2013 AT 7 PM

We are grateful to have your financial and spiritual support. The Annual Finance Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 8 at 7 pm in the HALL. All parishioners are welcome! We invite your questions and concerns at this meeting.

Pastor - Rev. Philip Le - frphilip@holyfamilymh.ca

Associate Pastor - Rev. Matthew Emmelkamp

fmatthew@holyfamilymh.ca

Deacons:

Rev. Mr. Robert Risling & Rev. Mr. Bill Schnitzler

Pastoral Care of the Sick - pager: 403-458-1445

Youth NET Ministry

medhatcatholicyouth@gmail.com

Medicine Hat Catholic Youth on Facebook

Mass Times

Saturday - 5:00 pm

Sunday - 8:30am, 10:30am & 6:00pm

Reconciliation: Saturday 3:00-4:00pm

Gospel Acclamation (John 13.34)

Alleluia. Alleluia.

I give you a new commandment:

love one another

just as I have loved you.

Alleluia.



Welcome To Holy Family Parish

You have entered this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. Being a human, you enter this church as a creature of God; as a baptized person, you enter it as a son or daughter of the Father in Christ. This house of God is therefore your family home. Come in then with humility of mind, joy of heart and thanks on your lips. Acknowledge the Lord's presence in the Tabernacle and adore Him. Come in and pause in prayer in the midst of your busy life and its many worries. Be grateful for those who, for the Glory of God, built this place of worship with faith and sacrifice, and sanctified it with their songs and prayers.

Anyone who wishes to practice the Catholic faith by attending this church may consider this parish as his/her own parish. You simply need to register. Please indicate whether you are a new parishioner or have moved and are providing a new address. Thank you.

Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____



FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 27/28, 2013

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading (Acts 14: 21-27).

Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps encouraging the little communities of Christians which they had founded.

Second Reading (Rev. 21: 1-5).

This is taken from the final part of Apocalypse and opens with the vision of a new world and the manifestation of a new Jerusalem. This new order of things has been inaugurated by Christ.

The Gospel (John 13: 31-35).

During his Last Supper with his disciples Christ left them a new commandment: to love one another as he had loved them.

OPERATING FINANCES

(April 18th to April 25th, 2013)

-Cost to operate our Parish (Budget 2013)	\$15,600
-General Collections:	\$12,361
-Debt reduction (Mortgage)	<u>\$2,557</u>
-Total Collections:	\$14,918
-Exceed or (Shortfall)	(\$682)

Special Collections

***Together in Action/Peace&Developemnet:	\$377
***World Missions:.....	\$22
***Holy Land:.....	\$5
***Seminary Fund:.....	\$50
***St Vincent de Paul:.....	\$794
***CARO:.....	\$15
***NET Ministries:.....	\$80

PARISH UPCOMING EVENTS & INTENTIONS

DAILY MASS MAY BE CANCELLED

IN THE CASE OF A FUNERAL

SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish Deceased ☩)
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + Children's Liturgy at 10:30 Mass
- + Confirmation Class: 5:00pm at HFP in the Faith Room
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Holy Family Parish Deceased ☩)
- + UNCHAINED after 6:00pm Mass in the Faith Room

MONDAY, APRIL 29TH

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Jacob & Katherina Schmaltz ☩)
- + Last Circle of Friends Prayer Group: 7:00pm at St. Joseph's Home

TUESDAY, APRIL 30TH

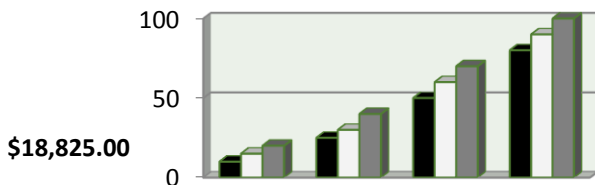
- + SVDP Meeting: 4:00pm at St. Patrick's Parish
- + Centennial Mass Choir Practice: 4:15pm – 5:15pm
- + **Mass: 7:00pm** (Intention: Edward Hertz ☩)
- + **Adoration after Mass until 8:30**
- + Light Weigh: 7:00pm in the Hope Room

