

Charity

June 2, 2019

“Before all things, have a constant mutual charity.” 1 Peter 4:7

True love or charity is grounded in God: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, strength and mind. This is the beginning and end of all true love. We must be firmly fixed in the love of God, Who is Love Itself, for nothing else can follow us by the way of genuine love that is not founded in this love. This means our love has to be supernatural before it can fulfill its own proper nature, because God is Love, and He is a Spiritual Being. St. John said: “God is Love and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.” If God is taken out of the picture, then all we have is a cruel caricature of the real thing, sterile and morbid.

The second commandment of love is the love of your neighbor as yourself. St. Thomas Aquinas says that love is “willing good for another”. The emphasis here is on the other; not on the lover, but the beloved. If I truly love, then my focus is on the other, not a narcissistic love. This latter love seeks one’s own pleasure rather than the spirit of sacrifice for the other without counting the cost. If we truly love, we place ourselves in second place. If we speak of love as willing the good of another, then we must mean real goods and not apparent goods. We should seek the ultimate real good, the person’s supreme happiness in heaven. The Hollywood notion of love is far from this genuine love of self-sacrifice. Unfortunately, our society has bought into this false notion.

On a daily practical level, genuine love will never do anything which would hinder others from achieving true happiness. Thus, we must avoid sin and avoid leading others to sin. Secondly, we must try to help others achieve the ends of the Beatitudes. Our actions will only be truly loving when they help lead souls to their ultimate good, which is beatitude in heaven. Love is self-sacrificing. Our Lord gave us the example when He laid down His life for us. We must love each other with such a love.

Sincerely in Christ,

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