

God is Love

*There is a story about a little boy whose five year old twin sister had a rare blood disease and needed an urgent transfusion. The blood would have to come from a relative with the same blood type and the little boy was suggested as a logical donor. "Son," said the doctor, "would you give blood so that your sister can live?" The boy looked a little puzzled at first but then said he would do it. The blood was taken and he was still lying on his bed when the doctor came and asked him how he was. 'Doctor,' He asked, 'when do I die?' Only then did it dawn on the doctor that the little boy misunderstood. He thought he had to give **all his blood** to save his little sister like when Jesus gave all His blood to save US.*

According to today's gospel when Jesus shed His blood on the Cross for us, that was his finest hour - his moment of Glory. But He wasn't alone. His Father in Heaven was with Him every step of the way.

While Jesus was dying on the Cross, God His Father wasn't looking on as an dispassionate bystander, with His heart in His mouth, as it were, to see if His Son would be able to endure the passion and not. No, throughout His passion, God was in Jesus 'reconciling the world to Himself'. An example might help explain it. *I have two computers in the house which are networked together so that there is a free flow of information from one to the other. Well, to put it rather crudely the Father and Son are 'networked' together in a free exchange of love and the 'connecting cable' is the Holy Spirit. But the same Holy Spirit is the wellspring of human love as well.*

Jesus says we must love one another as He loves us. But do we? Does our love come anywhere near that of Jesus? For instance, do we hesitate to go that extra mile when people need us? Remember Jesus, despite falling several times, didn't flinch on the road to Calvary. He, figuratively speaking, went that extra mile. Or again, have we a tendency to dodge people who cause us embarrassment or discomfort. Remember the woman of Samaria did her utmost to put Jesus off but He sat it out and loved her despite her frosty attitude towards Him. Her life was turned round as a result. Or again we could ask: Does our love come from a pure heart or are there ulterior motives behind lots we do? For instance some people like to be noticed and admired for their good deeds. Jesus said "when you give alms, don't have it trumpeted before you". Others, when helping out just go through the motions without their

hearts being really in it, often treating those being helped as objects. That is hardly loving others the way Jesus loves us. Or again other people give a helping hand but expect to get something in return. Jesus says: "give without any hope of return".

Through the grace of this Mass may we take this new commandment to heart more earnestly? This is the surest way to Heaven where we will share forever in that endless exchange of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS

'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself'. Discuss what this passage of Scripture means to the group.

God permitted His Son to die on the cross for our salvation. Why did God need to do this? Could we not have saved the world in a less draconian way and spared His son all that suffering? Discuss

Why does loving others have to be tied up with suffering, as it was for Jesus. For us it might involve 'going that extra mile' with someone especially if it's inconvenient. It may involve 'loving our enemies', which 'goes against the grain' of our human nature. Is it any wonder that people are unwilling to live these and other aspects of the gospel which is all tied up with 'loving our neighbour? Discuss

Why does loving like Jesus need to be done in an unassuming, non-showy way? Are we not entitled to a bit of recognition now and again for our acts of charity? Discuss