

Fr. Martin's Reflection – May 5, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our second reading and our Gospel this weekend, the theme is clearly about love. Let's look at what John has to say. 1Jn 4:7-10 speaks of love as a fundamental aspect of God's nature and a cornerstone of Christian faith. It emphasizes that love originates from God and that those who truly love are born of God and know God. This love is not merely a human emotion or sentiment but a divine force that transforms lives and relationships. The passage highlights the sacrificial nature of God's love by stating that God sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. This act demonstrates the depth and breadth of God's love, showing that it surpasses human comprehension and extends even to those who may not deserve it. Believers are called to love one another in the same way, with a selfless and unconditional love that reflects the love of God.

Our Gospel reading today is John 15:9-17. This passage is part of Jesus' farewell discourse to His disciples before His crucifixion. In these verses, Jesus reiterates the importance of love within the Christian community. He commands His followers to abide in His love, just as He abides in the Father's love. This abiding love is not passive but active, requiring obedience to Jesus' commandments. The ultimate commandment given by Jesus is to love one another as He has loved us. This love is characterized by selflessness, service, and sacrifice, mirroring the love of God demonstrated through Christ's life and death.

Both passages emphasize the transformative power of love rooted in God. They teach that genuine love is not based on human merit or conditions but flows from the nature of God. It is a love that seeks the well-being of others, even at personal cost. This love is the hallmark of discipleship and is meant to be a defining trait of the Christian community.

The connection between these passages is evident in their focus on divine love and its implications for human relationships. 1Jn 4:7-10 lays the foundation by revealing the source and nature of love as originating from God and demonstrated through Christ's sacrifice. John 15:9-17 builds upon this foundation by providing a practical framework for expressing and living out this love within the Christian community.

The call to love one another is not a suggestion but a commandment given by Jesus Himself. It is a love that transcends boundaries, encompasses all people, and serves as a witness to the world of God's transformative power. By abiding in God's love and loving one another, believers fulfill their purpose and reflect the character of Christ to the world.

In summary, these passages teach that love is central to the Christian faith and is the defining characteristic of God's nature and followers. They challenge believers to embody and express this love in their lives, relationships, and interactions with others, thereby fulfilling the greatest commandment and bearing witness to the transformative power of God's love.

I hope and pray, in this coming week and always, that you may experience the love God has for you.

Fr. Martin