

For Sunday, May 6, 2018

## We Are All Called to Love

Sixth Sunday of Easter

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/050618.cfm>

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

[St. Therese of Lisieux](#) was only a teenager when she entered the convent. Like many young people, she was unsure of her talents and how she should serve God and others. All around her were nuns who had special abilities or were strong leaders. She wondered what her special gift was.

In prayer, she came upon this passage from Paul's letter to the Corinthians: "Set your desires on the greater gifts. And I will now show you the way which surpasses all others ... If I have not love, then I am nothing." ([1 Cor 12:31-13:3](#)). She came to realize that love was her special calling.

In her autobiography, "[The Story of a Soul](#)," she writes:

"Then, nearly ecstatic with the supreme joy in my soul, I proclaimed: O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my calling: my calling is love. Certainly I have found my proper place in the Church, and you gave me that very place, my God. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love ..."

Love is the supreme calling of all Christians. No matter what resources or talents we have, we are all called to love. Not all of us can preach or teach. Not all of us can feed the poor or visit prisoners. Not all of us can travel to mission countries to convert souls. But all of us can and must love.

Love is the greatest witness of the Christian life. No matter how eloquent our preaching, no matter how logical our defense of our faith, no matter how selfless our service to others, it is the love we show in doing all this that speaks to the beauty and truth of the Christian message. It was Jesus' love that drew others to him, and it was the love that his first disciples showed for one another that built up the Church. In the same way, it will be our untiring, selfless love that will continue to reform, renew, and build up the Church in our day.

To love as Jesus commands us, we need his help. We need grace. That is why St. John tells us in this Sunday's [second reading](#) that love consists in this — not that we have loved God but that He has loved us. When we realize how unconditionally God loves us, we will begin showing that same love to others. When we realize how much He has forgiven us, we will freely forgive those who hurt us. When we realize that everything we have comes from Him, we will generously share with the needy. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we will passionately share the good news of that love.



Imagine if all Christians really lived Jesus' commandment of love. Imagine a world in which [the hungry are fed](#) and in which no one would be poor or lonely. Imagine Christians armed with love bringing peace to the [ongoing conflict in Syria](#). That is the world that God wants to build through us.

However, we cannot begin to change the world until our hearts are changed. We are wounded. We have tried to love but have been hurt. We have given of ourselves but have been rejected. Now fear and shame keep us from opening our heart to God and others. We can find healing by bringing all that pain to God who promises never to reject us. He can take our cold, stony hearts and give us hearts that are capable of loving again. Then our transformation and that of our world can begin.

*Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

## PRAYER

O my God,  
I love you above all things,  
with my whole heart and soul,  
because you are all good and worthy of all my love.  
I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you.  
I forgive all who have injured me  
and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

Amen

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