

# Our Readers Write

Saint Paul's message that Love and Faith are intertwined is revealed in the Epistle to the Romans. My opening prayer is a plea:

If we are trustworthy, we will love and be loved "Let your love be genuine, hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; (10) love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.(11) Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. (14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.(16) Live in harmony with one another. [Romans 12:9ff. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." [Hebrews 11:1]. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding." [Proverbs 3:5].

This is the foundation for love.

In the Epistle to the Romans, after an introduction [1:1-15], Paul presents aspects of the doctrine of justification by faith [1:16 to 11:36] imputing it to the righteousness of Christ. Then, he moves to practical exhortations about love and faith [in 12:1 to 15:13] that are followed by a conclusion with personal comments, salutations, and the names of twenty-four Christians at Rome; the Epistle ends with a benediction, and a doxology [15:14 to 16:27].

I have drawn my topic from Chapter 12 to the first part of Chapter 15 in the Epistle to the Romans where Paul outlines the specific ways Faith and Love intertwine and transform our discipleship in Christ, and he

records the behavior that results from this transformation. Paul wrote that: "believers should live not under the law, but under the grace of God. If we, believers, live in obedience to God and to rightfully delegated authority, if we study the scriptures; if we share the Word with others; and if we offer love to each other, then, we, believers, will not fall into error or sin. That is, if we love freely."

But, what is Faith and what is Love freely? [You can "google" the words Faith and LOVE and get more than 2,020,000,000 definitions and references for them]

Yes, but what is Faith and how is it related to Love?

Perhaps an anecdote will help: a young man, Jack, eager to help his elderly neighbor, Wilbur, asks if he can do any painting; Wilbur's answer is a definite yes, the porch is in bad shape and needs painting. Jack eagerly accepts to help and is directed to the garage for the buckets of paint. Fifteen minutes later, Jack rings the doorbell announcing he finished the painting job. Wilbur is impressed; as Jack turns to leave he shouts, hey Wilbur, by the way, it's a Ferrari not a Porsche.

So, we need to trust in someone's selfless giving, it tells us that the heart is in the right place when we ask someone to trust us, but sometimes it is awkwardly skewered when love creates other issues and trust is lost.



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Romans 13:10 reassures us that “love does not work evil/inconveniences [distrust] on a neighbor, love involves the fulfillment of life, it is the “fulfillment of the law [through trust].” It is expressed in a proverb: *La rabbia sta prendendo il veleno mentre aspetta che l'altra persona muoia* [Anger is taking poison while waiting for the other person to die. I don't trust you, I wish you evil]. There is neither love nor trust here.

Romans 12:9-16 is an echo from Jeremiah 29:7 and Luke 6:27: Jeremiah says the Lord urges us to “Seek the peace and prosperity of the city (Babylon) into which I have carried you (70 years of exile). Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper”; Jeremiah is echoed in Luke 6:27 which records Jesus' command that we should pray for our enemies; and Paul in Romans reassures us we will prosper if we endure in suffering for the sake of love. Anger is an antonym to Love and the Faith we place in Love; it does not foster trust. Yes, anger is like taking poison while waiting for the other person to die.

Nothing seems more natural than to hate those who have mistreated us. But we are urged to a different path:

**a.** The world says, Get even. God says, Seek the good of those who have harmed you. The world says, Get angry. God says, Pray for them. The world says, Look for chances to make them suffer. God says, Look for chances to do good to them. The world says, Don't waste time loving bad people. God says, I want you search for ways to love them anyway.

**b.** We are faced with: three options: [So, every time we are faced with people who mistreat us we have three options]:

- 1) We can overtly hate them, wishing them harm: That accomplishes nothing.
- 2) We can struggle to hold back our anger: That will emotionally exhaust us.
- 3) We can pray for God to bless them: That door opens for God to bless us also

**c.** Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul raise some questions we need to consider:

- I. From where Do My Enemies Come?
- II. Who Are My Enemies?
- III. What should I do about my enemies?
- IV. How should I treat my enemies?

For Jesus, the last question is the only important one; and the only question which the Gospels address:

- 1) Greet them with open arms.
- 2) Disarm them with affection.
- 3) Do Good to them.
- 4) Refuse to speak evil about them.
- 5) Thank God for them.
- 6) Pray for them.
- 7) Ask God to bless them.

