

Theological Virtue

Love



Descriptor

Loving God above all things and others as God loves them.

The language of our story speaks of **love**. The theological virtue of love is God's gift to us at Baptism. The gift of Christian love enables us to love God above all things and to love others as God loves them. This was the great insight of St. Thérèse, who said, *we have been made by love for love*. God's gift of love directs and gives strength to our life of virtue. Our model of love is Jesus, who laid down His life so that we might have life to the full (Jn. 10: 10). Our encounters with Jesus in His Gospel and the sacraments nurture us so that we can love as He has loved us. Love is visible in our Catholic schools wherever the kindness, service and self-giving of Jesus are found.

Scripture Quotes

The Golden Rule

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7: 12

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was

going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Luke 10: 25-37

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Luke 13: 10-17

Parable of the Prodigal Son and His Brother

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came

back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

Luke 15: 11-32

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.' Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

John 14: 15-24

Jesus and Peter

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

John 21: 15-19

Marks of the True Christian

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12: 9-21

Love for One Another

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13: 8-10

The Gift of Love

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a, 13

Rules for the New Life

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4: 25-32

Blessing

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3: 8-9

The New Commandment

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13: 34-35

The Judgment of the Nations

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or

naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Matthew 25: 31-40

[Additional Scripture Quotes on Love](#)

Connection to Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Theological Virtue of “Love” relates to the following Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations:

1. A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community who

CGE1c -actively reflects on **God’s Word** as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures;

CGE1d - develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good

CGE1e -speaks the **language of life**... “recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that a person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it.” (*Witnesses to Faith*)

CGE1f -seeks intimacy with God and celebrates **communion** with God, others and creation through prayer and worship;

CGE1g -understands that one’s purpose or **call in life** comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life’s journey;

CGE1h -respects the **faith traditions**, world religions and the life-journeys **of all people of good will**;

CGE1j -recognizes that “sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey” and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of **redemption**. (*Witnesses to Faith*)

2. An Effective Communicator who

CGE2a -listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values;

CGE2c -presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others;

3. A Reflective and Creative Thinker who

CGE3a -recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges;

CGE3b -creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good;

CGE3c -thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems;

CGE3d -makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience;

CGE3e -adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience;

CGE3f -examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

4. A Self-Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner who

CGE4a -demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others;

CGE4b -demonstrates flexibility and adaptability;

CGE4c -takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership;

CGE4d -responds to, manages and constructively influences change in a discerning manner;

CGE4e -sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life;

CGE4f -applies effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills;

CGE4g -examines and reflects on one’s personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life’s choices and opportunities;

EOCCC: Our Language, Our Story 1.0, 2009.

5. A Collaborative Contributor who

- CGE5a** -works effectively as an interdependent team member;
CGE5c -develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society;
CGE5d -finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good;
CGE5e -respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others;
CGE5f -exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals;

6. A Caring Family Member who

- CGE6a** -relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner;
CGE6b -recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended;
CGE6c -values and honours the important role of the family in society;
CGE6e -ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

7. A Responsible Citizen who

- CGE7a** -acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions;
CGE7b -accepts accountability for one's own actions;
CGE7c -seeks and grants forgiveness;
CGE7d -promotes the sacredness of life;
CGE7e -witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society;
CGE7f -respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures;
CGE7g -respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today's contemporary society;
CGE7h -exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship;
CGE7i -respects the environment and uses resources wisely;
CGE7j -contributes to the common good

Related Concepts

AUTONOMY	OPPRESSION	POLICY
ANTI-SEXISM	PEACE	POWER/POWERLESSNESS
ANTI-RACISM	EXPLOITATION	PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR
COEXISTENCE	HOPE	PROFIT MOTIVE
COLLABORATION	GLOBAL COMMUNITY	PROTEST/DEMONSTRATION
COMMON GOOD	FREEDOM	RELATIONSHIP
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	FRIENDSHIP/UNDERSTANDING	RESOLUTION
CONSENSUS	HUMAN FAMILY	RIGHTEOUSNESS
COOPERATION	HUMAN RIGHTS	SERVICE
DEMOCRACY	INCLUSIVITY	SHARING/SOCIAL CHARITY
DIALOGUE	INTERDEPENDENCE	SOCIAL JUSTICE
DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON	JUSTICE	SOCIAL SIN
DIGNITY OF WORK AND SERVICE	LEADERSHIP	SOLIDARITY
DISENFRANCHISEMENT	LIBERATION	SUBSIDIARITY
DISTRIBUTION	LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR	TRADE
DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE	MARGINALIZATION	UNITY IN DIVERSITY
EMPOWERMENT	MUTUALITY	VIOLENCE
EQUALITY/EQUITY	NONVIOLENCE	

Links to Online Resources

The Vatican

<http://www.vatican.va/>

The official web site of the Vatican contains an impressive collection of materials with a useful internal search engine.

[*Educational Guidance in Human Love \(Outlines for Sex Education\)*](#)

(Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1983)

[*The Human Family. A Community of Peace*](#)

Holy Father's Message for World Day of Peace (Jan 1), 2008

[*Sacramentum Caritatis \(The Sacrament of Charity\) On The Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission*](#)

Pope Benedict's Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist (Feb 22, 2007)

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.cccb.ca/Home.htm?NL=1>

The official web site of the CCCB contains extensive documentation, including recent media releases and publications, with a wide variety of useful links to other Church and Catholic organizations' web sites.

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.occb.on.ca/>

The official web site of the OCCB contains extensive resources from the Catholic Bishops of Ontario as well as useful links to other Church and Catholic organizations' web sites. The Conference's jurisdiction over Ontario Catholic schools makes this site particularly relevant.

[*Intimacy and Sexuality*](#)

(OCCB Letter to Secondary Students)

[*Church Teaching on Sexual Morality*](#)

(Downloadable Materials from OCCB Website)

Action Life

<http://www.actionlife.org/>

Promotes respect for human life from conception to natural death through education.

[*John Paul II's Theology of the Body*](#)

by Christopher West

Life Issues

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/>

The United States Conference of Bishops website provides links to a variety of life issues that provide a substantial amount of information/links.

Love (Theological Virtue)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09397a.htm>

Provides a clear explanation of the theological virtue of love.

Love by Peter Kreeft

<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0019.html>

This article, written in a Catholic apologetics style tells us that: "Without qualification, without ifs, ands, or buts, God's word tells us, straight as a left jab, that love is the greatest thing there is."

Orthodox Perspective on Love

<http://www.oca.org/OCIndex-TOC.asp?SID=2&book=Spirituality§ion=The%20Virtues>

Love from an Orthodox perspective.

Pure Love Club

<http://www.chastity.com/>

"Within the pages of chastity.com, you are going to find blunt, honest, and uplifting reasons for why you're worth waiting for. No fear tactics. No guilt trips. Just the demands of authentic human love."