

The Greatest is Love!

In describing the three theological virtues- Faith, Hope, and Love, St. Paul clearly emphasized that "the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). In a very striking way, today's readings describe these theological virtues in practical ways. We can use the analogy of a tree to describe this very well. The root of a tree is faith, the stem is hope, and the leaves, flowers, and fruits are love. Love reflects our faith and hope.

Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11: 6). In the first reading, the disciples, Paul, and Barnabas, on their way back, returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen and encourage them "to persevere in the faith." To persevere in faith means knowing and feeling God's presence amid the sufferings and disappointments of our lives. In the second reading, the book of Revelation, John experienced the vision of what will happen after our earthly lives. The words of this reading are words of hope, "He will wipe every tear from the eyes."

Jesus in the Gospel reminds us of the greatest commandment- love, with emphasis that it is through the love we have for each other that people we know that we are his disciples. The love we have for each other is a testimony of our faith and hope in God. The selfless and self-giving life of Jesus is a perfect example of love. Let us look up to our Lord Jesus to teach us how to truly love and ask him for strength to love as he did and still does for us. Amen.

"By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." And again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1823).