

FAITH AND REASON

True Love: After her reception into the Catholic faith, by Bishop Sheen, Claire Booth Luce was invited to address the student body at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. She opened her address with a question: "Will someone please tell me what it means to be a catholic?" After a long pause, she continued, "to be a catholic means that those who meet you can tell by the smile on your face, by the sound of your voice, by the look in your eye, by your whole bearing, that God.... lives.... in.... you" This is obviously not a matter of "projecting the right image." Something much more profound is involved implicitly in these words.

Jesus did not call us simply to "project the right image". On the contrary, we are called to live a completely new way of life. This new way of life is our sharing in the life of God! And the "Shema" the most important text in the Jewish scriptures express in a clear and a very direct style what we must do to live that life: "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is Lord alone. Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself" (Deut 6:5, Lev 19:18).

St Paul leaves us in no doubt about the implications of this text for our daily lives! "Brothers, I beg you, through the mercy of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing, and perfect. Your love must be sincere. Detest what is evil, cling to what is good. Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect. Do not grow slack but be fervent in spirit; he who you serve is the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer. Look on the needs of the saints as your own; be generous in offering hospitality" (Romans 12).

"Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe ourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another, forgive one another. Over all these virtues put on love which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of one body you have been called to that peace. Whatever you do, in speech or in action, do it in the name of the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3).

This is a far cry from the shallow, sentimental, self-serving caricature of love that is so prevalent in the modern world. St Paul puts before the requirements of true love. "You are a new creation" therefore "throw off the old man and put on the new man in grace and truth"..."Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus." St Paul is not speaking simply of a change of behavior, even though that is involved. We are called to Love the Lord you God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself". This requires an abiding disposition, a new orientation of character, a new way of life. It is not a matter of "doing" but most of all of "being" that leads to doing.

This is what gives love its strength, its beauty, its nobility. From this flows those sterling qualities - honesty, self-sacrifice, loyalty, devotion, perseverance, friendship - qualities which the modern world needs desperately! The unfaithful spouse claims to do everything out of love. The peddler of drugs which ravage, destroy individual and family life. The terrorist that plants bombs that maim and kill innocent people, claim they are freedom lovers motivated by high ideals. The burglar who steals your property gives it to his lady-friend as an expression of love. The parent who spoils a child because they do not wish to be unpopular with the child , claims to be motivated by love.

Love cannot be reserved for a particular person. If my love for a particular person means that I am indifferent to the rest of people, in this case, love is not love, but a selfish attachment to that person, or to the image I have of that person, for my own selfish reasons. And that is quite common in the modern world. In this, as in other important issues, we must be clearly aware of those forces in our world that are determined to undermine the nature and integrity of love and consequently, the nature and integrity of the person.

I would like to end with a note from Fr Pierre Teilhard Chardin (1881-1955). After his ordination, he taught physics and chemistry in Cairo. He was involved in the First World War (care of the wounded). In between encounters he wrote his war-time diary, with deep insights into physical and spiritual suffering of individuals and humanity. His interest in science was encouraged and he came to be known as a competent scientist in the fields of Geology and Paleontology. He was a very original thinker and a deeply spiritual priest. He was a very controversial figure, because his thinking was in conflict with the teaching on original sin and grace. He accepted the decision of his Superiors with "edifying obedience" a true priest. "Some day after we have mastered the winds and the waves, the tides and the gravity we will harness for God the energies of love, and then for the second time in the history of the world man will have discovered fire".

Notice the words used by Fr Chardin "harness... the energies of love". Here he reminds us of the power of love.... genuine love... Love as clearly stated and explained in the Revealed word of God, and not the subjective, shallow, self-serving, worldly "love". When Pope John Paul II was suffering from Parkinson's disease, was asked if he would consider retiring, he paused, briefly and then said, "Did Christ come down from the Cross"? Pope John Paul dragged himself across the world to bring Christ and his message to the world. That is the power of love, as is evident in the lives of the Saints. This is the revolution the world needs desperately... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

