

With Love Beyond All Telling

December 20

O God, eternal majesty, whose ineffable word
the Immaculate Virgin received through the message of an Angel
and so became the dwelling place of divinity,
filled with the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant, we pray, that by her example
we may in humility hold fast to your will.
Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Read Luke 1:26-38

In the past few days, we have examined the virtue of faith; to be able to walk in the darkness – the assurance of things unseen. We have examined the virtue of hope; the expectation in what God can do, not what we can accomplish. Today, it is the virtue of love, of charity, which is very different from the love that our world celebrates.

Often times when we think of love we identify the emotion, the feeling of love. Emotions are spontaneous. They are morally neutral until we do something with them. Emotions have everything to do with what we want, what we need, what we expect. Emotions often have to do with our individual values. When we make decision based on our emotions, those decision are fundamentally selfish, examining what other people do based on how it affects us.

Love, true love – the love that is the love of God, the friendship of God – This love grows over time. We take the focus off of ourselves and onto the other. It is seeking the good for the other. Decisions based on the virtue of charity are often selfless. It is about giving to the other.

Today we celebrate the gift of God's love; that act of the will in which God seeks to capture us, to entice us. God gives Himself, God loves us first. Charity is to give as God gives, always selfless. "Hail, full of grace," the angel said. She had already offered to God the gift of her virginity; the question that she asked the angel would not have made sense otherwise. She was to give birth to Him who Himself was the fullness of grace and truth. She herself, would become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. He, whom the world cannot contain, was now found wholly and completely, in her womb. She, with love beyond all telling; she gives herself even more.

You have to wonder at how small God becomes for us. The great mystery of God who is grander, larger than the universe that we can imagine (and we only know a portion of the universe), Often times at the end of Mass, as I am purifying the chalice, you see these little tiny crumbs, these little tiny crumbs! And I am in awe that God has become that small again.

So, what is God doing in your life? Where is God asking you to give of yourself; to be for others in the way that everything you are about is best for them? What is God asking of you? God is asking of you, but do you know what it is? It is different for each of you. Where is God asking you to love, to grow, to expand your heart to include all the world, because then we will know the language of love.

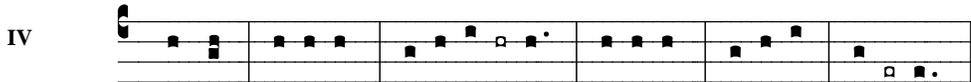
In the Scriptures, the language of the devil is very clear. It is any action that is "non serviam" – I will not serve. That is the whole ethos of the devil. With God it is the complete opposite – Here I am, send me. Let it be done to me according to your word. What can I do for you? Who can I be for you? Let me open my heart and my life that

you may come. That is the language of love. That is the language of charity. It is very, very different from our emotions. You can see in charity, emotions have no effect on the action of the will because we will give and do, no matter what we are afraid of, no matter how we are in doubt, no matter where we think God has abandoned us – whatever it feels like – it does not matter what we feel, because we have decided to give of ourselves. The emotions lead us to an unholy trinity: me, myself, and I. The virtue of charity leads us to the most Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gave Themselves completely to us that we might learn to give ourselves to Them and to one another.

Psalm 24: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6



Let the Lord enter, he is king of glory.



The LORD's / are the earth/ *and* its **fullness**; * the world/ *and* those who/ **dwel**l (in) it.

-- For he founded/ *it* **upon** (the) seas * and established it/ *upon* the /**rivers**.

Who can/ ascend the /*mountain of* (the) LORD? * or who may /*stand* in his/ **ho**(ly) place?

--One whose hands are sin-/*less*, whose **heart** (is) clean, * who/ *desires* not /**what** (is) vain.

He shall/ receive a /*blessing from* (the) LORD, * a reward/ *from* God his/**savior**.

--Such is the /*race* that **seeks** (for) him, * that seeks the face of/ *the* God of/ **Jacob**.