



Bringing Home the Word

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time February 26, 2017

God Simply Loves

By Mary Katharine Deeley

We nod our heads when asked whether God loves us, but what would you say if you were asked, “Does God *like* you?”

God’s love is often difficult to fathom. Some of us are rational: “God loves everyone”—the unspoken thought being, “It’s his job to love me.” We say this about parents as well: “She’s my mom, she has to say that.” This idea of God’s love never moves further than the head. Other people compartmentalize the love: “God loves me, but only when I’m good,” or

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 49:14–15

“Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?”

1 Corinthians 4:1–5

“[The Lord] will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts.”

Matthew 6:24–34

Jesus said to his disciples: “No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon.”

“God loves only the good parts of me.” Still others use God’s love as a shield against responsibility: “God forgives me no matter what I do and would never judge me harshly.” God becomes a marshmallow—all sugar, no nutrition.

In reality, God’s love holds us in delight as parents delight in their children. God’s love rejoices in us as the Creator rejoices in endless variety and hidden mystery. God’s love doesn’t come out of necessity. Rather, it springs out of the nature of God. Out of love, God holds us accountable for our actions, forgives us when we ask, and is an abiding presence, whether we recognize it or not. When we turn away, God is there. When we suffer, God walks with us. When we sin, God is the source of our conversion.

God grounds us in peace and joy. God doesn’t love us because we’re the greatest and best. If that were the case, none of us would be worthy. God simply loves. We have only to seek his righteousness to know that and believe it. †

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A Word From Pope Francis

God prepares our path, he prepares our lives over time....It seems that Simon, Andrew, James, and John were definitively chosen, but that does not mean that from that moment on they were definitively faithful. In reality, they made mistakes; they made non-Christian suggestions to the Lord and in fact they denied him....In Jesus’ own genealogy, there are men and women who were sinners. But what did the Lord do? He entered into their affairs, he corrected the path, he set things aright....The Lord knows. When the Lord tells us: with eternal love have I loved you, he is referring to this.

—Morning meditation, chapel of *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, January 13, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What about your life would cause God to rejoice in you as God’s child?
- What about your life would God lovingly ask you to correct?



Christian View of Happiness

By Mario Paredes

Some say the only thing that counts as success or happiness is pleasure gained from whatever is quick and easy. This leads us to a vision of happiness in which there is no place for anything other than pleasure. Pain, suffering, old age, loneliness, as well as the difficult yet joyful experiences of solidarity, commitment, and serving others have no place in today's world. In our search for happiness, we have failed to integrate

the very human experience of suffering and hardship into our understanding of daily life. The experience of anything difficult or unpleasant has been set against the view of success and happiness as originating from pleasure.

A denial of that less enjoyable yet meaningful side of life leaves us depressed and anxious when we face hardship. In the midst of so many ways of life from which to choose, we have no sense of

direction and no way of understanding how we could be happy even in the midst of suffering. Yet as Christians, we are called to live each day with life in Christ as the true measure of our earthly success and of our eternal happiness.

It isn't always easy to follow this call or see our true source of happiness in Christ. As people living in the world, we still see a distinction between the happiness that comes from salvation and worldly happiness. It is our responsibility to demonstrate through our lives that Christ saves us. In other words, Christ makes us happy and gives us the abundant life for which we long. If the way in which we live our daily lives does not make this message clear, then the Church's proclamation of salvation becomes one that no one understands or finds convincing. †

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Wistful Longing

By Jeanne McNulty

God is love, and we are made in his image and likeness. Nonetheless, God lives in light inaccessible and is blinding to the naked eye. We yearn to see him, but if we did we could no longer exist on the earth.

Many spiritual masters make it abundantly clear that there is some groundwork that has to be done for us to obtain the union with God we yearn for. With mass and instant communication, it is easy to get caught up in a whirlwind of communicating with everyone except God. We go so fast there rarely is a

moment within a day where we can just be. We have to make time. We have to carve the way for space to breathe deeply and slowly and rest in the Almighty. A soul that is in a constant state of agitation will find it very difficult to center itself in God.

All that being said, no one can deserve or be worthy of a state of intimate union with God. It is pure gift. It cannot be earned, but we can be disposed to it by the way we live. The Lord sees our desire for union and, since he is love, will he not give us what is best for us if we entreat him with all our hearts? Is this the aim of our lives: to be totally caught up and

transformed in the warmth and light of God? †

Source: *Liguorian*,

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Lord, you are the source and center of my life. Give me the grace to love you with all my mind, heart, soul, and strength.

— From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 27–March 4

Mon. Weekday:
Sir 17:20–24 / Mk 10:17–27

Tues. Weekday:
Sir 35:1–12 / Mk 10:28–31

Ash Wednesday: Jl 2:12–18 / 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 / Mt 6:1–6, 16–18

Thurs. After Ash Wednesday:
Dt 30:15–20 / Lk 9:22–25

Fri. After Ash Wednesday:
Is 58:1–9a / Mt 9:14–15

Sat. After Ash Wednesday:
Is 58:9b–14 / Lk 5:27–32

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