Reading the holy Scriptures confers two benefits. It trains the mind to understand them; it turns man's attention from the follies of the world and leads him to the love of God. Two kinds of study are called for here. We must first learn how the Scriptures are to be understood, and then see how to expound them with profit and in a manner worthy of them . . . No one can understand holy Scripture without constant reading . . . The more you devote yourself to the study of the sacred utterances, the richer will be your understanding of them, just as the more the soil is tilled, the richer the harvest... **Isidore of Seville**

Oh, what awesome mysteries take place during Mass! One day we will know what God is doing for us in each Mass, and what sort of gift He is preparing in it for us. Only His divine love could permit such a gift be provided for us. O Jesus, my Jesus, with what great pain is my soul pierced when I see this fountain of life gushing forth with such sweetness and power for each soul, while at the same time I see souls withering away and drying up through their own fault. O Jesus, grant that the power of mercy embraces these souls... **St.**

Maria Faustina Kowalska

The Heart of God: The Old Testament speaks of God's heart twenty-six times. It is regarded as the organ of his will, against which man is measured. It is the Logos which is at the center of us all - without our knowing - for the center of man is the heart, and in the heart there is the guiding energy of the whole, which is the Logos. It is the Logos which enables us to be logical, to correspond to the Logos; he is the image of God after which we were created... It is here, in the heart, that the birth of the divine logos in man takes place, that man is united with the personal, incarnate Word of God... The heart is the place of the saving encounter with the Logos. The pierced heart of Jesus is not concerned with self-preservation with self-surrender. It saves the world by opening itself.... The heart saves, indeed, but it saves by giving itself away. Thus, in the heart of Jesus, the center of Christianity is set before us.

It expresses everything, all that is genuinely new and revolutionary in the New Covenant. The heart calls to our heart. It invites us to step forth out of the futile attempt of self-preservation and, by journey in the test of love, handing ourselves over to him, and with him to discover the fullness of love which alone is eternity, and which alone sustains the world. **Pope Benedict XVI**

A Thought For the Day

Sunday Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Monday The issue is now clear. It is between light and darkness and every one must choose his side.

Tuesday "Come", says my heart, "seek his face", your face, Lord, do I seek!

Wednesday When ambition ends, happiness begins.

Thursday One of the easiest places to hide from God is at church.

Friday Faith doesn't get you out of trouble, it gets you through it.

Saturday For if I am to love truly and freely, I must be able to give something that is truly my own to another.

Knowing God Through Jesus: The most important reason for Christ's coming was that we should know how much God loves us, and once knowing the depth of God's love, we might begin to burn with love for the God who loved them first. Following Christ's commandment in love and his example, we might then come to love their neighbor. Indeed, Jesus Christ, by loving even those who were wandering far from him, might become a neighbor to us all... **St Augustine**

Pope Francis' monthly prayer intention for July is for a eucharistic life. The Pope made the appeal to put the celebration of the Eucharist at the center of our lives in his Pope video message, entrusted to the entire Catholic Church, through the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. Pope Francis begins this month's video by saying, "if you are the same at the end of Mass, as you were at the beginning, something is wrong." In his new prayer intention, the Holy Father invites us to see the celebration of the Eucharist not as an obligatory ritual, but rather as an encounter with the Risen Jesus, for "the Eucharist is the presence of Jesus," which is "profoundly transforming." Along this line, Pope Francis insists in this video that "it is Christ Who offers Himself, Who gives Himself for us," which leads to "our lives being nourished by Him, to nourish the lives of our brothers and sisters." Going out of ourselves, opening ourselves to others. In the video, Pope Francis explains "the logic of the Eucharist," which "gives us the courage to encounter others, to go out of ourselves, and to open ourselves to others with love." This is why the Pope encourages us to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, because that is where we receive the capacity to love others and to allow ourselves to be transformed by Him. Finally, the Pope encourages us to pray that "Catholics place at the center of their lives the Eucharistic Celebration, which transforms human relationships and opens up an encounter with God and their brothers and sisters."

Life: Let us not live distracted lives. Let us strive to know ourselves so that we can better understand others. If we want to understand those with whom we live and work, we need to understand ourselves first.

In His Will is Our Peace

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