

This young boy's mother was dying of some disease. The Doctors told the family, only a blood transfusion will save the woman. In a rural India there is no blood bank, no red cross so, where to find the blood. For lack of education, people think that after giving blood the donor will die after some time. After testing the blood sample of family members, the only person with matching blood group was her older son. With persuasion by family members, he agreed to donate blood. As the blood transfusion was going on the young boy, the donor asked quietly, "Doctor, when will I die after this?"

It was only then that the doctor understood the fear of this boy, who thought, of course mistakenly, that by giving his blood to his sick mom, he himself would die. This boy was ready-to-die for his mom.

Today we celebrate Mother's Day. And most mothers are examples of ready to die type of love for their children.

The word 'love' is so widely used and abused in English. I love God. I love my girlfriend. I love my dog. I love chocolates. I love holidays. The same word love is used for God, persons, animals, things, events etc.

The main theme of today's readings is love. Today's second and third readings use the word 'love' almost twenty times. So, what kind of love Jesus is talking about? How do we understand 'love'?

Jesus is talking of a very special kind of love, love that does not think of oneself but sacrifices for the sake of the others. To make sure we would not confuse this very special type of love with other types of love, the writers of the New Testament used a very special word to describe the love of Jesus for us and the love of God for us.

In the Greek, there are three words for love. They are eros, philia and agape. Philia and agape are used in today's readings.

Agape is the "highest" and most perfect form of love, the one that is always used for God. Love for God expressed by love of other human beings. It is not used to describe one's love for pets or apple pies. Agape love is always self-giving and self-sacrificial and unconditional kind of love. Doing something for another person, whether you know them personally or not, is a shining example of this particular kind of love. Some of you donated for the Ordination expenses of my cousin or St. Ann's nuns in India is clear example of agape love.

The second Greek word for love is philia. It is used to describe the affection of

friendship. Philia, in today's terms, would resemble something like "brotherly love." It was about showing loyalty, giving sacrifice, showing appreciation, and other more "noble" forms of love not involving sex.

Some of you donated for my travel expense is clear example of of philia love or brotherly love.

In today's readings both in Gospel and second reading gospel John appears to use these words as synonyms. And by doing this the writer wants to tell us that wants all love should also have some qualities of agape love.

Jesus loved us with agape love ἀγάπη (agape). That is the love that does not think of oneself but sacrifices for the sake of the other. "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Jesus showed this love for us by dying on the cross.

Jesus is our model for loving with this sacrificial love, agape love, loving the other for their benefit without putting ourselves first.

Every Mass is a celebration of this special love of Jesus giving himself for us on the cross.

Most of us have experienced all the three forms of love by love of our parent's agape love, by love of siblings, relatives and friends (philia love), and by love of our spouses, (eros love). Have we experienced the love of God?

Once we experience the love of God, we will start loving others, just as God loves us.

St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata is one perfect and clear example of God's love being shared with others. Let us try to become a little St. Teresa in our own place by sharing God's agape love with others. Unconditioned, unselfish, and self-sacrificing love!