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1ST

- + Women's Praise & Worship: 6:45am in the Faith Room
- + **Mass: 8:00am** at St. Thomas School
- + **Mass: 8:15am** at St. Mary's School
- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Anthony Herter ☩)
- + Breakfast after Mass in Hall
- + Bible Study: 9:30am in the Faith Room
- + **Mass: 11:00am** at Monsignor McCoy High School
- + Ministry to the aged: 1:30pm - Sunnyside
- + **Mass: 3:30pm** – Good Samaritans
- + Choir Practice (6pm Mass): 6:00pm
- + RCIA 7:00pm in the Faith Room

Together
in Action

2013 Goal - \$55,151.48
YTD Donations: \$18,825.00



2013 TOGETHER IN ACTION –TIA-

"...You will be my witnesses... Acts: 1: 8).

Please contribute to the Together in Action.

Thank you for your Generosity and Support!

THURSDAY, MAY 2ND

ST. ATHANASIUS

- + Men's Prayer Group: 6:30am in the Charity Room
- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Agnes Heringer)
- + 3 Baptism, 1 Profession of Faith & 1 Marriage Blessing.
- + Rosary Guild: 1:30pm in the Charity Room
- + Breakfast after Mass in Hall
- + **Holy Hour: 6:00pm**
- + Choir Practice for 8:30 & 10:30 Masses at 7:00pm

FRIDAY, MAY 3RD

ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES, APOSTLES

- + **Mass: 9:00am** (Intention: Phillis Zacher)
- + **Adoration after Mass until noon.**
- + Breakfast after Mass in Hall – FIRST FRIDAY
- + Ministry to the aged: 10:00am – Meadowlands
- + Ministry to the aged: 10:00am – The Wellington
- + EQUIP: 7:00pm at St. Patrick's Parish

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH

- + Catholic Girls League: 10:30am – 1:30pm in the Kitchen/Hall
- + Hall Rental: 2:00 – 4:00pm
- + EQUIP Retreat: 3pm to 3pm Sunday at St. Mary's School
- + **Reconciliation 3:00 – 4:00pm**
- + Confirmation Class: 4:00pm at St. Patrick's Parish
- + Choir Practice for 5:00 Mass at 4:00pm
- + 1st Communion\Reconciliation Class: 4:45pm at St. Patrick's Parish

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- + **Mass: 5:00pm** (Intention: Amanda Wallace & Patrick Wallace)
- + Library open before 5:00pm Mass

SUNDAY, MAY 5TH

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- + PARISH BREAKFAST AFTER AM MASSES
 - + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Jack & Joyce Risling)
 - + Library: open after morning Masses
 - + 1st Communion\Reconciliation Class: 10:15am in the Faith Room
 - + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
 - + 1 Baptism at 10:30 Mass
 - + Children's Liturgy at 10:30 Mass
 - + Confirmation Class: 5:00pm at HFP in the Faith Room
 - + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Tina Hertz ☩)
 - + UNCHAINED after 6:00pm Mass in the HFP Hall
-

EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION/ADORATION

Spare an hour with the Lord...

Tuesday: After 7:00pm Mass until 8:30pm

Thursday: Holy Hour from 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Friday: After 9:00am Mass until Noon



NET TEAM NEWS

Equip Gr. 6-9 - Do you believe in Miracles? Be blown away by some awesome Miracles related to our Catholic Faith! Join us on Friday May 3rd at St. Patrick's Parish and Friday May 10th at Holy Family Parish, 7pm-9pm!

Equip Overnight Retreat: Open Wide the Doors to Christ Join us for an epic overnight retreat of awesomeness for anyone in grades 6-9! Come out to St. Mary's Junior High School on Saturday May 4th starting 3:00 pm, overnight until Sunday May 5th at 3:00 pm! There will be games, new friends, talks, prayer, skits, music, food and fun! Bring your sleeping bag, pillow, pj's, change of clothes, and toiletries. Don't miss out! Pick up a sign up form at Holy Family Parish!

Unchained Gr. 10-12- Have you ever wondered what your purpose is or what you should do with your life? Come find out how God can help you find out what you were created for! Join us for a night on **Vocations**, Sunday May 5th from 7pm-9pm at Holy Family Parish!