At the end of the 1996 movie *Marvin's Room*, Bessie, played by Diane Keaton, has cared for her sick father and her aunt for 20 years. After learning that she has leukemia, she receives a visit from her estranged sister, Lee, who lives in a dysfunctional relationship, played by Meryl Streep. Bessie tells Lee, “I've been lucky to have had so much love in my life.” Lee says yes, she agrees that her father and her aunt really do love her. Bessie seems startled for a moment. Her sister doesn't understand. Bessie doesn't mean she's lucky to be loved. She means she is lucky to have had so much love to give to others.

This kind of “lucky to love” is evident in Saint Paul's Epistle, twelve perspectives: This is the amazing perspective Paul has written: If we are full of God's faith and love, the gifts will overflow to others; problems will turn into solutions, fear will turn into hope, anger will turn into peace. The only stipulation is that we must be trustworthy, then, we will love and be loved.

Romans 12:9-16, then, constitutes Paul's perspectives for faith and love which contains twelve precise ingredients. In each of the perspectives and ingredients, we must ask ourselves: if you don't trust me, how can you love me? And, If I don't possess faith in you, how can I believe your love?

# A Reflection

## 1. Love must be sincere [*“Let love be Genuine”* (v. 9a)]

The word “genuine” literally means “sincerity” or sine cera/without face wax, “without hypocrisy.” It urges us to act out of true feelings; to put forth the true appearance of virtue. Hawthorne in the *Minister’s Black Veil* urges us to remove the veil which hides the soul. He advises us to love from the core of our humanity, he says: be your true self don’t act out of false desires.

## 2. Love must be discerning [*“Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good,”* v. 9b].

Love and Faith hate evil! Often we think of love as a sugared emotion that causes us to lose our moral balance, but that’s far from true Christian love. We cannot love evil and love God at the same time any more than we can love money and love God at the same time. Here’s another way to put it. The discussion of evil no longer shocks us in a world where every lack of trust is acceptable. We formerly blushed when something risqué appeared in conversation or in the media. Now we enjoy it. Our love needs discernment or else we will end up loving things we ought not to love—and enter into relationships that are not morally acceptable. We need to develop sound judgments, insights, and perceptions because: Not every relationship is a healthy relationship. Not every choice is a beneficial choice. Not every friendship enhances our lives. Not every job is a wise career move. Not every roommate is a spiritual presence. Not every purchase is a wise use of our money.

There are really two parts to making wise and discerning choices: **First**, we must know what is right. This is crucial because we live in a world where evidently we have lost the sense of right and wrong. Technology presents its stuff in shades of gray; so, everything is “neither good nor bad but thinking makes it so.” **Second**, we must have the courage to choose what we know to be right. True discernment gives us a vision to see what is right and, then, the courage to choose to do it. Because if faith is trust, then wholesome love must follow it.

## 3. Love must display tender affection [*“Love one another with brotherly affection”* (v. 10a)].

Paul uses two words that speak of the love of family members for each other. They are Greek words that have been joined together: *philos*, tender affection, fondness, devotion,” and *adelphos*, literally means “one born of the same womb.” It is the “affection arising from those born from the same womb.” It’s easy to understand why the early Christians adopted this word to describe Christian love. All Christians have been “born from the same womb” through the new birth of our Baptism. Jesus said, “You must be born again” (John 3:3). To be born again means to receive new life through personal faith in Jesus Christ. It means to be “born from God’s womb” where trust is linked to love, separating them from dishonesty.



We are different from each other; we have different habits and hobbies, different likes and dislikes. Yet one thing binds us together. We come from the same womb; the Church. There is a special place in my heart for my sisters and brothers so that even if I haven’t seen them for a long time, it’s as if I last saw them yesterday. And, it means if I am estranged from them, there’s an ache in my heart to be reconciled with them. There is a bond that time, and anger, and distance cannot break. Perhaps we’re not comfortable with people who refuse to give a sign of peace, or with those who pray the Rosary during the Mass. But coming from the same womb we are linked to truth because Love and Faith are linked together. If we trust, we love more fully.

