



# Love: The Lens For Understanding Being an Interpreter of the Church and Faith

Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish  
Glorify God and Sanctify Souls

Parent Sponsor Session 3  
Mark MacKenzie  
Director of Faith Formation



# Confirmation Updates

# Confirmation Update

- Confirmation at Holy Redeemer – Saturday May 25<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm
  - Rehearsal to be before – time TBD
- Conflicts with May 25<sup>th</sup> Confirmation Date
  - I have email record of 2 youth who will be Confirmed at St. Thomas
  - Please let me know by email if you know May 25<sup>th</sup> is a conflict
- Baptismal Certificates
  - Please make sure we have a copy of your youth's baptismal certificate

# Confirmation Retreat

- Confirmation Retreat
  - Feb 15-17 @ Mt. Angel
- Palanca Letters for the Retreat
  - Palanca is a Spanish word for lever. A lever is device we can use to multiply our own strength, enabling us to lift or move something that we could not lift if we were to rely on our power.
  - In the context of a Confirmation Retreat, the lever we apply comes in the form of a letter that we write to Confirmation Candidates that we know or love. This letter, which is given to Candidates during the retreat, is **a letter of encouragement and an assurance of prayer and sacrifice for the spiritual growth** of the person it is written to.
  - Please endeavor to **secure at least 3 letters** for your youth. Invite others, who are a part of their life, to write one as well: these could be sponsors, grandparents, siblings, godparents, or friends.
  - Letters are **due by Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019** in the Faith Formation Office

A red heart is centered on a grey circular background. This central element is surrounded by a colorful floral wreath with green, yellow, and red flowers. The text is overlaid on the grey circle.

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Being an Interpreter of the Church and Faith

# Being a Prototype

We are prototyping **living the faith**  
for the purposes of **transmitting the faith**

According to the research from Dr. Christian Smith of Notre Dame – A prototype (parent or sponsor) who is effective has these qualities:

- **Sponsor: Covered Last Session**
- **Interpreter: One who can effectively tie experiences, ideas, and thoughts into their faith**
- **Gatekeeper**

## Prototype

*noun*

- 1 :an original model on which something is patterned
- 2 :an individual that exhibits the essential features of a later type
- 3 :a standard or typical example

# The Challenge

- The position of the Church can be viewed as: limiting, narrow, old fashioned, unaccepting, or rule based
  - Marriage/Divorce
  - Contraception
  - Abortion
  - Sexuality
  - Gender
  - The requirements to follow the Precepts
  - The 10 Commandments
  - ...

In this case, one could view the position of the Church as optional

The back ground image I've chosen for today is a stained glass image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The outer part of the image is highly ordered and structured so that it can transition and integrate into the architecture and frame work of the building it is in.

But the important part of the image, the Sacred Heart, is less tame, and could not fit easily into a window frame unless it was hand crafted – which would take more time and resources to fit.



Sometimes how we approach the Church and what it is trying to tell us is from the outside, from the framework, and we are trying to see the Heart that is inside from there, and often times we can't.

But what if instead we focused our attention on the center of the image, understood it and knew it. Then the framework would become transparent to us.

The framework doesn't exist because the Heart demands it, but because the world around it does.

Imagine the Sacred Heart is the motive and desire of Jesus and His Church, and the framework represents how it integrates to the outside

# Challenges for being an Interpreter

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What do the rules tell me about the church



In this case, one could view the position of the Church as optional

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What does  
the heart of  
the Church  
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its rules



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# God is Love

Where it ALL begins

# God is Love?

- His Nature: The Trinity as an example of Love
  - God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit...
  - God is three persons in one essence or nature
- In Scripture
  - OT – The Love story between God and his chosen people
  - NT Gospels – Jesus is the fullness of God’s own revelation. He lives a life devoted to love and shows us what it means to love
  - NT Epistles – 1 John 4:8, 16 “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.”
- In Tradition
  - For if man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator. (Gaudium Et Spes)

A close-up photograph of a piece of embroidery. The central focus is a heart-shaped patch with a grey, textured background. On this patch, a vibrant red heart is embroidered with dark green leaves. The heart patch is surrounded by a wide, circular border made of brown, textured fabric. This border is further embellished with a decorative pattern of small, repeating floral or geometric motifs in shades of yellow, green, and red. The overall appearance is that of a traditional or folk-style textile craft.

