

“You will never love enough”

No matter how much you may love, you will never love enough. The human heart is endowed with an enormous coefficient of expansion. When it loves, it opens out in a crescendo of affection that overcomes all barriers. If you love Our Lord, there will not be a single creature that does not find a place in your heart. (Way of the Cross, 8th Station, 5)

12 January

Let us now consider the Master and his disciples gathered together in the intimacy of the Upper Room. The time of his Passion is drawing close and he is surrounded by those he loves. The fire in the Heart of Christ bursts into flame in a way no words can express and he confides in them, 'I give you a new commandment that you love one another, just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Lord, why do you call it a *new* commandment? As we have just heard, it was already laid down in the Old Testament that we should love our neighbour. You will remember also that, when Jesus had scarcely begun his public life, he broadened the scope of this law with divine generosity: 'You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But

I tell you, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and slander you.'

But, Lord, please allow us to insist. Why do you still call this precept new? That night, just a few hours before offering yourself in sacrifice on the Cross, during your intimate conversation with the men who — in spite of being weak and wretched, like ourselves — accompanied you to Jerusalem, you revealed to us the standard for our charity, one we could never have suspected: 'as I have loved you'. How well the apostles must have understood you, having witnessed for themselves your unbounded love.

If we profess the same faith and are really eager to follow in the clear footprints left by Christ when he walked on this earth, we cannot be content merely with avoiding doing

unto others the evil that we would not have them do unto us. That is a lot, but it is still very little when we consider that our love is to be measured in terms of Jesus' own conduct. Besides, he does not give us this standard as a distant target, as a crowning point of a whole lifetime of struggle. It is — it ought to be, I repeat so that you may turn it into specific resolutions — the starting point, for Our Lord presents it as a sign of Christianity: 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples.' (Friends of God, 222-223)

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