

“Carry each other's troubles”

Our Lord says: 'I give you a new commandment: Love one another. By this love everyone will know that you are my disciples'. And Saint Paul: 'Carry each other's troubles and you fulfill the law of Christ'. I have nothing to add. (The Way, 385)

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If we look about us we could find reasons for believing that charity is a phantom virtue. But if we then

consider things from a supernatural point of view, we can also see what is the root cause of this sterility: the absence of a continuous and intense, person-to-person relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ, and an ignorance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, whose very first fruit is precisely charity.

In commenting on St Paul's advice, 'bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ', one of the Fathers of the Church says, 'By loving Christ we can easily bear the weaknesses of others, including those people whom we do not love as yet because they are lacking in good works.'

This is the direction taken by the path that makes us grow in charity. We would be mistaken were we to believe that we must first engage in humanitarian activities and social works, leaving the love for God to

one side. 'Let us not neglect Christ out of concern for our neighbor's illness, for we ought to love the sick for the sake of Christ.'

Turn your gaze constantly to Jesus who, without ceasing to be God, humbled himself and took the nature of a slave, in order to serve us. Only by following in his direction will we find ideals that are worthwhile. Love seeks union, identification with the beloved. United to Christ, we will be drawn to imitate his life of dedication, his unlimited love and his sacrifice unto death. Christ brings us face to face with the ultimate choice: either we spend our life in selfish isolation, or we devote ourselves and all our energies to the service of others. (Friends of God, 236)

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