

## Weekly Readings:

This week we continue to deepen in the new theme: **“your time has come, the time for love”** (cf. **Ezekiel 16:8**) by contemplating the quality of love that God has loved us with through the self-giving of his only beloved son Jesus Christ. Jesus' love is a total and free giving of his body, blood, soul and divinity which we receive every time we participate fully in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. He is the first to love us so that we may be able to give ourselves with him for the life of the world.

**Day 1 Deuteronomy 6:1-13** **“You must love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.”**

From the very beginning of the history of salvation, God has asked his people for a genuine and holistic love that implies a giving of ALL of one's heart, soul (mind) and strength (body). This is because God first has loved us and created us to live in full communion with him, sharing his thoughts, his feelings, his desires and his work.

In prayer, place yourself consciously in God's presence and invite him to share with you afresh his deepest desire for your life and for the world that he has created. Would you like to share his desire? Or would you prefer to share in the desires that come from your disordered human nature, eg. self-indulgence, self-glorification, self-centredness, self pity, self adoration, self worship, self criticism, self hate, etc. Every choice we make today will lead to fullness of life or emptiness and misery. Let us ask for the grace to choose to surrender ourselves completely to God's desire to bring about his kingdom of universal love, justice and peace and to give ALL of our capacity to love, think and act as God asks us in each moment.

**Day 2 1 John 4:7-10** **“Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love. This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent his only**

**Son into the world that we might have life through him. Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God loved us and sent his Son to expiate our sins.”**

Not knowing God is not knowing the love we come from and the love that we are created to participate in. The one who is ignorant of God is also ignorant of the true purpose of their life and will end up hopelessly begging for love from the doors of other beggars.

In prayer, allow your heavenly Father to remind you of his immense love for you by the gift of his Son Jesus to make up for your sins. You may also wish to invite Jesus to remind you of what he chose to go through in order to give you life. Do you believe that you are completely and eternally loved by God? A truly grateful heart asks Jesus: how do you now need me to correspond your love for me? How can I reveal your total love to someone who has never known you or who has become distant from you?

**Day 3 Romans 5:5-8** **“When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for the godless. You could hardly find anyone ready to die even for someone upright; though it is just possible that, for a really good person, someone might undertake to die. So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.”**

Proof of love is something we constantly may seek from different significant figures in our life, eg. our parents, siblings, friends, boss, teacher, priest or consecrated person, etc. We want to see concrete signs such as their attentiveness and tenderness in speaking to us, that they remembered our birthday or anniversary, that they include us in an event, etc. However, if we were deeply aware of God's proven love for us then we would be more free from our need to find proofs of people's love.

In prayer, fix your eyes on the greatest proof of love that you could ever receive: Jesus gave his flesh to give you

eternal happiness. Are you amazed or insensitive to this proof of his love? Are you aware that in every celebration of the Eucharist Christ making the same sacrifice that he offered for you at Calvary over 2000 years ago? Allow Jesus to assure you that you are constantly loved by him and to invite you to become proof of his love for others by choosing to give yourself for the eternal lives of others today.

**Day 4 Colossians 1:15-20** **“He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers -- all things were created through him and for him. He exists before all things and in him all things hold together, and he is the Head of the Body, that is, the Church. He is the Beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in him and through him to reconcile all things to him...”**

We come to know God's love for us in the measure that we come closer to Christ who **“is the image of the unseen God.”** Yet it is interesting how we can end up investing more time in coming to know the superficial details of Hollywood movie stars or sporting heroes instead of spending quality time with Jesus each day and allowing him to surprise us with details about his life and love that we have never noticed before.

In prayer, allow Jesus to surprise you with his self-giving again today by contemplating him at the Sea of Tiberias where he invites you to have breakfast with the rest of his disciples. What is your reaction to his unconditional generosity when he steps forward, takes the bread and gives it to you (**John 21:13**) even though you may have been off “fishing” lately, i.e. doing your own thing? Share with Jesus how he is needing you today to imitate his free self-giving in your concrete relationships.

**Day 5 John 18:1-12** "...so Judas brought the cohort to this place together with guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees, all with lanterns and torches and weapons. Knowing everything that was to happen to him, Jesus came forward and said, 'Who are you looking for?' They answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said, 'I am he.'..."

Why could Jesus come forward and offer himself to evil men? Because Jesus wanted to keep revealing the limitless love that comes from heaven, a love that always steps forward without end in order to save sinners, even those who would be responsible for his death.

In prayer, allow Jesus to come forward and be close to you in whatever reality of sin you are struggling with. Do you perceive his desire to save you? Don't be afraid to hand over the most broken part of yourself, to ask Jesus for his mercy, and to listen to how he is calling you to trust in him and follow his way of life in this particular stage.

**Day 6 John 17:21-26** "I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them..."

To make someone's name known is to live up to their reputation, to do the same deeds as they did, and to pass on the same wise teachings that they taught you. So, when we see how Jesus loved us to the very end, even forgiving us when we nailed him on the cross, we know that we have a heavenly Father whose forgiveness must be immense.

In prayer, take a moment to enjoy basking in God's abundant love for you in spite of all your shortcomings. Does someone come to mind who you know is lacking a personal experience of God's love for them? Ask God how you can give yourself to them in a way that could help them to witness God's deep mercy and unconditional love for them, eg. make time to listen to them, show them a gesture of kindness, share a gift, etc.

**Day 7 John 6:37-40** "Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me; I will certainly not reject anyone who comes to me, because I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of him who sent me. Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, but that I should raise it up on the last day. It is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise that person up on the last day."

If we struggle to experience being loved by Jesus it is perhaps because we haven't gone to him since he assures us that he "**will certainly not reject anyone**" who comes to him. In fact, not a single repentant sinner was rejected by Jesus throughout his entire public ministry, even in his dying moment when the good thief asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus would come into his kingdom (**Luke 23:42**).

In prayer, take notice of how you go to Jesus? Is it with humility, asking for his mercy and forgiveness? Is it with an openness to surrender your life into his hands for him to instruct you in the right paths that you should walk? Or do you go to Jesus complaining about others faults, justifying your own lack of self-giving, making excuses why you can't be more wholehearted in following his invitation. Allow Jesus to remind you of your final destiny: eternal life! Are you willing to trust Jesus as the one who knows the way that leads to the Father and to allow him to teach you how to give yourself in service of building the kingdom of God? What concrete things is Jesus asking you to do in order to give yourself to him in prayer each day, in building friendships based on truth and faith, in reconciling with people you have hurt or who have hurt you, in being a more just administrator of your time, talents, money and material goods, in helping carry out the mission of evangelization, etc.?

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# School of the Word

## Weekly Readings

*"your time has come, the time for love"*

*(Ezekiel 16:8).*

## Week 2: Time For Giving Oneself



*"...the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world..."*

*(John 6:51)*