Have you ever thought that Faith and Science could never go together? Join us as we bust common myths about faith and science and find out what the Catholic Church says about how they work together! Sunday May 12th from 7pm-9pm at Holy Family Parish!

Unchained Overnight Retreat: Living for Greatness. What are you living for? Come discover what you're living for at the UNCHAINED Overnight Retreat, for anyone in grades 10-12! Join us at Monsignor McCoy High School on Saturday April 27th starting 7:00 pm overnight until Sunday April 28th at 6:00 pm! There will be music, new friends, talks, prayer, skits, games, food and fun! Bring your sleeping bag, pillow, pj's, change of clothes, and toiletries. Feel free to bring a friend! Don't miss out on this awesome event! Pick up a sign up form at Holy Family Parish!

Volunteers - Interested in volunteering in Youth Ministry? The NET Team invites you to share your love for God and your gifts with the youth of our parish! There are a variety of different things that we would love your help with, including giving a talk, leading a game, or leading small group for our Middle School/High School youth groups or Family Fundays, or helping with set up or background work. If you feel like you could help in other ways, you also have the options to donate snacks for our events, offer your home to host members of the team, or pray for the ministry. We will be starting our Leadership Training Series very soon, so please contact us at medhatcatholicityouth@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering!

CAMP McCOY

Camp McCoy is looking for photos of Camp McCoy for a power point presentation, the older the better. We need photos of the old hall inside and out, Camp activities and/or photos of the grounds before cabins and extra buildings. All photos will be returned to their owners once scanned. Not all photos will be used for the power point. You could also email me photos. Please contact: Michael Anctil 403-529-7815 (cell) manctil@memlane.com



C.W.L.

The CWL Our Lady of Good Counsel Mass will be on April 28th at 8:30am.

BIBLE SUMMER CAMP ST. PATRICK & THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have an awesome camp for both Holy Family and St. Patrick's Church coming up this summer.

St. Patrick's Monday July 8th – Friday 12th 9am – 12 Noon

Holy Family Monday July 15th – Friday 19th 9am – 12 Noon

This program is written by Catholics for Catholics and has been granted the Nilhil Obstat through the Catholic Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana.

Each level is geared toward specific age groups. Planning is a breeze because the curriculum is all ready to go. Everything from lessons, activities, music, snacks, crafts and pirate skits are just waiting to be dived in to. All we need is YOUR HELP! We need volunteers to help make these 2 wacky weeks crazy fun, entertaining and most of all God inspiring. PLEASE call Sally at Holy Family 403-527-6933 or at St. Patrick's 403-526-2265. It's great to be Catholic! Let's give our kids this opportunity to see just how awesome it is!

FEEDING THE HOMELESS SCHEDULES

The new schedule for the "Feeding the Homeless" program starting May 23rd can be picked up in the folders beside the vestment room.

SACRAMENTAL PREP

Confirmation

There will be a retreat for Confirmation Candidates at Holy Family Parish Saturday May 11th from 9am to 2pm. Lunch will be provided. Also parents please drop in during Confirmation class and sign your child up for their Study Appointments.

If you haven't handed in your Bishops letter, Confirmation Name sheet and Sponsor sheet at the end of April it is very important to do so as soon as possible.

Candidates who are planning to go to the Equip Sleepover Retreat which starts at 3:00pm Saturday May 4th and goes till 3:00pm Sunday will still have to attend Confirmation class either Saturday or

Sunday. Classes will be shortened to a ½ hour to help accommodate. St. Patrick's 4:00pm – 4:30pm & Holy Family 5:00pm – 5:30pm

1st Communion/Reconciliation

Please be sure to sign up indicating your choice of dates for Study Appointments, Reconciliation Services and Communion Masses. There are only 3 classes left. May 4/5 & May 11/12 & May 25/26

Candidates Receiving Reconciliation Only

Please drop by Holy Family or St. Patrick's Church to sign up on the dates provided in regards to the Reconciliation Services. If you have any questions please feel free to call Sally at 403-527-6933

JUNIOR CHOIR WANTS YOU ATTENTION ADULT CHOIRS TOO

Sunday May 26th Holy Family Church will be celebrating the Diocese of Calgary's 100 year presence in Southern Alberta!! There will be a mass at 3:00pm with Bishop Henry that will be led by our junior choir and anyone else who would like to join us! We would love to have you come both young and old . . .er. (ahem =/)

Practices will be every Tuesday at 4:15 to 5:15 starting April 30th. If you work and can't get there until a little later . . . no worries I can stay and go over music with you.

