



A journal for restless minds

## TIME PASSES

*Eternity remains*

## LOVE ENOUGH

*By our deeds he will know us*

Colloquī is a Deacon's Corner weekly journal. Its mission and purpose: to encourage serious discussion, to promote reasoned debate, and to provide serious content for those who hope to find their own pathway to God.

Each week Colloquī will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more.

Be forewarned! Articles may and often will contain fuel for controversy, but always with the express intent to seek the Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us God.

## Time Passes

*Eternity remains*

From the windows of an ordinary apartment block on the corner of a narrow street the young lad who lived there would often note the passing hours on a sun-dial on which was written: 'Time passes, Eternity remains.' No one then could have imagined what lay in store for this poor boy, but as history would record, this unlikely lad would soon make history of his own, leaving a legacy that changed the world.

Time indeed does quickly pass; fleeting ripples disturb once still waters, then too soon fade away, all lost and forgotten.

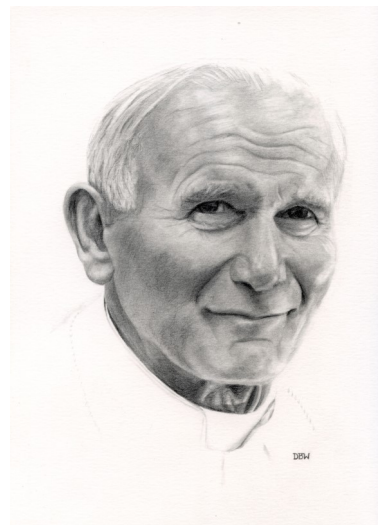
And yet, the hand of God can write a mighty score, roiling time and memories, adding genius to the music, moving from pianissimo to fortissimo and back

again. Such music never fades; time passes, yet eternity remains.

Such a gift the world received when God created Karol 'Lolek' Wojtyla. He was far more than the common man; he would become more than a ordinary man from an insignificant Polish village; he would earn the love and respect of all the world; he would sit on Peter's chair and guide, with steady hand, the universal Church; and he would, in time, be called a saint.

He occupied the Papal chair longer than any other pope; for more than a quarter-century his gentle countenance, towering intellect, and faith in God steered the course.

16 Books, 7 plays, and poetry he would write over a lifetime of love and devotion to the Lord. A pivotal force during the Second Vatican Council, during his papacy he would issue 14 Papal Encyclicals as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Pope Saint John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla) pray for us.



## Love Enough

*By our deeds he will know us*

**W**hat more can be said of love? Can but one exist who has no passing thought of it? Mere words fail, for all the ink and paper consumed have yet to fully measure it. What verb toils with such resolve; what noun evokes such passion; what word but *love* means too much and too little?

*Love* is used and much abused; it has stood for and often been used to justify strong desires, excessive needs, obsessive longings, mendacities, atrocities, even murders. Man has tortured, maimed, killed, injured, and persecuted others, all for the *love* of God; such things most assuredly disavowed by God, who is Love. Man has abused, crushed and destroyed the very objects of his obsessive love, all in the name of *love*. Man has even destroyed his own soul out of a twisted, distorted, self-destructive love of self.

Could there be a word more misunderstood than *love*? Some equate love with sex, others think of it as a feeling, a thrill, an emotion. "*Love should fix things, change them. It ought to make us feel better about ourselves and the world. It must make life light and easy, a joy, an ecstasy, bliss.*" Love is a "*chameleon that hides in the hue of everything and disappears into any context available.*"<sup>1</sup>

Love has become overloaded with meaning; overused, in so many ways, it is no longer easy—if it ever has been—to define it, either precisely or in simple terms. Consider how often we use the word: "*I love God. I love you. I love my children. I love my job. I love my dog. I love my car. I love music.*" Love means *zero* in tennis. There are love songs, love boats, books on love, movies, even X-rated ones, with *love* in the title. Love, love, love, we love just about anything and everything. But then, perhaps we don't.

*commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments*" (Matthew 22:37-40).

**H**ere then is a radically different love, a love which requires selfless commitment, a love which places demands on us, a love more serious than sublime, a love which calls us to serve others, even possibly giving our lives for their sake.

Saint Thomas Aquinas described love of neighbor this way: "*To love anyone is nothing else than to wish that person well, to want what is good for them.*" What Aquinas wrote distinguishes real love from nonessential feelings or emotions which may accompany love. And it offers us insight into just how one can love another without liking them. We may not like someone but

we can still love them as Jesus commands by wishing them well and wanting what is good for them.

Is this then the love Jesus calls the greatest commandment? Is it? His response compels us to seek a greater understanding of what love is. "*This love isn't just anything. It involves heart and will, soul and life, mind and strength. It requires a covenantal fidelity. It makes demands. Love is not mere ardor; it is arduous.*"

**W**e have heard it before, "*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first the*

G. K. Chesterton once observed that "*The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are generally the same people!*" Here then, Aquinas' definition serves us well. Whenever we are tempted to constrict the circle of who we include as our neighbor, we are called by Jesus to do otherwise; to see every human being as a neighbor, worthy of our love. And, that is often

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daunting to do. Our fallen nature makes loving every human being extremely difficult, if not impossible without the grace of God.

