

Love one another...

JOHN 13 : 31 ~ 34

MAY 19, 2019

A number of years ago Henry Drummond wrote a classic sermon titled "The Greatest Thing in the World." He concluded his sermon by suggesting that if you put a piece of iron in the presence of an electrified field, that piece of iron itself will become electrified. And in the presence of that electrical field, it is changed into a magnet. As long as it remains in contact with that field of power, it will continue to attract other pieces to itself. We are like that piece of iron. In the presence of Christ, we experience his love and take on his likeness. We are changed, electrified by the Holy Spirit, to attract others to the same love of God that we experience. Our Christian discipleship, living as faithful members of the Church, is not just a matter of willpower. It is not just deciding that we will do it, that we will love others. It just doesn't happen that way. It happens far more simply than that. Sharing God's love, living God's love, loving one another happen when we are connected to God's love, when we allow God's love to surround us, to shape and mold our lives in Jesus' image. In a world all too often filled with people concerned about themselves first, characterized with an impersonal "what's in it for me" attitude, we are called to witness to something more important - love that gives of itself for others; love that cares about others; love that makes our lives meaningful and significant in giving to others.

For the ground at the foot of the Cross is level. We are all sinners. We have all fallen short of what God expects of us and we are all received into God's goodness by God's grace, not by our own doing. It is God's love that unites us and it

is God's love that we are called to share with each other. That means that our lives must be characterized by love in action. Jesus says, "As I have loved you, love one another."

Love is much more than a feeling. It is even more than just about us. Whenever you are as concerned about the safety, the satisfaction, or the happiness of another person as you are about your own safety, satisfaction, and happiness, there the state of love exists. The focus of love is to be in our commitment to act in ways that promote the welfare, security, and happiness of others as much as we promote our own welfare, security, and happiness. When this standard of our love is being reciprocated, then we love one another. That understanding dwells at the heart of Jesus' teaching on the expectation that a faithful person will "love our neighbors as ourselves."

In the year 1624, English clergyman, poet, essayist, and lawyer John Donne was pondering this reality. Specifically, Donne was meditating on the question of why an outsider might be concerned about the death of a stranger. His insight is simple, clear, and as relevant today as it was nearly four centuries ago.

*We mourn because, No one is an island,
Entire of itself, Each of us is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less. As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if the home of your friend
Or even your own home was washed away.
Each person's death diminishes me, For I am involved in
humankind,
Therefore, do not send a neighbor to find out
For whom the death bell rings. It rings for you.*