



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Newsletter
May 15, 2022

My Dear Parishioners,

It has been a little while since I gave a more serious teaching. This week, I would like to offer a teaching on Christian Love based on the Sacred Scriptures.

God is Love, and so when Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commands us to love as He has loved us, He is setting the bar high-really, really, high. Our Blessed Savior has set the bar so high that our salvation depends on us living this commandment of love. The Beloved Apostle St John teaches us: *Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and His love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in Him and He in us, that He has given us of His Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent His Son as savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in Him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. (1 John 4:7-16)*

To love as He loves us begins with loving without sin, as He who is Love became like us in all things but sin. While all sin is an obstacle to true love, those sins of grave matter, those sins that are potentially mortal sins, are the greatest obstacle to true love and also a danger to our souls. On this, Beloved Apostle St John further instructs us: *See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed* we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope based on Him makes himself pure, as He is pure. Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. You know that He was revealed to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. No one who remains in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or known Him... .. The way we came to know love was that He laid down His life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:1-6, 16-18).*

St Paul also understood that sin is an obstacle to true love. In encouraging us in true love, he gives us a beautiful vision of Christian love in action: *Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. 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, endures all*

things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially, and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13)

This beautiful vision of true love asks us to love always, which means doing what is the hardest thing to do, to love even when someone sins against us. Yes, responding to sins against us with love is often hard, and it is hard because it requires us to first overcome sin in our own lives. The Great Commandment of Love asks us to examine ourselves first, and to be aware of any obstacles to love in our own lives. Those obstacles can be summarized by the seven capital sins: anger, pride, lust, greed, envy, gluttony, sloth. The Commandment of Love also asks us to avoid temptations and near occasions of sin. It asks us, moreover, to confess our sins and receive forgiveness for our sins and to make acts of reparation for our sins. These acts of reparation are really acts of love aimed at repairing our relationships with God and with our neighbor.

Thankfully, in giving us this beautiful vision of true love, Our Blessed Savior also gives us all the helps we need to achieve them. Thus, we have no reason to fear but all the reason to hope. The Apostle St John encourages us with these words: *[Now] this is how we shall know that we* belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before Him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if [our] hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him. And His commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as He commanded us. Those who keep His commandments remain in Him, and He in them, and the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit that He gave us. (1 John 3: 19-24)*

Our Blessed Savior is so good to us. All we have to do is allow Him to work through and in us to make us instruments of true love: Our first Pope, St. Peter, also understood that God is on our side and that He is constantly helping us to live the Great Commandment of Love. St Peter moreover reminds us that God's generosity will never be outdone: *His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by His own glory and power. Through these, He has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who lacks them is blind and shortsighted, forgetful of the cleansing of his past sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble. For, in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. (1 Peter 1: 3-11)*

So, in other words, St. Peter is telling us that we can do this. St. Peter is telling us that we can love as God has loved us because He has willed it and gives us the graces to do it. So let us set our sights high and think big, and love as God has loved us, and we will be richly rewarded, beyond our wildest dreams, as St. Peter has promised.

On a similar note, a beautiful act of love is to pray for others and especially to pray for those who are in desperate need. On Thursdays, after the morning Mass, we have begun devotions to St. Peregrine. Our new devotions to St. Peregrine give us the opportunity to pray, as a community of Faith, for those who suffer from cancer. St. Peregrine himself was miraculously cured from cancer, and in our Thursday morning devotions, we have an opportunity to entrust those we know and love, who are suffering from cancer, to Our Blessed Savior and His Sorrowful Mother through the intercession of St. Peregrine.

Let us continue to pray our Rosaries and our Chaplets for the sick, for the deceased, for peace in Ukraine, for first responders, for our college students returning home, for an end to the pandemic, for Life, for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, for a return to family values, and for our fellow parishioners.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

Fr. Michael J. Pawelko, Pastor



Some old-fashioned prayers that were designed to help us live out the Commandment of Love are the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love. Maybe it is time that we re-acquaint ourselves with these old prayers:

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die.

Amen

ACT OF LOVE

O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die.
Amen.

ACT OF HOPE

O Lord God, I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because you have promised it who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful. In this hope I intend to live and die.
Amen.

Happy 12th Ordination Anniversary

Father Pawelko

May 15, 2010

