



Knights of Columbus Council 9542

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC 20064

In Service to One, In Service to All

Deus Caritas est: God is Love. How many times have we heard this simple yet profound theological truth in a homily, story, or teaching? How many times have we taken this for granted? In a world where truth seems to exist until inconvenient, God's love remains a refreshing and comforting constant in the Christian life. If this were not so, as the world would have you believe, for what purpose, let alone by what means, would you or I exist? It is this perfect love of God which sustains us each and every moment of eternity. In fact, it's God's very nature, so bursting with love, if you will, that wills us into being. So too, then, must our love for our neighbors guide and give purpose to our lives.

Love is not always the neat and tidy bundle of adorability and cuteness the Hallmark Channel presents. Authentic love is also messy, chaotic, and freely given with no expectation for reciprocation. "What does love look like?" St. Augustine asks, "It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." While there is certainly something beautiful to behold in the chaste expression of love in the form of affectionate relationships, ultimately that is an imperfect reflection of God's Love, with which "He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."¹ And if you ever find yourself in need of a reminder of this, recall the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori: "O Christian, should a doubt ever enter your mind that Jesus Christ loves you, raise your eyes and look at Him hanging on the cross."²

Remember that first core principle of our Order? Charity, a word often used interchangeably with love, 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."³ As Knights of Columbus, we must heed the words of the Apostle Paul as recorded in the Catechism: "Charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."⁴ As such, it forms the basis for our good works:

Our Catholic faith teaches us to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Members of the Knights of Columbus show love for their neighbors by conducting food drives and donating the food to local soup kitchens and food pantries, by volunteering at Special Olympics, and by supporting, both spiritually and materially, mothers who choose life for their babies. Knights recognize that our mission, and our faith in God, compels us to action. There is

¹ John 3:16 (NASB).

² St. Alphonsus Liguori, "On the love of Jesus Christ for us, and on our obligations to love him" (Sermon, Fourth Sunday of Advent, n.p., n.d.).

³ CCC 1822.

⁴ CCC 1825, cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

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no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day.⁵

We take this to heart especially because we can accomplish amazing things for the good of the Order and the Church, but our privilege, service, and virtue is for naught if we don't possess charity— we would “gain nothing.”⁶ Similarly, our living out the virtues is “animated and inspired by charity, which ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony.’”⁷ Its fruits are joy, peace, and mercy; love is “itself the very fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.”⁸

The liturgical season of Lent is an especially wonderful opportunity for us to reorient ourselves with God's love and mercy. As we prepare for the commemoration of the ultimate expression of Love the world has ever known⁹, we may give up something we fleetingly desire in order to be made more aware of our need to depend on the One Love, the True Love, the Infinite Love. Of course, we can do more throughout Lent, but take to heart the suggestion of my bishop, “Don't make this Lent a complicated regimen of resolutions and promises that will unravel a week from now. Make it simple. Make it real.”¹⁰ I close with a final word from Fulton Sheen:

God loves you despite your unworthiness. It is His love which will make you better, rather than your betterment which will make Him love you.¹¹ ... Say to yourself over and over again, regardless of what happens: “God loves me!” And then add: “And I will try to love Him!”¹²

May God bless you, and God love you!

Fraternally,

SK Thomas Wong

⁵ “Our Principles,” *Knights of Columbus*, accessed February 12, 2016.

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/about/principles/index.html>.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:1-4 (NABRE).

⁷ CCC 1827.

⁸ CCC 1829.

⁹ See John 15:13.

¹⁰ David O'Connell, (homily, Ash Wednesday Mass, Trenton, NJ, February 10, 2016).

<http://www.trentonmonitor.com/main.asp?SectionID=5&SubSectionID=148&ArticleID=12224>.

¹¹ Fulton Sheen, *Remade for Happiness: Achieving Life's Purpose through Spiritual Transformation* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 187.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25.

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