When we speak of the love of God, Aquinas' definition, quite simply, no longer works. While we can say that God loves us, wants what is good for us, has given us all that we have, including creating and sustaining us, does it make any sense for us to love God because we want what is good for him? So, what is love then for God? Such love must necessarily differ from love of neighbor.

Love of God is perhaps better described as a union of wills. When we unite our will with God, when we desire what God desires, when we focus on living our lives according to his will, when we use all our heart, mind, and soul to doing God's will, then we are loving God enough.

We are complex creatures. Our flesh (our physical existence), our mind (our intellect and reasoning faculties), and our soul (the affections, passions, and emotional attitudes which we hold dear), all combine to make us who we are. And frequently, we behave in ways which contradict mind, body, or spirit. Jesus recognized this complexity as well as our contradictory nature by qualifying his response, telling us that we are to love God with all that we are and all that we have: with all of our heart, mind and soul, anything else is unacceptable. He calls us to abandon our whole self to the will of God, to give all we are, mind, body, and spirit to God.

This then is where the rubber meets the road. We struggle with the constant challenge to love God completely for there are too many competing interests vying for our affection.

*"At every turn our minds are confronted with supposedly enlightened knowledge that purports to refute the wisdom of God. Additionally, our physical beings resist the discipline of dedication and cry out for the comfort of complacency. Invariably we must periodically renew our vow of love and commitment, through major acts of devotion, lest we discover that our love has grown cold. The seasons of the liturgical year call forth and provide opportunities for the renewal of our love. In addition, these vows of love and commitment to God need to be nourished daily by quiet acts of devotion like Scripture reading and prayer. When either major or quiet acts of devotion is abandoned for any length of time our love for God may quietly, steadily grow dormant."*<sup>2</sup>

How are we supposed to seriously love God? Must we eschew the world, don sackcloth and live in a cave, devoting our lives to God? In the final contemplation in his Spiritual Exercises—"Contemplation to Attain the Love of God"—, Saint Ignatius calls our *"attention to the simple reality that love consists more in deeds than in words, that lovers give what they have to one another. Then he instructs us to place ourselves in the presence of the Lord and the communion of saints and to ask the Lord to wake us up to a knowledge of the gifts we have received (from God, of course) and to stir up gratitude 'so that I may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things.' Now the simple insight begins to dawn: The most direct way we can obey*

*the command to love God is to pay attention to God's gifts.*

Ignatius then adds, *"I will call back into my memory the gifts I have received—my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself."* and then suggests the famous 'Suscipe' prayer, which begins, *"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you."*<sup>3</sup>

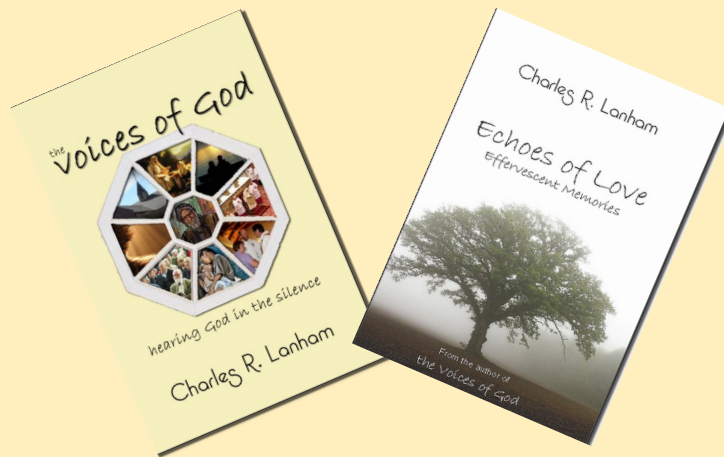
Saint Augustine once observed that *"People are renewed by love. As sinful desire ages them, so love rejuvenates them. ... For as love grows stronger we feel more secure, and when our feeling of security is complete fear vanishes, since, as the apostle John declares: 'Perfect love casts out fear.'"*

To love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind requires more than we are often willing to give. Religious observance—attending Mass once a week—is not enough. God must always be visible in our lives; otherwise, our religious practices are just empty formalities, nothing more.

Amen.

Homily for the  
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)  
Exodus 22:20-26  
1 Thessalonians 1:5C-10  
Matthew 22:34-40

1. John Kavanaugh, S.J., *All You Need Is Love*, The Sunday Website of St. Louis University.
2. Emmaus Journey, *Homily for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time*.
3. Dennis Hamm, S.J., *How To Love God*, The Sunday Website of St. Louis University.
4. Saint Augustine, *Sermon 350A, 1-2: PLS 2, 449-450*.



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