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## **4. Love must honor others [*“Outdo one another in showing honor”*(v. 10b)]**

The Greek word *panoplia* (complete set of armor), and the Latin word *vituperare* (to find fault with) reveal a sense of competition; so, the translation “outdo one another” is very accurate. In the Christian context, it means that we take affirmative action to ensure that others receive preferential treatment before we do. This obviously rubs against our human nature so that it is not possible without the infusion of God’s Holy Spirit in our hearts. Because the Spirit speaks truth in love. Father William Strickland, who helped keep the Jesuits together in England after the suppression of the order in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV, said – “I have observed, throughout life, that a man may do an immense deal of good, if he does not care who gets the credit for it.”

## **5. Love must be enthusiastic [*“Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord”* (v. 11)]**

Religious “enthusiasm” is derided as emotionalism and fanaticism. Paul’s use of the greek word “enthousiazein (to be inspired by God)” has nothing to do with how loud we sing or how much we clap after the homily or whether or not we raise our hands when we worship. Those things are purely secondary. Paul is challenging us to put as much energy into our acts of love and faith as we do into our work: he wants us to be “entheos, possessed by God,” so we will “never be sluggish in zeal and in earnest endeavor; but be burning with the Spirit, to serve the Lord.” His phrase “be aglow and burning with the Spirit” refers to a boiling pot. Serve the Lord with zeal and boiling intensity. The world will not be moved by half-hearted disciples who in half measures, separate love from faith; it will be moved by the heavy cost of discipleship in love filled with faith [trust].

## **6. Love must be patient [*“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer”* (v. 12)]**

Behind these three phrases lies the linking of Faith and Love to hope. But hope in what? The hope of resurrection, the hope of salvation, the hope of the Second Coming? While we wait, we trust and love. We must accept all opportunities to be patient to endure suffering, to suffer under the burden, to be constant in prayer, and joyful in the hope that faith and love will keep us joined to our expectations.

There was once a farmer in ancient China who owned a horse. “You are so lucky!” his neighbor told him, “to have a horse to pull the cart for you.” The farmer replied: “Maybe.” One day he didn’t latch the farm gate properly and the horse ran away. “Oh no! That is terrible news!” his neighbor cried. “Such bad luck!” The farmer replied: “Maybe.” A few days later the horse returned, bringing with it six wild horses. “How fantastic! You are so lucky,” his neighbor told him. The farmer replied: “Maybe. The following week the farmer’s son was training one of the wild horses when it threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. “Oh no!” the neighbor cried. “Such bad luck, all over again!” The farmer replied: “Maybe, The next day soldiers came and took away all the young men to fight in the army. The farmer’s son was left behind. “You are so lucky!” his neighbor cried. The farmer replied: “Maybe.”

So, When we interpret a situation as an opportunity’ or a ‘disaster’ it shapes us, we are shaped by the way we respond. But the Taoist Farmer shows that we can never truly know how a situation is going to turn out. There are no intrinsic ‘opportunities’ or ‘threats’ — there is only the “maybe” in what happens and how we choose to respond. In which case, it makes sense to look for the opportunities in every situation. If we are facing a crisis, how might we turn it into an opportunity? When we’ve lost much, sometimes all we can choose is our attitude in the face of trials. We must accept all opportunities to be patient, to endure suffering, to suffer under the burden, to be constant in prayer, and joyful in our expectations to be whole and glued together in our hope that faith and love will keep us joined to Jesus’ suffering in the Garden where he joined his will to God’s will.

# A Reflection

## 7. Love must be generous [*“Contribute to the needs of the saints” (v. 13a)*]

The word translated “contribute” is the verb form of the word *koinonia*, to share with others, really a communion. On one level it means sharing in the hurts and heartaches of others. On another level, it mean *diaconia*: charitable activity on behalf of the poor and suffering, to open our pocketbook and to give so that the poor will have their needs met. Here is a true measure of Christian faith. What are we doing to meet the needs of those who have less than we own? Do we engage in sugared aspects of love or do we trust that we can be part of the solution to problems in our community. Do we give “from the top” or “off the bottom” of our possessions, offering love slogans without the trust that life can be made better for those less fortunate.

## 8. Love must pursue hospitality [*“Seek to show hospitality” (v. 13b)*]

The Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*, *philos*, an affection” and *xenos*, a stranger or foreigner: literally one who loves shows kindness to strangers. This command shows up in various places in the New Testament because hospitality was a crucial quality of the early church. In the first century there were no Ventian Inns or Hilton Hotels. When Paul came to Corinth, he could not reserve a room at the Marriott.

