

WE ARE CALLED TO SPREAD THE LOVE OF GOD

**And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves:
for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.**

1 Peter 4: 8



We pause and remember that our Loving and Compassionate God is always with us. This is the God Who loves us so much that He called us into being. This is the God Who loves us so much that He sent His only Son to redeem us. This is the God Who loves us so much that He gives us the Holy Spirit Who continually calls us to life and to holiness.

HYMN: WHERE CHARITY AND LOVE PREVAIL

**Where charity and love prevail there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love by love are we thus bound.**

**With grateful joy and holy fear His charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and strength now love Him in return.**

**Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
and let us love each other well in Christian holiness.**

**Let strife among us be unknown, let all contentions cease;
be His the glory that we seek, be ours His holy peace.**

**Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
as members of His body joined we are in Him made one.**

**Love can exclude no race or creed if honored be God's name;
our common life embraces all whose Father is the same.**

PRAYER BEFORE THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

Open your ears, O Christian people.

Open your ears and hear the Good News.

Open your hearts, O Christian people.

Open your hearts and receive the Good News.

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-8

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails. The Word of the Lord!

JOHN 15: 9-17

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. "I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father.

It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

This I command you: love one another. The Gospel of the Lord!

RESPONSE

God has given each of us a gift. It comes without strings.

It lifts us up where we belong. It is ours----if only we will take it.

It is the gift of Jesus Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

It is a costly gift. So costly that it leaves us lost in wonder, love, and praise.

REFLECTION:

The Church's work of charity, both for individuals and for organizations, must always find its reference point in Christ, "the source of charity," Benedict XVI says.

The Holy Father said: "Charity has to be understood in the light of God who is caritas: God who loved the world so much that he gave His only Son. In this way we come to see that love finds its greatest fulfillment in the gift of self.

Every act of charity should be inspired by a personal experience of faith, leading to the discovery that God is Love."

"Christian charity exceeds our natural capacity for love: It is a theological virtue.

"It therefore challenges the giver to situate humanitarian assistance in the context of a personal witness of faith, which then becomes a part of the gift offered to the poor. Only when charitable activity takes the form of Christ-like self-giving does it become a gesture truly worthy of the human person created in God's image and likeness."

"God's love is offered to everyone, hence the Church's charity is also universal in scope, and so it has to include a commitment to social justice."

However, he clarified, "changing unjust structures is not of itself sufficient to guarantee the happiness of the human person."

"For this reason, the great challenges facing the world at the present time, such as globalization, human rights abuses, unjust social structures, cannot be confronted and overcome unless attention is focused on the deepest needs of the human person: the promotion of human dignity, well-being and, in the final analysis, eternal salvation."



In whatever we do, let us do it for the love of God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

That we may always be aware of and give thanks for God's great love for us, we pray:

That we will come to know that all love is from God, we pray:

That we will realize that loving God and our neighbor cannot happen unless we love ourselves, we pray:

That all those who need friendship, love, and encouragement will find it in God and one another, we pray:

That we will accept all peoples as the Lord accepts and loves us, we pray:

That those who are "in love" will contemplate the great mystery they encounter in one another, we pray:

That each of us will outdo one another and ourselves in loving others as the Lord loves us, we pray:

That we will come to understand that it is only through love that the ills of the world will be rectified, we pray:

Let us pray: O Lord of All, we place our simple petitions before You. Hear them and answer them as You know best for us. In all things, may we have charity. Amen.

HYMN: IF YOU REMOVE - Isaiah 58: 9-11

**If you remove from your midst oppression,
false accusation and negativity;
if you bestow your bread on the hungry
and meet the needs of those who are afflicted:
then light shall rise for you in the darkness,
and gloom shall become for you as mid-day,
and then the Lord will guide you always,
though greatly parched, your land will be fruitful.
The Lord will renew your strength.
You shall be like a watered garden;
like a spring whose water never fails.**

**It is not how much we do,
but how much love we put in the doing.
It is not how much we give,
but how much love we put in the giving.
Mother Teresa**

A THOUGHT: Pope Benedict XVI - from DEUS CARITAS EST
Faith, hope and charity go together. Hope is practiced through the virtue of patience, which continues to do good even in the face of apparent failure, and through the virtue of humility, which accepts God's mystery and trusts Him even at times of darkness. Faith tells us that God has given His Son for our sakes and gives us the victorious certainty that it is really true: God is love! It thus transforms our impatience and our doubts into the sure hope that God holds the world in His hands and that, as the dramatic imagery of the end of the Book of Revelation points out, in spite of all darkness He ultimately triumphs in glory. Faith, which sees the love of God revealed in the pierced heart of Jesus on the Cross, gives rise to love. Love is the light—and in the end, the only light—that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working. Love is possible, and we are able to practice it because we are created in the image of God. To experience love and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world—this is the invitation.

PRAYER

**O my God, teach me to be generous:
to serve You as you deserve to be served;
to give without counting the cost;
to fight without fear of being wounded;
to work without seeking rest;
and to spend myself without expecting any reward,
but the knowledge that I am doing your holy will.**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
inspire us to live lives filled with love of God, neighbor and self.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts.
Forever!**

