

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

God does not have favourites. Acts 10:25-26, 34-35,44-48
Pure and simple: God is love. 1 John 4:7-10
Remain in my love; be happy. John 15:9-17

Next week:

The ascension.
Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians
1:17-23; Mark 16:15-20

In a nutshell

The Gospel tells us that real joy comes through loving and being loved by the One who is the source of all love. The art of loving is a lifelong process that develops and deepens with age and experience. May our own attempts to love be free of all manipulation and self-created notions of what constitutes 'love'. May we love like Jesus did.



My dilemma

A reader shares:

Faith can be such a paradox. It is my greatest source of strength and at the same time my greatest test. I have been in a loving relationship for two years with a boy who doesn't believe in God. As someone who was raised with a strong faith commitment this has been one of the most trying periods of my life. I was aware of our deep differences well before I fell in love with him. In a way I suspect that my feelings for him developed because of these differences - the 'opposites attracts' theory. But now the reality has set in. I am living with this dissonance. My dilemma is whether to make life easy for myself and break free from what I know will be a difficult relationship, or to hang on to someone who loves me so much that he has committed himself to battling the odds by embracing our relationship. Neither of us know how we'll manage except that we have the belief that we have our love.

And here is where I find my greatest solace. Jesus taught us about love, the greatest commandment of all. If we have love, we have God. And so, even though I am constantly struggling with my faith, trying to find a balance between my beliefs and that of my boyfriend, I know that our love is a gift from God. We are both blessed to know love, to have love and to share love.

I find it ironic that throughout this experience I feel as if I am growing distant from my faith, yet never before in my life have I given my faith so much thought. My greatest wish is that my boyfriend will one day share my faith. That is my mission - a pact I have made with God.

For now I am filled with fear, hope, anxiety and great comfort all at the same time. I feel helpless but I also sense my faith maturing. This has truly become my encounter with God.

Lifelong love

Waiting at traffic lights, I caught sight of my neighbours - an elderly mother and her adult son - walking along, happily chatting. The son I knew to be an adopted child and had been born with physical and mental disabilities.

Seeing the two made me think about true love. Some 35 years ago this woman, with her devoted husband, made a decision to adopt a baby with disabilities. The husband had died, and my neighbour continued to live out their love, caring for their son and making arrangements for his ongoing care should he outlive her.

I said a quiet prayer that I might learn to love as deeply and faithfully as that. (WD)

Love and truth

During the canonisation of Edith Stein in 1999, John Paul II cautioned against the assumption that truth is the opinion held by the greatest number of people. Truth and love require one another, he said. As Edith Stein had taught: 'Do not accept anything as truth if it lacks love; and do not accept as love anything which lacks truth.'



- 'Remain in my love.' Share a time when it was difficult to remain loving; a time when you wanted to withdraw your love from someone.
- Sometimes true love entails 'letting go' of the beloved. Is this part of your life experience? Discuss.
- Holy Spirit, when it comes to loving, help us to seek the right mix of assertiveness and submission, boldness and humility, impatience for justice and patient compassion. Amen.



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