The few existing inns were drabby and dangerous. Many were little more than brothels and havens for criminals and robbers. As Christians traveled from place to place across the Empire, they didn’t have the option of staying in comfort. If the Christian message was spread it would require Christians to open their homes. The only way an evangelist from Antioch succeeded in Ephesus is when a family in Ephesus opened their home to him. The only way a teacher from Caesarea could visit Cyprus would be for someone from Cyprus to open his home and say, “My Brother, come and stay with me.”

Ironically, God is the original “lover of strangers.” For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). While we were estranged from God, He sent his Son to the earth. And we who were once strangers and aliens on the earth have now been brought near to God by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11-13). We are no longer strangers, no longer aliens, no longer orphans, no longer separated from God. We are now as near to God as His own Son, for through the blood of Jesus we are brought into the family. Because He loved us when we were strangers, we are strangers no more. That same thing happens today when we show hospitality to others. We are only doing for others what God did for us because we trusted that God loved us.



## 9. Love must be kind [*“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them” (v. 14)*]

The root of kindness is benevolence, offering good will, affection, tenderness, compassion. There are two parts to this that we must consider: 1. What happens to us. 2. How we respond

We will be ignored, hated, mistreated, misunderstood, injured, lose what is precious to us, and there will be moments to cry because we are hurting deeply from scars. The scars can be attacks coming from those closest to us, sometimes from our own family, from our closest friends. The hurt can come in malicious words or physical injury. There is no escaping this reality, and to deny it is like denying the sun rises in the east and sets in



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the west. Sooner or later people we loved and trusted will let us down, and some of them will turn against us. At other times misfortune of a moral and physical sort will be our moment of recognition that love and trust can be fragmented and broken. It will be our moment to see whether or not the person we love sits down and comforts himself/herself in the discoveries of faith. It will be the moment when we live in a dark hole of injury and know that Faith reveals the object of love. Faith discerns, comprehends and receives most in the act of love. If there is moral injury we sing with the musician Nestor Alexander Haddaway “What is love? Oh baby, don’t hurt me. Don’t hurt me, no more... no more.”

αγάπη

[agape] • Greek

*agape* is the highest form of love. It requires faithfulness, commitment and sacrifice without expecting anything in return. It is unconcerned with the self and concerned with the greatest good of another.

If the injury is some physical misfortune, when the rupture between love and trust comes to us what will we do? How do we bless our fortune coming from God, when we would rather curse our misfortune? When faced with this mistreatment, we can sincerely ask God to do for others what we want God to do for us. And we can ask God to prevent us from asking why misfortune has crossed our threshold.

The greater the hurt, the greater the potential blessing that will come when we bless those who curse us. And, when we accept the cross given to us. An enemy and a misfortune can be a gift from God. Though we don’t know it and often can’t see it, being hurt so deeply is a gift from God. To say that it is not a gift, we easily excuse evil or condone mistreatment.

It is exactly this act of love and trust that Joseph intended when he said to his brothers, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). Our enemies humble us, our suffering keep us on our knees, they reveal our weakness, and they expose our total need for God. Just as David needed King Saul to pursue him, to persecute him and repeatedly attempted to kill him, we need the enemies and the injuries God sends us. If we didn’t need them, he wouldn’t send them. Therefore, we thank God who knows best; we love our enemies and love our suffering the best way we can. Often God raises up an enemy and sends us misfortune to see if we really want to be like Jesus. He will keep our enemies alive, and our suffering intense as long as we need them.

God’s love for His covenant people in the Old Testament, expressed by the Hebrew word *hesed* (*chesed*), is clearly “faithful love.” In the Hebrew Scriptures, *hesed* refers to love that is both promised and owed. It is an exchange of affection and loyalty based on mutual obligations: love formed in the bonds of a covenant.

Contracts concern material possessions, but covenants concern intangibles like honor and loyalty. When used for human relationships, this Hebrew word means union, fidelity, and commitment in the context of the marriage covenant (Gen 24:49), and when used between men or nations, it expresses the covenant bond of family loyalty or a treaty obligation (Gen 21:27; 1 Sam 11:1), and when used in the face of suffering it means that Jesus is so close to us we can feel the hot breath of his kiss on our souls.

