

From the Pastor's Desk

The True Nature of Love

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27

A scribe asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked the scribe what the Law of Moses taught. The above line was the scribe's response. He was essentially quoting Deuteronomy 6:4, which was a common prayer prayed by the Jews and seen as a summary of the entire Law of Moses as found in the Ten Commandments.

Notice that this summary of the Law does not present a negative prohibition such as "Thou shalt not..." Instead, it is a positive command stating, "Thou shalt love..." Love is the fulfillment of the Law of the Old Testament, as well as the fulfillment of the New Law of Christ. When we love God with our whole being, that love overflows upon all of God's creatures, including our neighbor. In this Gospel, the scribe goes on to ask Jesus who His neighbor is. Jesus responds by telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In that parable, there was a man beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest and a Levite passed by and ignored the man. But a Samaritan passed by and took care of the man, bringing him to an inn and vowing to pay for his recovery. The story concludes by the Samaritan being identified as the one who acted as a neighbor to the victim.

Sometimes we can see love as a feeling or emotion. Though love is often accompanied by certain emotions and feelings, love is much more. It is an action. In this parable, if the Samaritan simply looked upon the victim and felt sorry for him, had compassion for him but then moved on, he would not have shown love. The love of charity is an action and requires much of us. If we are to fulfill this first and greatest commandment of love of God and neighbor, then we cannot wait until we feel like loving to act. Instead, we must act now and not hesitate. This is love.

Reflect, today, upon the true nature of love. Love, in its most elevated form, is the choice to do what is best for others—to help free them from sin and to be an instrument of God's providence in their lives. It is a participation in the very love that God has shown us in Christ Jesus by giving His life for our salvation. We are all called to devote ourselves to this same form of selfless and sacrificial love. Doing so is a requirement for the glorious sharing in eternal life.

(Used with permission. www.mycatholic.life)