

October 23, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

Image by Christine Sponchia

INCLUSIVE LOVE

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**”*

MATTHEW 5:43-48

Reflection

The communion of mutual and reciprocal love and deep relationship between and among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, inspires our living and loving. Today’s

reflection on God the Father draws us into the unconditional love of God.

TRINITARIAN LIFE OF THE FATHER

Scripture says that “God is Love” (1 John 4:8, 16). As written in the Catholic Catechism, God’s love is the context for one of the most beautiful paragraphs about the Trinity, describing the innermost secret and core of who God is:

“God’s very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.” (CCC, 221)

God is an eternal exchange of love between the Persons of the Trinity. This phrase describes the all-encompassing mystery of the Trinity in its purest essence. We are destined to share in that exchange!

The scripture selected for today, Matthew 5:43-48, invites us to reflect on God, the Father – who Is Creator, Divine Lover, and who reveals profound holiness and inclusive *Love*. **“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”** (Matthew 5:48)

My own dear father used to say to us, *“If something is worth doing, it is worth doing well.”* He also said that our mother, his wife of 63 years, taught him how to love. Putting these two thoughts together creates rich imagery for a dawning realization over my lifetime. Being perfect is not about being without blemish or doing everything to the best of one’s ability. Rather, God’s perfection lies in Love, and so does mine. God is love and loves without condition. God’s love is all-inclusive. As it is said in Romans 8:39, **“Nothing can separate us from the love of God.”** God is all-loving, compassionate, merciful, forgiving, and desires for me to be one within God’s extravagant love. If I am to live in God’s ways, then I am to love with no strings attached. To be perfect, that is to love well and freely. I am invited to be mature, to be whole, to live with integrity so that the inside and the outside of me matches.

These qualities help me/us to relate to God, who is LOVE and the creator of all LIFE. God, as Creator, continually loves the universe into the fullness of life. You and I are God’s best gift to God’s self because God loves us just as we are. We are to allow grace to work in us so that we, too, emulate God’s loving ways.



Holy Trinity icon
Photo by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

For Pondering

- When have I experienced the unconditional love of God?

- Who has taught me to love?
 - For what grace do I pray so that I may strive to love as God loves?
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For Prayer

*We pray to the honor of God the FATHER
who is the model of all perfection/wholeness.
We seek in all things whatever is most perfect,
meaning what is most whole, true, good, and life-giving.
Teach me to love as you love,
in a manner that is inclusive and without strings attached.
Shape my heart like your own, loving, and gracious Father.
Amen.*

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