

Sunday, January 31, 2016

It Is Not Naïve to Believe in Love

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/013116.cfm>

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13 or 13:4-13

Luke 4:21-30

There are a few books that can make you tear up every time you read them. One such book is [Love You Forever](#), a children's book written by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Sheila McGraw. It was first released in 1986 and since then has sold over sixteen million copies in English alone. It is the gentle tale of the power of love between a mother and her son. It stands as a testament to the fact that true love lasts forever and that those who experience that true love learn how to pass it on to others.

(Sorry, I can't tell you the whole story. If you haven't read it before, do yourself a favor: buy it or borrow it and read it. It does not matter your age, gender, or if you have children of your own. You are a human being created by God and that is all you need to "get it.")

What does true love look like? If we look around, we can see many examples. It looks like a mother holding her baby and rocking him to sleep when he is sick and now a teenager. It is a man who looks at his wife more fondly now after twenty-five years of marriage than he did when they were first married. It looks like a woman consoling her dear friend after receiving the word that she has cancer.

You can turn on your television right now and see all the hate and despair in the world, packaged for your consumption in little two- to three-minute packages. But the truth is that love is always more powerful than hate and that love is on display all around us, all of the time. You just have to open your eyes.

Love is on display in those who have given their lives to God and service through ordination and the consecrated life. February 2 marks the end of [a year dedicated to those in consecrated life](#). Those whom God has called to such a commitment show us how love can take over our lives and transform us.

Love can be seen in the many faces of those devoted to Catholic education, and through their sacrifice and devotion. This coming week is [Catholic Schools Week](#), a time to highlight not only the commitment the Church has made to quality education, but also the men and women who have given so much to generations of Catholic and non-Catholic students. Recently, after almost forty years, I heard from my first grade teacher at [Queen of Apostles Catholic School in Alexandria, VA](#). She asked if I remembered her. Of course I did! She made a huge impact on my life, for what she gave me was more than math and reading, she gave me her love.



Love was seen in the sacrifice of the thousands that braved the snowstorms of the East Coast to attend the [March for Life](#) in Washington, DC. You probably have seen by now the photos of buses and vans stuck on highways in and out of the nation's capital. Especially powerful are the photos and videos in social media of priests from Des Moines and Sioux City, Iowa [celebrating Mass on an altar made of snow](#) with busloads of people. It was a moment where those who traveled to bring a message of love were able to, in the face of trial, celebrate the most pure example of love, Jesus.

In the end, Jesus is the source of all love and the power by which all these examples and many more are able to bring love into a world that so desperately needs it. Paul's treatise on love to the Corinthians can too easily become a sentimental list of notions reserved primarily for refrigerators and wedding ceremonies. But it is more than that. It tells us about a force that never fails. When it appears all hope is lost, love finds a way.

It is maturity that allows one to see the triumph of love. Paul speaks about how this talk of love is not that of children. It is not naïve to believe in love. When one matures and puts away those things of childhood, love remains and now can be seen in its entire splendor. There will always be those who think they are wise or mature by seeing love as fleeting and life simply as trial. They will claim love in the manner that Paul speaks about is ridiculous. Profoundly, they are correct. The love we can experience, talked about by Paul and exemplified in our savior, Jesus Christ, is folly to this world. But maturity allows one to risk, seeing with the eyes of the divine instead of those merely human. And when we look at the world this way, not only is love all around, in its many forms it is almost unbelievable.

May your God hold and keep you, especially during this Jubilee Year of Mercy, and sing to you when shadows have fallen and you need him the most:

“I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living
My baby you'll be.”

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

NOTICES

LENTEN COVERS FOR LPi PRINTING PARTNERS

LPi has created an exclusive series of bulletin covers for the Lenten season and Easter. The covers are available to LPi printing partners at no cost on our Art & Media Portal; just search keyword "[Lent 2016](#)". Lenten covers and banners are also available for purchase [here](#).

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

The Year of Consecrated Life that began on November 30, 2014, will close on the World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2016. The USCCB has resources prepared for parishes, available at www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/consecrated-life/year-of-consecrated-life/.

Logos, printed materials, and other resources for the Year of Consecrated Life are also available from the National Religious Vocation Conference at <https://nrv.net/275/publication/year-of-consecrated-life-2841>.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated in the United States January 31–February 6, 2016. Many parish communities hold special events in honor of Catholic Schools. For more information and for resources and ideas, visit: <http://www.ncea.org/our-services/catholic-schools-week>.

PRAYER

Too late have I loved you,

O Beauty so ancient,

O Beauty so new.

Too late have I loved you!

You were within me but I was outside myself,
and there I sought you!

In my weakness I ran after the beauty of the things
you have made.

You were with me,

and I was not with you.

The things you have made kept me from you,
the things which would have no being
unless they existed in you!

You have called,

you have cried,

and you have pierced my deafness.

You have radiated forth,

you have shined out brightly,

and you have dispelled my blindness.

You have sent forth your fragrance,

and I have breathed it in,

and I long for you.

I have tasted you,

and I hunger and thirst for you.

You have touched me,

and I ardently desire your peace.

—*Excerpt from the Confessions of St. Augustine.*

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