Love Defined

# The Four Loves

- Storge – empathy bond. Liking someone through the fondness of familiarity: The love a child has for a parent
- Eros – being “in-love” bond. Being in love or loving someone. Desiring to be with one particular person (not lust)
- Philia – friend bond. The love between friends that is as close as siblings in strength and duration
- Agape – unconditional love. The love that exists regardless of circumstances that wills the good of the other. The love we are called to as Christians. The love a parent has for a child

Occur  
“naturally”  
and have  
Feelings

Acts of the  
Will

# What is Love (Agape)?

“love is not merely a feeling: it is an act of the will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself.”

- You can't judge love by the intensity of emotion.
- We must strive for what is best for the other, and then make an actual commitment of our wills to bring about this “good” for the other.

# Love is an ability

- Love is an ability - Fr. Mike Schmitz  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeW3VQ1Uf5Q>
- Discussion Question: As interpreters of the faith, and the love that is behind it, what are some ways that we can help our children grow in their ability to love?

The background of the image is a close-up of a piece of fabric with a heart-shaped embroidery. The heart is a vibrant red color and is centered within a circular patch of light-colored, textured fabric. This central patch is surrounded by a wide, decorative border made of various colored threads, including shades of brown, green, yellow, and red, arranged in a pattern that resembles a sunburst or a floral design. The overall texture is that of a woven fabric, possibly a rug or a decorative textile.

# Created for Love

Theology of the Body

Using the Lens of Love to understand the human person, including  
sexuality, marriage, and life

# Theology of the Body

The study of God as revealed through our bodies

- Pope Saint John Paul II
- General Information
  - Wednesday audiences from 1979-1984 (129 in all)
  - Compiled into a book form—the first major teaching of JPII
- Questions answered in Theology of the Body:
  - What is the meaning of our bodies and sexual desire?
  - Who am I? What's my purpose in life?
  - What is love all about?
- A core component is a study of the creation account

# Created Good, out of Love

- God Creates out of Love
  - God was completely content and full of joy and love within himself
  - God did not need to create, he chose to create
  - God wanted to share His love with others
  - This means our creation has meaning, it is not an accident
- In the beginning creation was good
  - Harmony within creatures
  - Harmony between creatures
  - Harmony between created things and God

# Made in His Image and Likeness

- When Adam was created he was without Eve, but he knew something was missing.
- God creates Eve as a partner to Adam
- When God made Adam and Eve, it was very good
- They were made in His image and likeness
  - Love first expressed in creation
  - There is a lover, a beloved, and the love between them – a communion of persons

“Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere gift of self.”

- This gift of self can be seen in the married life or in the celibate life.
- “Life is not worth living unless it is lived for others.” Mother Theresa

# The Body as a Visible Sign

“The body, in fact, and it alone is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery [of God]...and thus to be a sign of it.”

- We are Body and Spirit, our Body allows us to express our spirit – which is love
- Just as a sacrament makes a spiritual reality (grace) visible, the body makes our call to love visible
  - JPII calls this the sacramentality of the body
  - Our bodies point us to the meaning of life
  - Our bodies and their desires are very good signs of God’s existence, His love for us, and of our call to love others

Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of this in how He serves during His ministry on Earth, and how he heals

# Humans Deserve only Agape Love

“The person is a ‘good’ toward which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”

- Real love is about giving and receiving
  - Three aspects
    - Attraction
    - Desire
    - Goodwill (agape)
- Love one another. . .
- When something other than love is exchanged, the exchange is disordered.
  - Use: A user maximizes their pleasure and minimizes their pain, pleasing themselves at the expense of others

# Love Costs Something

- Fr. Mike – Learning to Love from the bible 9min  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_HVkkquls-w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_HVkkquls-w)
- Discussion Question: What are some ways we can help to teach our youth that love in it's highest form requires sacrifice, to learn what true love is?



# Interpreting the Church and Faith

Using love as a lens

# Challenges for being an Interpreter

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If God is love, and we were created by God for love, and the Church was established by God to carry on the mission of love, then the purpose of the Church is to promote Love

# When we lose sight of love

Any view the Church takes on an issue will be rooted in love of God, or love of person.

