

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES OF



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Dear Parishioners,

I admit my taste in music is very pedestrian; I like a good pop song as much as anyone else. But I often wonder why songs are so often about love and fidelity. Is it because love and fidelity are so difficult for us? Sure, we can get carried away for awhile, but long-lasting friendship and love are not so easy, and isn't it really in the endurance of love that fidelity becomes so important, that love becomes a steadfast love? Isn't it in persevering with our friend through all their ups and downs that our love is shown to be a type of faith? When we say to our friend in a moment when they are struggling, "I believe in you" or "I have faith in you," these are not idle words. Neither are "I believe you." When we love someone, we want to "keep faith" with them. That's the human experience that pop songs draw upon so heavily; and it is one of the human experiences which gives meaning and value to our life. In the end, we know our life is valuable because our life is cherished by another, and that someone "has believed in me." My life never begins and ends only with me.

The one who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me, Jesus told his disciples in this Sunday's Gospel. Faith is shown in love's endurance. Love always comes first, and faith draws upon the love that is already there.

When I tell my friend, "I believe in you," this is a consequence of unconditional love. When we love someone, we place our trust in them. And because we have trusted them, we listen to them and give value to what they say.

Josef Pieper, a famous German philosopher of the late twentieth century said, about faith: "[T]he crucial factor of belief never consists in the matters that are believed. The believer...is not primarily concerned with a given *matter* but with a given *someone*."

In a way, our love makes the burden of trusting someone a burden that is light (Mt 11:30). The yoke that binds me to my friend through thick and thin becomes easy when it is a yoke of friendship.

The commandments of God are not easy; they challenge us every day. Trying to live and keep them faithfully is a daily task. But we strive, not because we must but because it is the demand of faithful love. God has never, even for one moment, given up on us; his creative love sustains us even when, in dark moments, we do not discern it. It is his love which has come first, and asks us to love in return.

Fr. Philip Creurer
Pastor