***This mass will take the place of the regularly scheduled 6:00pm Sunday evening mass this time only. Call Sally for more info 403-527-6933.

MOUNT ST. FRANCIS RETREAT

Many of our retreatants have requested an early reminder of the ladies mid-week retreat at Mount Saint Francis so they are able to do some planning prior to summer.

Mount Saint Francis Ladies Mid-week retreat, Cochrane, AB Tuesday September 10th - Thursday September 12th /2013 Contact: Kathy Oczkowski 403-246-0660 or Roni Cooper 403-271-8812

YOU ARE INVITED TO A BARBECUE!

In appreciation for all that St. Patrick's and Holy Family Parishioners have done to help the NET team, we would like to invite you to a Barbecue: **Monday, May 6th at 6:00 pm in St. Patrick's Church Hall.** If you have volunteered, in any way, by becoming a host family, donated food to help host families, brought snacks for Youth Nights, all who donated cash, and for everyone who prayed for the success of the NET and our youth in the parishes, please join us, and mark your calendars!

Since this is a catered event, we need to know the number of people, as well as **the ages of any children** attending, please call/email, if you can attend, no later than May 1st, to either: **Dianna 403-527-4338** (hdfrey@shaw.ca) or **Trish 403-529-6824** (btcarr@shaw.ca)

FEEDING THE HOMELESS SCHEDULES

The new schedule for the "Feeding the Homeless" program starting May 23rd can be picked up in the folders beside the vestment room.

ONE ROCK & WORLD YOUTH DAY

One Rock & World Youth Day at Home 2013

Are you going? One Rock has a new home at Mt. St. Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane this year on July 26 th – 28th. It is a 3-day event that will give you the spiritual energy to meet new challenges. You can hear Dan DeMatte or Audrey Assad, attend Mass with the six bishops from Alberta and the North West Territories and see the live feed of Pope Francis at World Youth Day in Rio. We will be there. Will you? Go to Onerock.ca for information and early ticket prices.

In the community of Medicine Hat, we will organize a group led by Fr. Matthew to go to Cochrane for this event. Mark your calendar and watch for more information in the upcoming bulletins.

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

Information Day on the Diocesan Priesthood

This day is for men between the ages of 17 and 35 years. It includes talks given by Bishop Henry and priests of the diocese, as well as the celebration of the Eucharist.

Location: Sacred Heart Church, 1307 – 14th St. S.W., Calgary, (new Lower Hall/14th Street entrance)

Date: Saturday, May 11th, 9:00 a.m. -- 2:00 p.m.

For further information and to register contact: Office of Vocations

Phone: 403-245-2753; **E-mail:** mjgaffney@telusplanet.net.

MEDICINE HAT PRO LIFE

Medicine Hat Pro-Life Meeting... Monday May 6th at 7:30pm in St. Patrick's Parish. Everyone is welcome. For more information phone George Ibach at 403-527-7434.

ANNUAL FINANCE MEETING MAY 8, AT 7 PM

We are grateful to have your financial and spiritual support. The Annual Finance Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 8 at 7 pm in the HALL. All parishioners are welcome! We invite your questions and concerns at this meeting. We would like your input as to where we go from here in regards to future projects of our church. Please join us!

1. 2012 finance review
2. Building a baptismal font?
3. Expanding the hall?
4. Building a columbarium?
5. Building a grotto?

YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR

St. Patrick and Holy Family Parishes are in need of a highly-motivated and confident coordinator of Youth Ministry.

The successful candidate for this position will have:

- Personal Catholic Faith conviction and active participation in a Catholic Parish
- Good organizational skills
- Self-motivation to work flexible hours with a minimum supervision
- Good communication skills
- Commitment to the teaching and practices of the Catholic Faith
- Education and/or experience in youth ministry

Specific tasks for this position:

- Continue to develop youth ministry at St. Patrick and Holy Family
- Encourage and assist those engaged in youth ministry in the parishes and schools
- Work with three level of youth: elementary, junior and high schools

So far we have 5 applications

For further information, contact Holy Family Parish, Medicine Hat, Alberta 403-527-6933

Candidates are invited to submit a resume before May 31, 2013 by email: frphilip@holymfamilymh.ca

LOST & FOUND

If you have found a pair of glasses in the church please bring them to the office. We have 2 parishioners that have recently lost their glasses at the church. One is a red pair and the other is metal pair with white arms.

