



Love Unites

Father Joseph Kentenich, April 10, 1961, OME #20, 156ff

Now I may ask again: What do we understand by love? We first asked practical people what they think about love. If we now ask the philosopher, then we listen to his answer: The essence of love is a transfer of life. What does that mean? It really is so: If you love someone tenderly, you will resemble the loved one more and more. Applied to religious life: If we learn to love God and learn to love the Blessed Mother with all our heart then this is the easiest and surest way to become like her. You see, I may now have the life of the Savior before me and examine it: He did it like this in such a situation; I will do the same. It is a very time-consuming process until I resemble Christ. But if I love him with all my heart the obvious consequence is “I will become like him.”

Now we ask the theologians what they say about love. The Apostle Paul said: Love is the perfect bond.⁶ That is, love *unites* perfectly. What does perfectly mean? Perfectly heart to heart, soul to soul, so that one really must say, for instance, in marriage if the right kind of love governs, the two have become more and more a unity.

Now we have asked the first question: What is love? You can apply the answer to the various forms of love. If I think of conjugal love: look, it must be an expression of a corresponding spiritual union (...)

...see to it that exterior beauty will be an expression of spiritual beauty. Otherwise it will be only physical love. In other words, you always have to see to it that every external form of love is an expression of spiritual love. ... the external forms of love - external union, pleasure in

external, physical things - must have a root in the mutual spiritual union. It is the same, if the wife is interested that her husband is clear in his thinking, sure in his judgment, then I as husband have to see to it that I foster it, that I don't squander my intellectual abilities. You always have to see, marital love is always love between two *persons*. Therefore I must develop more and more my characteristics as a person. The less I do this, the more my love will be animalistic, a merely physical love...

I think with this I have answered the question: What do we understand by love? You must ask one another again: Is our love still like this? Of course, it does not have to be as ardent as your first love, but it must be a firm love. You have to keep in mind, if love remains only physical, it will not endure. Physical beauty vanishes, and masculine strength breaks down. Therefore, proceed to the core of the person from all the external things. ■

Questions:

❖ Father Kentenich speaks of a time-consuming process until we resemble Christ in the way we love. Discuss with your spouse how overcoming an aversion or distancing yourself from an urge toward some material good can delay the process of spiritual union and union with God.

❖ What are the best opportunities to imitate the openness of heart which Christ and Mary had?

⁶ See: Col. 3:14.