

The First Love



The Lord is Risen, Hallelujah!

This is the joy of our faith. The transcendent meaning of this supernatural event: the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, called "Paschal Mystery", fills us with hope and joy because we understand that only in Christ, we have true life. It teaches us that we have been saved and can live forever.

This claim, to die in order to live, is one of the great mysteries in our life of Faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ freely chose to die on the cross, for all of us, and He did so out of **love**. To contemplate the cross is really to understand how love is expressed. It is a scene of deep love, and love affects us all.

All human beings crave for love from the beginning of their existence. God is the author of Love. Our Christianity radically teaches us that "God is love;" it is His own nature, and in that way, love is innate in us because we are created in His image. This means that He, being the origin of everything, **loved us first** by giving us life, and calls us to respond to His love.

The modern world defines love as a euphoric feeling at different levels. Human feelings change all the time; we can feel an intense love for a friend, but if we have an argument or altercation, it can easily move on to a feeling of resentment or hatred, so that after conciliation it becomes love again.

The society also sells us the idea that we must love ourselves first, reaching a narcissistic way of life, that leads us to be individualistic and live in self-centered societies that primarily seek more attention, control, security, wealth, and success.

Jesus turns this mindset on its head: "those who love his life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life" John 12:25.

So, what is the true meaning of love?

The Gospel of St. John is called the Gospel of Love *and intimacy of Jesus with the Father and the Holy Spirit*". It is an excellent resource of reading and prayer to enter into the Trinitarian love from which human love comes:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: What is Charity?

A: CIC 1822: "Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God."

Q: What is the First Commandment?

A: CIC 2083: "Jesus summed up man's duties to God in this saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This immediately echoes the solemn call: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled in the first of the "ten words." The commandments then make explicit the response of Love that man is called to give to his God.

Note: Send us your questions

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Reflection

Jesus, today I want to hear your voice. Help me to be quiet, to silence my fears, to calm my haste. Show me how to be silent, to listen attentively to your voice.

From the depths of my being
I await you and shout:
Here I am! Come, Lord Jesus!



A Message from the Seglar Catholic Society of Missionaries of God's Love

The lover is the Father, The loved **one** is the Son, and The love between the Father and the son is the Holy Spirit.

We are called to be part of that supernatural love through Divine Grace.

Love is not a feeling or an emotional act, it is an act of the will, it is to desire the good of the other over any circumstance.

At the human level, we must contextualize all human activity within the framework of love, at work, in business, interpersonal relationships. Jesus calls us to love one another as He has loved us. Although we are sinners, Jesus loves us perfectly, unconditionally, and as He promised, the Holy Spirit will be the one who will help us truly love.

I remember with great emotion when I experienced what it means to feel being loved by God. More than a decade ago, during a period of great personal conflicts and tribulations in my life, when I was doing things that did not make me feel proud of myself, I went to church for confession. The priest, after hearing my confession, repeated in the most loving way for several occasions only one thing: God loves you, you are forgiven.

Those words penetrated my mind and my heart. I was transformed. In the following days, I understood that I should forgive myself. From that moment on, my relationship with God and with others began to change. That confession was the first great encounter with the God of Love I have ever had in my life.

St. Teresa of Jesus tells us that the deepening of our relationship with God is not achieved through knowledge but fundamentally through Love:

- In that experience of Love, the encounter and the thought interconnect with that God who calls us and awaits within us
- What is new about this experience is "knowing you are loved"
- In this state you reach the point of pure intimacy, where you are to let yourself be driven, moved, and carried away by God.
- The way of prayer is not a compendium of formulas and/or practices. You have to understand it and live it as a [happy] adventure.

Having meditated for a moment that God loves us all by His own initiative, let us continue to celebrate with great joy these Easter days that we still have left and prepare ourselves to celebrate the great coming feast of Pentecost.



- Lord, help me to discover the dignity of being inhabited by you, loving God, and to enter that space where great things happen.
- Lord, thank you for loving me without limits. I do not deserve it, but with that joy that ignites my heart, I will be able to love others as you love me.
- Let me understand your invitation to continue walking towards the ever-closer encounter through meditation.
- May love as an experience be built through contemplation.