# A Reflection

**10. Love must show sympathy [*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (v. 15)*]** Love and Faith are intimately connected. They don’t stand stoically on the side while others are suffering a difficult time. We probably don’t find it easier to weep with someone else than to rejoice with them. But It is a good thing when we can laugh with our friends, and then weep with them later in their suffering. This is the measure of the word “sympathy,” it asks us to laugh and to cry “with” someone.

In an similar way, the word *agape* describes God’s love and faith for us but also for the human response to God’s love as well as for love shared and expressed between covenant believers who are brothers and sisters in the covenant family. For example, in John 21:15, Jesus asks Peter: “do you love (agapas) me more than these?” In Matthew 5:43, *agape* refers to the love of one’s neighbor and seems interchangeable with *philos*, brotherly love. Jesus says, “You have heard how it was said, You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” In this case, Jesus uses *agape* when referring to loving an enemy. Therefore, *agape* is not just a covenant love owed in loyalty to a particular person or group with whom one has a committed relationship whether it is God or the human family. *Agape* love refers to a unique love defined by Jesus as an unconditional, self-sacrificing love in faith which does not expect a reward.

In 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, St. Paul gives instructions to all Christians on how they should use their spiritual gifts. He begins his treatise with the words: Though I command languages both human and angelic “if I speak without love (*agape*), I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing” (1 Cor 13:1). Paul uses the word *agape* as the expression of love all Christians should exhibit using the spiritual gifts God has given them. Therefore, *agape* love, whether divine or human, is a self-sacrificial love which the Gospel of John says characterizes God, and which should describe all of us in our response to God and each other. John tells us: For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in

him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16). Is this not evidence that love in faith is a goal?

For the Christian, *agape* love is defined as an expression of divine grace which means it is undeserved and unmerited. In its unique, redefined Christian definition, *agape* is a love human beings cannot give themselves apart from God because *agape*, expressed as self-sacrificial love, is the example Jesus set for us on the cross. The true expression of *agape* love flows from Christ in abundance to us and from us to the world, just as the blood and water flowed from His side on the Cross. For the Christian then, *agape* love is a higher order love because Christ Himself divinely inspired it in trust [faith]. It is not love based on obedience, but *agape* is founded in unmerited grace. *Agape* love, unconditional, self-sacrificial love, is the standard of love Jesus commanded us to express in the human family when He said: This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you [without conditions and in faith].

**11. Love must live in harmony [*“Live in harmony with one another” 16a*]**

The greek word *harmos* urges us “to fit at the base.” The Greek text literally reads, “Think the same things toward each other.” This does not imply total agreement. After all, if two people totally agree on everything, perhaps one of them is unnecessary! The word harmony implies a beautiful symphony, a collection of instruments playing on the same page at the same time. They don’t sound alike and they don’t play the same notes. So it exists in the body of Christ. We don’t all look alike or act alike or sound alike. We certainly don’t always think alike. The church is enriched by a variety of different opinions. But there is harmony amid the cacophony of sounds when we understand that the things which unite us are greater than the things that divide

**12. Love must show humility [*“Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited (literally: “wise in your opinion”)*” (v. 16b)]**

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The greek *kenodoxia* identifies a “conceited,” mean, empty opinion of oneself. And the Italian *conchetto* means having a theoretical opinion of oneself. We must avoid thinking we are too good to associate with people who are not in our social class. Another translation of the verse reads, “Make real friends with the poor.”

Say what you will about Jesus, he was not a snob. He associated with tax collectors, prostitutes and drunkards. And he reserved his harshest words for the Pharisees who robbed widows’ homes and claimed to be serving God. Jesus wasn’t a “front runner.” He was a true “friend of sinners” who welcomed everyone who wanted to meet him. If we trust that Jesus is genuine, then our love is sincere [without the wax of a mask].

It is easy (and spiritually dangerous) to be non-specific when it comes to love and faith. If we are to grow, our love must reach out in faith and trust to people we meet today, and this week. They may come to us through an email or a phone call or a chance encounter or at a meeting or when we are in a hurry and on our way to do something important and we don’t have time to be bothered and we would be glad to help them later. Or the test may come in dealing with the same people we meet, with whom we live, or work, or with whom we go to school, every single day. But they need help now, and what will we do then? That’s the real test of love and trust. Jesus was a true “friend of sinners” who welcomed everyone who wanted to meet him, now not later.

