

May 17, 2020

# St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish

## Reflection on God's Love

### The Gift and the Giver

We ask for a piece of sand and he gives us a beach.  
We ask for a drop of water and he gives us an ocean.  
We ask for time and he gives us life eternal.  
And it is so easy for us to fall in love with the gift  
and forget the Giver.  
- Edward Farrell

God is Love and He loves all of His children perfectly. His love is manifest in everything around us. I could go on listing His gifts forever, but would rather urge you to read PSALM 139. The Psalmist says it all so beautifully. Whenever I have doubts or cannot feel God's presence, I read Psalm 139 and I am comforted in the knowledge that my loving Father could NEVER forsake me.

God's love is manifest to us through the people in our lives. Our family, friends, and all the people God sends us as we journey through life. But again, we fall in love with all these wonderful people and forget God.

God's greatest gift to us is Jesus. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - John 3:16, and yet we take Jesus for granted, or worse, dismiss and reject Him altogether.

God has freely given us all these gifts; then why don't we have a personal relationship with Him? I guess it is like relationships we have with each other. No amount of roses and chocolates can make us fall in love with a person. We have to get to know the person to fall in love with him or her. So how do we get to know God personally?

In today's Gospel Jesus says "Whoever holds to my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and reveal myself to him." - John 14:21

Here then lies the key 'Obedience'. If we obey His commandments, He will reveal Himself to us.

Does the word 'obedience' remind you of another important relationship with God? Yes, Adam and Eve 'disobeyed' God and the consequence was they could not have a relationship with God anymore.

Fortunately for us, Jesus and Mary, the new Adam and Eve, by their total obedience to God, make right the wrong done by Adam and Eve.

God gave the people of the Old Testament the 10 Commandments but those commandments did not teach people to love one another they just taught them how not to hurt one another. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” or “Thou shalt not kill”. That was the best that God could do at that time because He was giving us the commandments through an imperfect human being. Moses, himself was a murderer. There were times he despaired and even doubted God and would lose patience with the people he was leading out of Israel so how could Moses teach them to love? He could just teach them what not to do. Much like us parents. We would like our children to be perfect but we can’t really expect them to be perfect because we ourselves are not perfect. Can a parent who smokes, really ask his or her child not to smoke?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind [and] love your neighbor as yourself.’

– Luke 10:27

This is Jesus’ commandment, but He can ask this of us because He is perfect and shows us how to be perfect, by His Words, Works and Life. He did not do away with the 10 commandments of the Old Testament but just elevated them. If you love God you will not only not offend Him but will do things to please Him and likewise, if you love your neighbor, you will not only not do things that will hurt him or her but will also do things that please them.

Jesus shows us that the Old Testament is not irrelevant. Rather it reveals the New Testament and the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament. Abraham’s sacrifice is another great way God tried to convey his love to us. God didn’t let Abraham sacrifice Isaac because Isaac was not without sin and so the sacrifice would have been pointless. But God did the next best thing. He asked Abraham to build an Altar which represented God. An unblemished lamb had to be sacrificed on the Altar and then the blood of the lamb, which had touched the Altar was sprinkled on the people and through this Covenant God was telling each person that received the sprinkling of blood that “I am your God and you are mine”. And it was not enough that this was done once because the people would go back to their lives and sin again and so the sacrifice had to be offered again and again to wash away sins.

Just as Jesus elevated the ten commandments, so also, he elevates Abraham’s sacrifice. That is why Mass is always celebrated in Church. The Holy Sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect, unblemished Lamb is commemorated on the Altar which represents God and when we receive the ‘Body and Blood of Christ’ God is renewing His Covenant of Love with us and saying “I am your God and you are mine” and when we say “Amen” we are agreeing that “Yes, You are my God and I am yours”. And why do we have to go to Mass every Sunday? Well, just like the people of the Old Testament, after Mass we go back to our lives and sin again which affects our relationship with God so He gives us the opportunity to come back and renew that love and relationship with Him and the more often we go to Mass and receive God in His Word and the Eucharist, the better we can know and love Him.

My favourite person of the Old Testament is ‘David’. I guess I can relate to him. He was imperfect and did some terrible things but he was always sincerely repentant. Most of all David loved God, his Psalms are testament enough and God loved David for that. He elevated him to King and even scriptures would go on to record that Jesus came from the line of David.

My sincere hope and prayer for each one of you is that you may find a personal relationship with God. Allow him into your life – you will never be the same!!

Reflection By:

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