

Love and Truth

Newman also exposed in his address the outlook on the idea of love by the religious liberalism and relativism. (Liberalism wants to abolish the order and hierarchy of GOD by centring the freedom of the individual. Relativism wants to present the truths of faith as not really true.) Typical of this is e.g. his sermon "Tolerance against religious error". Therein he started from the general assumption that we lose the right measure if we make ourselves and not GOD the centre of attention. The best example is Lucifer. Once he was the greatest Angel in Heaven. He looked at himself, and he delighted in his own beauty, in his own talents and plunged into hell. „If we be ever so heavenly-minded, ever so loving, ever so holy, ever so diligent, ever so active, ever so peaceful, yet if, for a moment, we turn our eyes away from GOD and turn them on ourselves, then immediately these outstanding characteristics lapse into too much or too little. Love turns into lavishness, piety is being tainted with spiritual pride, zeal degenerates into impetuosity, activity devours the spirit of prayer, and hope is carried so far as to turn into presumption.“

Excerpt from the sermon of 19 July 2006



Schwert-Bischof
JESU CHRISTI

**Be blessed by GOD TRINITY,
the + FATHER and the + SON
and the + HOLY GHOST. Amen!**

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JESU CHRISTI
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Love, The One Thing Needful

Part One

If today we support our sermon with quotations and teachings of Cardinal Newman (excerpts from L'Osservatore Romano), then you will recognize that this great man has something after my own heart. Already as a child I was looking for prayers written by him. He was a fine, very learned man. Newman was a priest of the Anglican Church in England. In his eager, honest search to please GOD, he has come to realize and believe that the Roman Catholic faith is the only right faith. Born in 1801, he converted to the Catholic Church in 1845 and was made cardinal in 1879.

Faith and Love

Newman continually spoke about us being created for love: „We love because it is our nature to love; and it is our nature because GOD made it our nature. Our real and true happiness does not consist in knowing, desiring or striving, but in loving, hoping, rejoicing, admiring, venerating, adoring. Our real and true happiness lies in the possession of those things in which our hearts can find peace and quiet.“

The Song of Songs

„Faith and love are the virtues of an imperfect state and come to an end with it (when we die); love, however, is greater because she is completion. Faith and hope are virtues as long as we are tied to this earth – that will pass away; love, however, is a virtue for us as creatures of GOD, here below and everywhere, for us as sharers in the redemption, which lasts

for ever. Faith is no more in the next world, where there is vision; neither hope, where possession; but love will (as it is our privilege to believe) grow for ever and ever." 1 Cor 13,8: „Charity never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

Only Love Leads to GOD's Throne

Love forms the inner motor and driving force of all other virtues. Newman: „We believe in GOD's Word because we love it; we hope for Heaven because we love it. We would have neither hopes for it nor an interest in it if we did not love it; we would not trust in the GOD of Heaven nor rely on Him if we did not love Him."

As we all experience, it is not always easy in everyday life to live according to our faith. You need courage to swim against the tide. It costs a lot of effort and hard work and we shun sacrifice and self-denial. Why that is so, to that Newman gives the short answer: „Obviously, because we are lacking in love!" Newman preaches „that faith can raise us above the earth, yet love leads up to the throne of GOD; that faith can make us only clear-sighted, yet love blissfully happy. It is this love in which the FATHER and the SON in the unity of the HOLY GHOST are at one, through which the Angels in Heaven are at one, through which all the Saints are at one with GOD, through which the Church is at one on the earth." Unity, therefore, is one of the fruits of love.

Love of Neighbour

Cardinal Newman had a dislike for a one-sidedly theoretical and sentimental understanding of love. In his speech "Love of relatives and friends" he turns against those who speak much of love but neglect their daily duties. He calls it foolishness when some „in a bragging manner extol their all-embracing love for the entire human race and pretend to be friends of all mankind and suchlike. What do such boastful confessions lead to? That such people are entertaining certain favourable feelings towards the world – feelings and nothing more –; nothing more than changeable feelings, the mere spawn of an unbridled imagination, which are only present if the mind is impressed, but in times of need will surely be absent. That does not mean loving men, but only in words indulging in love."

Mustard Seed of Love

„True love of men must arise from practical exercise and must consequently start with the work on our nearest friends, otherwise she will not last. The endeavour to love our relatives and friends, the good will towards their wishes even if they oppose ours, the patience with their weaknesses, overcoming their occasional whimsicality by a friendly nature, the pleasure in their qualities and the attempt to imitate them, those are the things with which we sink love into our hearts like a root, which, though small at first, yet in the end like the mustard seed can overshadow even the earth."

Source of Love of Neighbour

Cardinal Newman is convinced that "the care for family love", i.e. the love of family members, friends and relatives, is "the source of extended Christian love". There are people who are tyrants at home, but in the street they play the most loving persons. That cannot be love. As an example of mature love of neighbour Newman refers to the Apostle John: „Did he (Apostle John) begin to love with immense effort on a large scale? No, he had the unspeakable privilege of being the friend of CHRIST. That was his school of love of neighbour; at first his love converged into a focus, then she transmitted her rays. Initially he had the high and comforting task, following the demise of our LORD, of looking after His Mother, the Most Blessed Virgin. Do we not discover here the secret sources of his special brotherly love? Could he, to whom the SAVIOUR had first devoted His love and to whom He had then entrusted the position of a son towards His mother, be anything else than the living memorial and the perfect model (as far as man can be such) of a deep, contemplative, placid and unbounded love?"

Reverence – the Very Being of Real Love

In a letter to his Anglican friend John Keble Newman writes: „The first duty of love of neighbour is to try to enter into the spirit and feelings of the others." – Have I not been preaching this for all these years?! – „No one who does not have any reverence for another person really loves him. If friends go beyond this control of their affection, they may, however, continue to be friends for a while, but they have broken the bond of unity. It is the mutual respect which perpetuates the friendship."
