**“God’s Love for Us”**

All our readings point us to how God loves us beyond our imagination. God’s great love for us is without end. God mercifully loves us even more than we love ourselves and He is always searching for ways to bring us to Himself. The type of relationship God wants with us could be compared to images of the union between a husband and a wife or between a family. It is the image of agape love that should be between a husband and a wife.

Agape love is the type of love that desires heaven for the other. It is the type of love that means we have died to self and our thoughts and desires are for the happiness of the other. The husband and wife desires the happiness of each other. This type of love has been demonstrated to us by God Himself. God gave up His own Son, His only begotten Son, to death on the cross so we can be saved. That great act of love is so important that we celebrate it in every Mass.

Jesus, in laying down His life for us as St Paul said even though we were sinners, He showed us what agape love is all about by first, emptying Himself to become one of us. Again, He emptied Himself to die on the cross for our salvation. Jesus not only took up His cross, He died upon it. That was the greatest act of love the world has ever seen.

When we reflect on this act of love of Jesus, we should be willing and eager to respond in kind. Love calls out for love. But it is not the kind of love that is expressed only in mere words, but love that is put into action. We demonstrate our love by how willing we are in accepting whatever trials and tribulations God allow to befall us. We should see them as the price of discipleship that is not too high for us to accept as our cross.

In our first reading through prophet Isaiah, we heard about the promises of God. How out of love for us, God would provide a life of blissful union between us, and between Himself and us. We are drawn a picture of what life would be like in Paradise. It would a life full of happiness, joy, **“Rich food and choice wine.”** It would be a life of rich banquet. The veil that separates us now, would be removed. We will see God as He is, because God would destroy death forever.

The destruction of death would be through the self-giving death of Jesus Christ on the cross which would lead to the salvation of all who desire to be saved. It would lead us to heaven where there would be no more pain and our accuser would be silenced forever. On this day when death and sin are destroyed, humankind would rejoice and know about the unfathomable love of our Messiah who would come to save us, because the hands of the Lord would be upon Him.

Our Psalmist in our Responsorial Psalm referred to what the Messiah would mean to the world! The Messiah would be the Good Shepherd who would lead us with His love to the Promised Land in heaven. He will lead those who listen, and obey His commandments. We will look to Him for our salvation and He would save us. He would lead us to the restful waters which is the Holy Spirit who would guide us in the right path to God, so let us rejoice and be glad.

This Psalm reminds me of a story about a little boy who had misbehaved all day at school. During dinner time, his parent set a little table for him apart from the main table in a corner. After the rest of the family prayed before meal, the little boy also said a prayer aloud at his table. He said, ***“Thank you God for setting a table before me in front of my enemies!”*** Amen.

In our Epistle, Saint Paul in his letter to the Philippians, talked about how he could survive in any kind of condition life might throw at him, be it in plenty or in famine. What gave him the power to be able to do this, is the love of Christ. Having the love of Christ and loving Christ and others, is all that he needed. He thanked the Philippians for their material support of him and prayed that God who replenishes those who do good deeds, would repay them many times over.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus gave a parable about a wedding feast. Jesus used the story to open our hearts to His kingdom that is full of love, justice and mercy. The king who gave the banquet is God. The groom is His only begotten Son, the Bridegroom of the Church. The Servants were the Prophets God had sent to be His voice to His people. The Troops are God’s Angels.

In this story, we can identify three categories of people. The first are the ones who were invited to the feast but rejected the love of God by refusing to come to the wedding. The affairs of the world was more important to them. They rejected absolute love that calls out for us to love God and our neighbor. They missed out on abundant food, and on imaginable joy that goes on for eternity. They are those who are self-absorbed and who think the world revolves around them.

They only know how to take but do not know how to give. They do not realize that love calls out for love. They are the people who put themselves on their top list as gods, though they might think there is a God, they do not care to know Him or search for Him. They are those who kill off the possibilities of the ultimate love that only God can give, justice that only God can render, and God’s endless mercy. They do not want to know the author of life.

The second category of people are the poor in spirit, the blind who have not being taught about the kingdom and those who are lame or those who cannot learn on their own. This group of people are those who depend on God. They are the ones who know that they need love and are in search of the ultimate love that comes from God. They are those who realize that they must accept love before they can give it. They do not take love in order to hoard it, but take the love of God and share it with others by doing good works.

The third group are represented by those who are not dressed for the kingdom. They were provided with the proper wedding garment of love to be showered on God and others. But took the love and did not want to share it. You might call them the grumpy people. So, they cannot be true members of the wedding party. That is why they would be banished to the other side with the devil and his demons.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for His grace so we can become members of His wedding party.