

Sponsor Meeting 4 – God's Love

Opening Prayer (Together): Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Activity and Discussion:

- 1) On your smart phone or tablet, go to www.blessedsacramentchurch.org/confirmation and watch the video under the post Sponsor Meeting 4 – God's Love.
- 2) When you have watched the video, read through the reflection on the following page, and use the discussion questions as a guide for a conversation with the confirmand on this topic.
- 3) Ask the confirmand to fill out the summary form, and then both of you should sign it.
- 4) Use the following prayer to conclude your time together. **Closing Prayer: John 15:13-17**

Sponsor says: *"Let us remember we are in God's Holy Presence."*

Sponsor and Confirmand take a moment to quiet themselves and place themselves in God's presence.

Confirmand Reads:

Jesus said to his disciples, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

They pause for a brief time to listen to the Lord speak to them in the scriptures.

The sponsor continues: O God, who has created us out of love and for the sake of love, help us to love you ever more perfectly. Fill (Confirmand's Name) with an outpouring of your love, and convince him/her of your love in such a way that he/she can never doubt. Take away all fear and anything that prevents him/her from knowing your love as perfectly as possible. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The word love, as it is used in the English language, is an imprecise term. We say things like, "I love pizza," or "I love basketball," or "I love that movie," or, "I love my parents." For this reason, it can be hard to understand what we mean when we say that God loves us. This truth, however, is an essential element of Catholic belief. It is the foundation for understanding our relationship with God.

God's love originates within himself. Catholics believe God is triune, which means that God is one, but is at the same time three distinct persons, all of whom are equal to the other persons. These three persons have always existed and always will exist, in a communion of love. In other words, from eternity, God the Father has loved God the Son, and God the Son has loved God the Father. This reciprocal love between them is manifested in the person of God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is an endless relationship of love.

The love shared between the persons of the Trinity caused all things to come into existence. God's love is creative. It poured out of itself and caused the world and all it contains to come into existence. God was not lonely. It is the nature of love to create more love around itself, similar to the way that one person laughing causes other people to start laughing. This means that humans were created out of love, and the purpose of their existence is to be loved by God and to love him in return. In this sense, love is not primarily an emotion or a feeling. It is a decision and an action to give from ourselves for the sake of another. This is really the purpose of human life – to love. This means that the whole reason we exist is so that we can make a decision and then act in such a way as to offer our lives as a gift to God and to other people.

Original sin has damaged our ability to understand God's love and how we are to love in return, so God chose to become a human being, Jesus, in order to break the power of original sin, and to show us how we are meant to love. Jesus demonstrates what real love looks like throughout his life, but most especially on the Cross. There are four characteristics that mark Jesus's love. First, it is a total love. He gives everything, holding back nothing for himself, even to the point of death. Second, it is free. Jesus says, "No one takes my life from me. I lay it down freely." (Jn. 10:18). His love is also faithful. He never stops loving us for any reason. (Cf. Ps. 27:10). Jesus's love is also fruitful. It gives life. It gave us immortal life.

It is God's great desire for humans to experience the love that he has for them. For this reason, we are able to say that every good thing we experience is an expression of God's love. God's love, however, is not just meant to be a one-way street. We should love him as well. We do this by choosing to follow the model of love that Jesus gave on the cross, and by sacrificing for him and for other people. Even here God's love helps us. He gives us the sacraments, which are real encounters with God wherein he uses signs to show us his love, and to help us love him and other people better.

Sponsor Meeting 4 – God’s Love (Confirmand)

Reflection Questions #4 – Due January 20th (please use the resources provided):

- 1) In which relationships do you love most like God? How do you show that love?
- 2) Who was an example of Christ's love to you this week?
- 3) Why did God create you? (CCC 1, 358; YouCat 1)
- 4) What do we call the mystery of three person in one God? (CCC 249, 251; Youcat 35-36)
- 5) What are some of the ways that you have experienced God's love?
- 6) What makes it hard to love as God loves?
- 7) Do the four characteristics of God's love change how you understand what it means to love?

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Student's Name (Print): _____ Sponsor Signature: _____