Also please check the lost and found box near the office, as we will be clearing out all the winter items soon. We also have a set of Dodge keys and a house key here at the office that have been here since Easter.

CATHOLIC CRUISE TO ALASKA

Come and sail away on a 7-night Catholic Alaska Cruise with Fr. John Palatucci, August 20-27, 2013 on the Carnival Miracle out of Seattle, Washington. Ports of Call, Cruise Tracy Arm Fjord, Skagway (Alaska), Juneau (Alaska), Ketchikan (Alaska) & Victoria (BC). Prices begin at \$2095 for two passengers which includes all port fees and taxes. Daily Mass and Rosary offered. Deposits of only \$450.00 per person will reserve your cabin. Space is limited. Contact Doug or Eileen at (860)399-1785 or dpayttc@aol.com.

MAY: THE MONTH OF MARY

PRAYER OF ROSARY

Mary, the Mother of Jesus played an important role in the New Testament that is why the early Church honoured her as the best symbol of the Church and its faith. Since then, two different views developed. Neither one was totally appropriate. Some Roman Catholics tended to exalt her so much that she rivalled Jesus Christ in the drama of salvation, or even controlled his mercy; most Protestants reacted by denying her any place in their meditation and devotion. But now, thanks to Vatican II Council and to scholars, a better view is forming in which all Christians can appreciate the significance of this special woman.

There are four major Marian dogmas: Mother of God, Perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception and Assumption. These dogmas pose the hardest question for ecumenism today. In fact, the first two do not—Mother of God is an acceptable title among Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, guarding the true humanity of Jesus from being swallowed up in divinity, while the “Perpetual Virginity” was the accepted view among the Reformers—Luther, Calvin and Zwingli for instance. The other two dogmas, however, spell trouble.

Remember to pray the Rosary every day to invoke the mother’s love of Mary. The words of Jesus on the cross remind us that we have her as our mother: “*Woman, here is your son,*” and “*Here is your mother*” (Jn. 19: 26-27).

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

The title “Mother of God” is not found, as such, in the New Testament. Since Mary was always present as the “Mother of Jesus,” and the Church knew in Jesus God became man, the title “Mother of God” helps us even more entering the mystery of Jesus.

In attributing to Mary the title of Theotokos, that is Mother of God, the third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (in 431) made a fundamental and decisive declaration about the mystery of Mary. It was a firm decree which was never contested in later times. We must note that the vision of the Council was, first of all, very strongly Christological. While Nestorius and his followers refused to recognize that the human and divine were united in Jesus, the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus wanted to affirm such a unity.

“First of all, the holy Virgin gave birth to someone who was not an ordinary person. Furthermore, the Word descended on him. We say that by coming from the maternal womb united with the flesh, he accepted a human birth. Because he assumed this human birth as his own, (the Holy Fathers) did not hesitate to call the holy Virgin, “Mother of God” (2nd letter of St. Cyril to Nestorius, 5th century)

(See Jean-Pierre Prevost, *Mother of Jesus*)

SATURDAY 5:00PM MASS

If you attend 5:00pm Mass on Saturdays and you live in SE or SW Hill area there is a parishioner that will not be able to drive for a while due to a recent injury and she is asking if somebody would like to give her

a ride to and from Mass. She lives on the 400 block of 12th Street SE. If you would like to help her out please call the parish office at 403-527-6933.

ROSARY BOUQUET FOR THE CALGARY DIOCESE

The diocese of Calgary is grateful for the blessings received in the past hundred years. We continue to seek God's blessings upon all individuals, families, religious and the clergy of the entire Diocese.

We pray the Rosary interceding through our dear Blessed Mother. The Legion of Mary is collecting your Rosary Pledges on their website until the end of the Centennial Year.