In matters of love and faith, we are not strong; we are only strongly weak – trying to use “our power” more fully. The most powerful recommendation for any church is that the members love one another! The world pines for this. When people are asked what they are looking for in a church, the Pew Research Center has found that the answer is always the same. They are looking for a caring church. Not just a friendly church or a relevant church or a church with plenty of programs. And not just a church where the Bible is clearly taught. As good and essential as those things are, they don’t touch the deepest heart cry of life. They want a church community filled with people who care,

who are trustworthy, who love earnestly, and who support each other because we are a “mystical body,” of inter connected parts of the community, and with life blood flowing through it, and not because we are part of a separate social network in the community.

A Dad asks his son to move a crate that had been delivered to the garage. The Son goes to the garage puts hands firmly on the crate; pushes, but the crate doesn’t move. He complains to his father: “I can’t do it.” The father says: you haven’t used all your power. The boy returns to the garage and shoves a hand truck under the crate and tries to lift and move it; but the crate stays where it is. The boy complains again to his father that he can’t do it; and the father again, insists, “you haven’t used all your power.” The boy braces himself against the wall and tries to shove the crate with his legs but the crate is immovable. The boy finally asks his father “what am I doing wrong.” The father replies “you haven’t used all your power; you haven’t asked me to help.”

Will you be my power, if I ask you to help me? Or, will you, without trust, use my asking for help against me? The Church is not a Community of separate social networks – The clubs and the projects and the meetings are important for development; but they must not become a substitute for the church as a unified community of faith and love. It is the mystical body that unifies us. This love and faith, in truth, that the Church is the mystical body of Christ, that all its members are being guided and directed by Christ the head, is defined by St. Paul in various passages, but more especially in Ephesians 4:4-13 and John 15:5-8). The motor driving love in the *Mystici Corporis* is trust [faith], and he defines that:

The members of the Church are bound together by a supernatural life communicated to them by Christ through the sacraments (John 15:5). Christ is the center and source of life to whom all are united, and who endows each one with gifts fitting him for his position in the body (John 15:7-12). These graces, through which each is equipped for his work, form it into an organized



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whole, whose parts are knit together as though by a system of ligaments and joints (John 15:16; Colossians 2:19).

Through them, too, the Church has its growth and increase, growing in extension as it spreads through the world, and intensively as the individual Christian develops in himself the likeness of Christ (John 15:13-15).



In virtue of this union the Church is the fullness or complement (pleroma) of Christ (Ephesians 1:23). It forms one whole with Him; and Paul speaks of the Church as “Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

This union between head and members is conserved and nourished by Eucharist. Through Eucharist our incorporation into the Body of Christ is alike outwardly symbolized and inwardly actualized; “We being many are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

We are people of Faith and Conviction; we believe that to love God with all our hearts, minds, and energies, and to Love our neighbors, as ourselves, are the two important aspects of life and commandment in the Jewish Torah and in the Christian Gospels [cited in Mark chapter 12, verses 28-34].

Saint Paul in 1Corinthians13:4-7, reinforces the Commandments of faith and love:

***“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres.”***

If I tell you that I love you, am I trapped forever? Yes, if I trust your love.

Through all the sadness and trauma in the world, we find peace in transcendent moments of reflection on our hope and promise in the ultimate demonstration of faith and love: in the death, and sacrifice, of Jesus, the Christ, on the Cross. It is to these ends, therefore, that Paul directs his message of love and faith in the Epistle to the Romans. Faith is belief, firm persuasion, assurance, conviction, fidelity to provide the assurances of love. Faith is confidence in what we hope for and the assurance that a higher power is working in our lives, even though we cannot see it. Faith knows that no matter what the situation of hatred or suffering, in our lives or someone else’s, that the Jesus is working in it with love for us.

Faith, is then, the trust in the power of love through which God enters our lives to dispel anger and fear. Love sits down with us to comfort us during our discoveries of faith to reveal the invisible things of God to us. This kind of “lucky to love” is evident in Saint Paul’s amazing twelve faith perspectives: If we are full of faith. or trust, in God’s promises to love us, the gifts will overflow to others: problems will turn into solutions, fear will turn into hope, anger will turn into peace. We must ask ourselves if you don’t trust me how can you love me? If I don’t possess faith in you, how can I believe you love me?

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