

January 4, 2024

Daily Reflections



TO LOVE IN DEED AND TRUTH

By Fr. David C. Robinson, SJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ... If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God.

1 JOHN 3:16-21

Reflection

For centuries, John's First Epistle has been a clarion call for Christian communities to embrace and nurture the gift of love—the reality of God's life

and presence in the world. However, the message is no invitation to a self-satisfying dose of sentimentality or a cozy spirituality. John's exhortation carries a firm and practical mandate for all: **The way we came to know love was that Jesus laid down his life for us; so, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers** (and sisters!). This commandment is clarified in no uncertain terms: **If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him?** Platitudes about charity and care for the poor are no substitute for concrete, day-to-day responses to the pleas of those who suffer in our midst. This exhortation concludes with a tender urging that all people of faith remain in a bond of gracious love with those who need to experience the gentle embrace of a community committed to their well-being: **Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.** John's words cut to the core of authentic Christian life—we know the truths by which we are called to live, but our deeds are the currency by which we show our true dedication to the self-sacrificing love Jesus bequeathed to us as our inheritance. This may be a self-evident 'truth' of our religious faith, but it is in the living that we discover the harvest of grace that is indeed ours by loving 'in deed.'



Mary and Jesus

For Pondering

- What are the concrete actions in your life that help you to understand the gift of learning to love 'in deed?'
 - When have you experienced a spontaneous and generous gift of love 'in deed' from another?
 - In what areas of your life do you feel invited to nurture a greater freedom in expressing 'deeds of love?'
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