

although we may rightly judge **their acts** as being evil by the same standards of love as we judge our own.

Now we also know, if we are honest, that sometimes we may even find it hard even to like someone who **is** a genuinely good person. For some reason, we may find the way a person talks, or walks, or even looks, or some other trivial aspect of their behaviour, to be annoying to us. In that situation perhaps we need to make sure we do three things: **first**, above all, do good to them, **second**, look inside ourselves to find what fault there is within **us** that makes us think and feel in that way **“Why do you tend to see the splinter in your brother’s eye and not the log in your own?”** (Mtt.7:3), **third**, get to know them better so that you can come to like them!

Two other important things need to be stated:

First, if we love God with our whole being, then we will automatically want to do his Will in all things, not our own **“Seek first the Kingdom of God”** (Mtt.6:33). That may often mean sacrificing something: **“If anyone wants to be my follower he must renounce himself and take up his cross every day to follow me”** as Jesus knew and taught (Mtt.16:24).

Second, if we do God’s Will and love others, then we will be also acting as a channel of peace to them **“My peace I give you .. this is my gift to you”** (Jn.14:27) and we will be carrying out Jesus’ command to evangelise: **“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations”** (Mtt.28:19). We will, in fact, be giving them the greatest love possible: the knowledge, love and peace of Jesus as Saviour.

The above **four, key** components of love can be shown visually:

The Diamond of Love

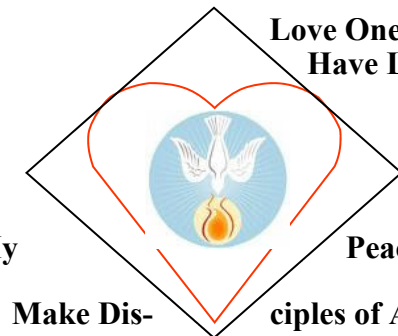
**Love the Lord your God with All Your Heart
With All Your Soul and With All Your Strength**

**Seek First the
Kingdom of God.**

**Take Up Your
Cross**

**My
Gift to You.**

My



**Love One Another as I
Have Loved You**

**Peace I Give You .. This is My
disciples of All Nations.**

Our Catholic Faith

14. Salvation Through Jesus Christ

Part 3 - Our Response Must Be Love



Ques- Reflection

tions for

1. What signifies a genuine living Faith in Jesus?
2. What are the components of Christian Love?
3. Has the Old Testament prescriptive to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Lv.19:18, and which was restated by Jesus in Mtt.22:39) been superseded?

God's Immense Love For Us

The magnitude of God's love for us is such that we can barely believe it. Without seeing God as Love (1 Jn.4:8, 16) we could never understand why God would want to create us **“What is man that you think of him, or a child of Adam that you care for him?”** (Ps.8).



Even after his love was rejected by our first parents, he showed just how much love he had for us by giving his Son that we might still be saved **“For this is how much God loved the world, he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”** (Jn. 3:16).

Indeed, Jesus himself stressed how much love he had when, anticipating his Passion, he said **“No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends”** (Jn. 15: 13).

Jesus died as part of God's eternal plan of salvation for us **“The wisdom that was hidden which God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began”** (1 Cor.2:7, and similar in Eph.1). By that plan we have been released from the effects of the first sin - it is now possible to attain the destiny that God wanted for us from the first moment of our creation, namely to be with him for ever **“We have been admitted into God's favour in which we are living and look forward exultantly to God's glory”** (Rm.5:2 and similar Rm.8:18).

Our Responsibility to Love

God wants to share his life with us and wants us, in effect, to be his adopted children (Rm.14f). All we have to do is to accept his offer by having faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, **“who justifies everyone who has faith in Jesus”** (Rm. 3:26) and by demonstrating this faith in a positive way by our actions **“It is by deeds and not only by believing that someone is justified”** (Jm.2:24).

In other words it is only by a **living faith** we continue to be seen as righteous in the eyes of God. But, what is really meant by good deeds for the purpose of remaining righteous before God? In other words, what is a living faith? These questions are best answered by recognising the core of Jesus' message, the essence of his teaching, and that clearly relates to **love**.

Throughout his ministry Jesus showed love and compassion to people. His example is what we must always try to imitate. Jesus emphasised this at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples: **“Do you understand what I have done? .. If I as Lord and Master have washed your feet then you must wash each other's feet .. I have given you an example so you may copy what**

I have done” (Jn.15:13-15).

Jesus wants us to be pre-occupied with a love that is shown by a humble service to others. His urgency is shown by his double proclamation: **“I give you a new commandment, love one another. You must love one another as I have loved you”** (Jn.13:34). It is important to recognise that his repetition goes beyond the usual prescription to **“love your neighbour as yourself”** (Lv.19:18, and Jesus' answer to the scribe in Mk.12:31). The responsibility to love is now unambiguous, it is **limitless** because Jesus' love is limitless.



In the allegory of the Vine (Jn.15) Jesus makes clear we can only stay united to him by keeping his commandments **“If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love”** and he clarifies what he means by this by restating his new commandment *twice* **“love one another as I have loved you”** (Jn.15:12, 17).

Have We Been Transformed by God's Love?

The first priority for our love must always be God: The greatest and most important commandment is: **“You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole strength”** (Deut.6, reinforced by Jesus in Mk.12:30).



All the other Old Testament commandments (Ex.20 and Deut.5) are summarised by Jesus' new commandment of love but, in reality, if we **truly** follow the first commandment to love God then Jesus' new commandment **must** necessarily follow. This is the point Jesus wanted his disciples to realise.

With this truth in mind, the central questions we must ask ourselves, and continue to ask of ourselves, are “In everything we do, are we showing **love** to others as Jesus commanded? Are we **loving** as Jesus did?” In other words, have we really been transformed by God's love for us and by Jesus' saving death?

In trying to answer these questions honestly we must first understand what Jesus **means** by love. There are, after all, many different types of love. However, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10) it seems clear that Jesus is concerned with a **practical** love, actions that show concern for the welfare of others, actions that are unselfish, actions that are not based either on personal animosity or personal gain, actions that show kindness.

It reveals that this type of love does not require us necessarily to **like** a person but to be **good** to them. After all, it is difficult if not impossible to like anyone who does evil acts, but we must nevertheless still love them and never judge them,