

**“We’re just friends.” That is the famous response that Lindsey gave Carlos at Union Station several years ago after he said, “If you ever want to get serious, let me know.” She let him know, all right. Carlos persisted, and finally on the night between their birthdays, to no one’s surprise, he got down on one knee to deliver the same message. This time, she said “Yes.” Carlos, in so many words, said, “Bingo!”**

**At the Last Supper, the disciples did not play musical bingo, but Jesus did use the word “friends” to tell them what he thought of them. On that night, the word “friends” did not flatten the relationship, but raised up the disciples to a level they had never thought possible. Disciples of rabbis were like slaves, and apparently, in private conversation, that’s what Jesus called them. But at the Last Supper he told them, “I no longer call you slaves... I have called you friends.” That is what follows the few verses from John’s gospel we just heard. There, on the night before he died, Jesus told the disciples, “I love you.” In the same breath, he gave them a command: “Love one another as I love you.” Then, just before he told them they’re his friends, he said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Then, when they found out they were his friends, they realized what he meant.**

**Lindsey was right. There are levels of friendship. You can be “just friends.” Or, as Carlos knew, friendship can develop. You can become the kind of friend someone would give their life for. That’s the friendship Jesus has for us and the friendship he asks us to have—something we see astonishingly again and again in couples and families.**

**Our first reading from the Song of Songs describes a committed love. A couple, totally enamored with each other, find words to express their joy and their promise. The guy says, “Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away.” When you’ve got love, it overpowers any other force—even death.**

**When Paul tells the Ephesians about the love of Christ for the Church, he expresses it in terms of sacrifice: “Live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us.” Christ loved the Church so much he was willing to suffer for us. Christ loved the Church so much he died for us. We have the promise of eternal life because of him.**

**Paul expects that love from husbands and wives. It does not seek one’s own pleasure, but the pleasure of the other. Love is not just something you receive; it’s something you give.**

**Lindsey and Carlos, you have discovered the many levels of friendship and love. You have come here today to bring your love to its next level, a public commitment that you make before God and before us. Like the commitment of Christ for us, yours is not burdensome; it is light because your love is strong.**

**Throughout your lives, Christ your friend has said to you, “If you ever want to get serious, let me know.” Today, you let him know. You open your hearts to love for each other and love of him, who will dwell in your home. May he increase the love you feel today every day.**