



**Benilde-St. Margaret's**

A Catholic, college preparatory school, grades 7-12

## Scripture Theme 2013-2014

### *The New Commandment*

*When he had left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. [If God is glorified in him,] God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you."*

*I give you a new commandment: **love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.***

(John 13: 31-38)

### **Brief Background:**

The passage comes about two-thirds into John's gospel and is the beginning of the farewell discourse when Jesus alludes to the fact that he will pass from this world. It is at this point in John's gospel, the first time, when readers really learn and understand that Jesus' life and death are an expression of his love for his disciples. Jesus labels this as a new commandment but the words are not new to the Jews because they are so similar to the words in Mosaic Law. The difference Jesus is emphasizing, which is what makes it "new," is that he sets the standard so very high. He tells his followers to love one another as he himself loved them. We are asked to love like Jesus loved.

The Greek word for love in the New Testament is agape. Agape means: To serve freely without reward, to suffer injury without seeking revenge. This agape (love) that Jesus calls his disciples to may be a bit more challenging. Could this kind of love transform a community?

One community, the Sisters of St. Joseph, worked very hard to understand and practice this commandment. If you visit the chapel and look closely at the icon BSM has of Mother Saint Jeanne Fontbonne, one of the founders of the Sisters of St. Joseph, you will notice the icon displays the key words of this year's scripture theme. But, there is an addition to it. It says, "Let us love one another. That is what God wants." These words are significant and were chosen to be part of the icon because they are the words Mother Saint Fontbonne so often spoke to the novices and sisters of the community. She was known among the people of the towns the sisters served to be a wise, kind, compassionate woman – a woman who loved as Jesus loved. The CSJs practice loving as Jesus loved, and they continue to be a lasting community in our world.

**This is our hope for BSM in 2013-2014: *May we be people who are wise, kind and compassionate – people who love one another. Then, all will know we are disciples.***

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### **Questions for Reflection:**

- How do you show the love of Jesus to those with whom you work? Teach? Coach? Parent?
- How can you be an agent of love that transforms BSM this year?
- How can you help others live out this new commandment?
- Do you find it easy to serve freely without reward? With whom do you find it most challenging?
- Are there times within the school year when you want to seek revenge after injury?  
How can you convert these feelings to agape?
- How can your attitudes, behavior and actions show the love that Jesus showed?

**Suggestions for use:**

- Post in your room or office to serve as a reminder of our theme and the greater mission of our school.
- Read before meetings (individually or as a group) as a reminder of the greater mission of our school, not our personal agenda. Taking a moment to reflect how you can love those in this meeting.
- Use as a prayer, individually or with a group before a gathering.