

Unconditional Love

Opening Scripture

John 15: 9 "Just as the Father has loved me, I have loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. In the same way, I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that you will have the same joy that I have. I also want your joy to be complete. ¹² Here is my command. Love one another, just as I have loved you.

I Observe

In his homily one morning at Mass in the chapel of the Santa Marta residence at the Vatican, Pope Francis said that loving one's enemies is the "model of Christian life." Reflecting on the Gospel reading from St. Luke (6:27-38), in which the Lord tells his disciples, "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you," the Holy Father said that this is a model of Christian life – of unconditional love in action.

Father Parent reminds us: We will love others, if we put our hearts into serving them, into accepting our differences and avoiding animosity whatever their mood happens to be. We will love others if we listen to them and we strive to understand them, if we avoid monopolizing them, if we have confidence in them, if we discover positive qualities in them and have the courage to give them credit for these qualities; if we are happy when others seem to be exalted, acclaimed and congratulated. We will love others, even our enemies, if we do not allow the spirit of vengeance to infiltrate us and if we are able to pardon.

To love is a duty of the heart not of the senses or the mind. This duty is given us by the Lord; the presence of God makes it possible insofar as this presence is not weakened by destructive criticism. When we avoid destructive criticism we dispose ourselves to love others profoundly and we can be sure that we do not extinguish the Spirit in us, that we do not sadden him. (Footsteps p.59)

I Ponder

- Am I afraid to Love? Why? Why not?
- Am I selective in deciding who I will serve? Do I make judgements about the "worthiness of another person?"
- Does my critical attitude towards another person hamper my love for them?
- Do I have trouble forgiving others? Especially for "BIG" hurts? What is my concept of forgiveness?

- Father Parent said that “Love was meant to grow; whatever the path we are walking; progress is always possible.” What positive steps can I take to assure that love will grow in my life?

I Move Forward

Have you ever felt that you are outside of God’s love? That you’ve done things that makes you eternally undeserving? A treason...a betrayal...an aborted promise?

Maybe, just maybe if you could be better, His love would be deeper? God loves you! Unequivocally. Unconditionally. He loves you as if you were the only person he ever made. Picture him speaking to you alone: “whatever you might have done, whatever you might have become I still love you unconditionally.”

My goal for the future is to let others know by my words and actions this message of God’s unconditional love.

I Pray

There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out all fear. (1John 4:18)

Dear Lord, you are the unconditional Love that is over me, around me, through me. I know this Love permeates every fiber of my being and is always available. I choose to allow this unconditional Love to flow through me by removing every critical attitude from my life.

I choose to fully recognize and allow Love to fill me because I know when I center myself and respond from that place of pure, unconditional Love then there is no place for fear. I choose to forgive by letting go of my right to get even. I pray for the grace to have eyes that see the miracle of Christianity – that in our neighbor we have Christ at our doorstep to be the object of our love.

Help me to recognize Love as the emotion that trumps all others. I give thanks for this present moment and all the opportunities offered. May my life always bear witness to your great love. I pray in Jesus’ Name. Amen.