Please visit www.LoMCalgaryDiocese.ca (Rosary section) for details or contact Joan 403-208-6887 / Sally 403-547-1770 or e-mail us at: info@LoMCalgaryDiocese.ca

Kindly pass on this message to your friends requesting them to pray for our diocese.



CHURCH VOCATION CONTEST WINNERS 2013

Knights of Columbus Joe McKenna Council #9502 and Holy Family Parish wish to congratulate the following students who submitted outstanding poster entries in the contest. They will be recognized at the 10:30 Mass today.

Grade 2 – Jorja Risk – St. Patrick’s School

Grade 3 – Ava Jefferies-Aldridge – Mother Teresa School

Grade 4 – Andrea Perez -St. Patrick’s School

Grade 6 – Ivan Ponrajah – Notre Dame Academy

Grade 7 - Courtney Norman – Notre Dame Academy

Grade 8 – Michaela Lundquist – St. Mary’s School

The winning entries are posted on the K of C bulletin board by the hall. Please take a few minutes to appreciate their work.

CHRISTIAN CONCERT

Emma Fradd & Friends will be at Holy Family Parish Hall on June 19th at 7:00pm. The admission is free and donations will be accepted. Come out and support this up and coming star. Emma was born in Port Pirie, South Australia, now 21 years old and living in Ottawa, Canada! She loves drinking tea and writing music and playing it for nice people like you. <http://emmafradd.bandcamp.com/>





Bringing Home the Word †

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER April 28, 2013

When Love Is Difficult, We Still Have to Try

By Diane M. Houdek

G. K. Chesterton said, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It's been found difficult and not tried." The great Hindu pacifist Mohandas K. Gandhi said, "I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. They are so unlike your Christ." These quotes challenge us to examine our behavior.

The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday of Easter is almost daunting in its simplicity. The night before he died, according to John, Jesus gave his disciples a single command: "Love one another." This sums up everything Jesus said and did while he walked this earth. How could it be otherwise when, as John tells us again and again, "God is love"? Love led Jesus to the cross,

but it also led him through the cross to resurrection.

Jesus told his followers, "Love one another." This may have seemed easier in the context of the Last Supper. But surely his followers remembered that he had also said, "Love your enemies."

The Acts of the Apostles, in fleshing out this command, tells us that the ideal for the early community was that the pagans would know Christians by their love for one another. This love would be something so extraordinary that it would set them apart. Yet again and again, even in that very same Acts of the Apostles, we find accounts of tension and disagreements. Even for the early Church, there was a gap between the ideal and the real.

Twenty-one centuries later, lines are drawn between liberals and conservatives. Fundamentalists of all faiths grow more intolerant and filled with hatred. Sometimes it seems as though we are farther from this ideal than ever.

It's easy to get caught up in debates about who's right and who's wrong. It seems to be human nature to take sides, to demonize those with whom we disagree. This happens in politics, in religious institutions, in schools, and in workplaces.

Remembering Jesus's command to love one another as he has loved us reminds us to see people first as children of God, as human beings like our-

selves—flawed, yes; frustrating at times, yes; but first and foremost worthy of respect and love. When we forget this, all the good that we might accomplish is lost behind a wall of intolerance and self-defense.

We might do well to focus on the small ways in our own lives that we can begin to live Jesus's command more deeply. There's nothing wrong with beginning by loving the people we find easy to love, those people who bring deep joy to our lives. But we need to constantly challenge ourselves to move out of those comfort zones.

Jesus commanded his followers to love one another. He didn't just suggest that it might be a nice thing to do if they had extra time, energy, and resources. It was the one thing he commanded them to remember. It's not surprising that we take refuge in a long list of rules and regulations in an attempt to avoid this one command. Sometimes the greatest excuse we fall back on when love seems difficult, even impossible, is that there's no point in trying because failure is inevitable. But we need to remember that even if we don't love perfectly, the attempt has to count for something in God's eyes.

The command still stands in all its stark simplicity: "Love one another as I have loved you." What one thing can we do today to show that we're serious about following Jesus? †

REFLECTION QUESTIONS QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Who do you find most difficult to love?
- What behavior among Christian groups or individuals seems most opposed to Jesus's command to love one another?
- What attitudes do you hold toward others that keep you from following Jesus's command?