- If my view differs from the Church's view on one of these issues, then isn't anyone (including my children) free to interpret any view?
- If I disagree with the Church, is it because:
  - the Church does not understand love
  - the Church's definition of love has changed
  - the meaning of love is different or has changed
  - our definition of love is different than the Church
  - Love of God, or self, or neighbor is not our true goal
- Have we lost sight of love in this case?



# Thank you

**For participating today, for loving your students, and for living out your calling to be a missionary disciple by passing on the faith.**

**We would love to work with you, let us know how we can help**



Backup Material

- **Love Busters Summary**

- I gave in to him because I thought it would make him like me more. But the next day, he acted like he hardly new me.
- My parents got divorced when I was four, so I never really had a dad. Now my mom is with this other guy, and they fight a lot.
- Social media is like a drug. I like staying updated with my friends and stuff, but I can't get on there without comparing myself to everyone else and constantly trying to measure up.
- I've been looking at porn for years, and I don't know how to stop. It's like I'm addicted to it.
- I had too much to drink and hooked up with someone. Now I have an STD. I can't believe it. It was just that one time.
- I've never experienced unconditional love at home, so I don't know what to look for in a relationship.
- No one has ever seemed interested in me. I hate my body.
- Sometimes I'm confused about my attractions, and I don't know what to do about it.
- When I sent this guy the picture he asked for, he promised not to share it with anyone else. Now the whole school has it on their phones. I feel worthless.
- You always hear about the guys using the girls, but after I lost my virginity to my girlfriend, I found out she was cheating on me.
- Some of my friends look at screens more than each other. Sometimes I wonder if anyone really sees who I am.

- HABITS Results



# Created for Love: Original Sin

- Affects us all
- We desire the wrong thing
- The tendency to sin is called concupiscence
  - Damage from sin causes despair
    - broken families
    - broken hearts
    - sexual abuse
    - addictions
    - infidelity
    - shame and regret

# Created for Love: Media Influences

- Primary teacher of society
- Movies and TV quickly degenerated from sexual suggestion to sexually-explicit material.
- “Frog in the Pot”
  - We have gradually become desensitized to the increase of explicit sexual content in our media.
  - Result: our country is plagued by a seriously warped understanding of marriage and the role that sex should play in relationships.

# Created for Love: Lust vs. Love

- Lust...
  - is a disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure.
  - sexual desire apart from God's love that selfishly seeks one's own pleasure at the expense of another.
  - dominates culture—leads to apathy—leads to lack of motivation for change—we begin to settle for less than true, good and beautiful relationships.
- Is there hope?
  - Life and sexuality were not always they way we find it now. Mt 19:8
  - Lust didn't even exist in the beginning
  - How did God create sexuality?
    - This will allow us to discover the true purpose of our sexual gifts.
    - Find out what went wrong.
    - Find hope that will lead us to true love and happiness.

# Love Defined

- **Nature of Love** incorporates desire, union, willing good of beloved, spousal love (total gift of self)
- Self-Indulgent Using vs **Self-Donating Love**
- To see each other as a **subject worthy of love** and created for our own sake NOT as a means to someone's end, a tool to be used.
- **Chastity is living the gift of sexuality** according to God's design
- Chastity promotes **authentic happiness and freedom** to love and be loved
- **Desire** and lust are not the same thing.
- Sexual repression is a distorted way of receiving the gift of sexuality vs **submitting sexual desires to God**, who reorders them with us for the sake of love.

# Love Defined: Chastity and Happiness

- The virtue that directs our sexual desires and attitudes toward the truth of love.
- It is more than abstinence (not having sex), it's about more than controlling desires—it's about learning how to love another rightly.
- A life of chastity is one. . .
  - that loves responsibly and purely
  - that says yes to the demands of love while fighting the selfish desires of lust
- We do not bottle our sexual energy and attempt to ignore it
- Neither repression nor indulgence of lust is the proper response to the sexual gift.
- Healthy Chastity: we acknowledge the power of our sexual desires and guide them with the deeper desire to love.
- So What is Love? Love is an active decision to give oneself to another and to do so totally--total self-donation.