



5. May 2024

## Love is of God

1 Jn 4:7-10

***Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.***

The word "love" is perhaps one of the most commonly heard words in the world, but it is often misunderstood. Therefore, it is worth reflecting a little on the nature of love. Nothing can help us to understand it better than to meditate on God's love for us. The text of John's letter makes it clear that He loved us first, before we could return His love.

God's love for us is first and foremost the great YES that He always pronounces and never ceases to repeat. Although we may evade this YES and interpret it as a NO, God's YES always stands. God can only love because He is Love! Everything in Him and everything that emanates from Him testifies to love, for that is His nature.

We experience this love in different ways: It manifests itself to us in goodness, in mercy, in His creation, in His providence, in the way He educates us, in His salvation and redemption, in His protection and help; we experience it as a "spiritual sun" that warms us, as true joy, etc.... All these expressions come from the same love, as do the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, although each has its own specificity, come from the same source and are manifestations of God's love, which is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Because we were called into existence because of this love and in this love, we are so sensitive to love. Without love, everything withers and does not find the deepest meaning of being. St Paul goes so far as to say that even the greatest charismatic gifts are worthless if they are not imbued with love:

*"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and*

*understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned,[a] but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:1-4).*

Indeed, we can see it in our lives: Every lack of love wounds us, and a child who grows up without love withers in his soul. How many inner wounds are caused in human beings by the loss of love, the lack of love, or false love in which one person claims the right to possess the other!

It is no exaggeration to say that most of man's inner problems are in one way or another related to love.

So we can understand why the reading presents love as the true principle of life which unites us with God and testifies to our relationship with Him; or, on the contrary, if we lack it, it reveals that we have not known God, as St John says.

The key to knowing God, then, lies in love. That is why, on the one hand, we must ask Him for it and, on the other, we must put it into practice: *“for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God”*.

We are approaching the wonderful feast of Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit, whom we venerate as the love between the Father and the Son. May He Himself teach us to understand God ever better and to grow in love as His gifts unfold in us. How the world would change if the love of God were to penetrate the hearts of men! How the darkness and the shadows would have to give way to the bright light of love!

But, as I said at the beginning, we must not misunderstand the concept of love. It is not just a feeling, but it requires that we put it into concrete actions and that we overcome everything that hinders it. Then this beautiful verse will become a reality: *“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it” (Ct 8:7).*