

# Love for Others : A Reflection



## I. To be is to love

- Since God is love and God is the source of all being, love must be the very essence of what being is, and so of what we are, for we participate in the being of God.
- To love is to give oneself. This is what God is and creation is the result of God's sharing God's own being and life. To the extent that we are in touch with our own true being we recognise ourselves as gift and we are in communion with God the giver.

- Communion with God means a sharing of the creative love that cannot but reach out as a gift of the self to others.
- See Jesus' Baptismal experience. Overwhelmed with God's love Jesus is impelled into mission.

‘God chose us for the praise of the glory of his grace – his free gift to us in the Beloved’ (Ephesians 1:6).

‘The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Ho

To be, then, is to share in God's self-gift to another.

When the other accepts this gift and responds to it, we experience well-being, a being-in-love.

When the one to whom we offer ourselves in love does not accept us or fails to respond, we experience pain.

But there is no other way to be.

By virtue of being a creature the only way to be is to give oneself in love to another.

## 2. Love as a sacrament

To experience my life as a gift is to experience my total dependence on love. This is why Jesus said: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven,'

(Matthew 5:3).

This is what it means to 'receive the kingdom of God as a child'(Mark 10:15), and why Nicodemus, groping in the dark for the light was told he had to be 'born again.'

(John 3:3).

To accept as true that I am totally dependent on love, is to accept that that is also true for you, and indeed for every person and for all of creation.

To know this is to be drawn into God's own love for all that God has made.

Love, then, is a primary sacrament, for it is being part of the divine grace that flows, giving life to all.

In love we are at the very heart of religious experience.

### 3. The necessarily imperfect nature of the love we now experience

Since to be is to be-come, the joy of being [being-in-love] involves a hunger and a thirst and a longing for the fulness of being-in-love that is not yet our experience.

It means that our present experience of loving is a promise and an anticipation of this fulness.

While, following the advice of Paul, we give ourselves to ‘live through love in God’s presence’ (Ephesians 1:4),

and while we ‘want love more than anything else’ (1 Corinthians 14:1), we know, as Saint Augustine knew:

‘You have made us for yourself, O God,  
and our hearts are restless till they rest in you’  
(Confessions 1.1)



4. Being-in-love is experienced as communion.

We belong. 'If you love one another,  
you have carried out all your ob-ligations'  
(Romans 13:10).

5. If we love, we can learn to like.

Since we have one Abba (God) then in what ultimately matters we are 'alike'. Recognising this can bring us to 'like' each other more.

## 6. Loving is receiving.

To love is to recognise the other as being, like God, able to 'create',  
to en-liven (put life into) ,  
to en-courage (put heart into),  
to en-joy (put joy into).

## 7. Loving is giving.

To love is to recognise oneself as being, like God, able to 'create',  
to en-liven (put life into), to en-courage (put heart into),  
to en-joy (put joy into).

## 8. The joy and pain of love

- The experience of not being-in-love shocks, hurts, wounds
- The experience of being-in-love heals, frees, comforts, brings peace and joy.

## 9. Sin that opposes love

Between the love we actually experience and the love for which we long lies sin = failing to 'be-lieve' (= be-love).

- : We seek to avoid the pain of love
- : We seek to by-pass the surprise of love
- : We seek to be in-dependent rather than inter-dependent
- : We fail to, or choose not to, see, affirm and respond to the likeness that we share
- : We seek to control, to possess, and we substitute this counterfeit for true love

## 10. Qualities of love

- : Love is truthful [be-troth-al; trust],  
pure [purge; fire],  
faithful [fidelity; confide; abide].
- : Love is zealous, because communion matters. A true lover is committed to abide in love, and passionately opposed to what might break the communion
- : jealousy is a distortion of zealous love. It manifests itself in the attempt to possess.

: frustration is a breakdown of zealous love. We decide that the commitment is useless; we give up on someone, deciding that the other is not worth the effort of loving.

: Love is compassionate, not dis-passionate, or list-less (lust-less). Love that allows only for what is self-less, dispassionate, a-sexual is 'heretical' love

Augustine: 'Love and do what you will'  
(*'Dilige et quod vis fac'*, I John 7).

'Di-ligo' = 'love' in the sense of 'choose between.'



## Love changes everything

music: Andrew Lloyd Webber *Aspects of Love*  
lyric written by Charles Hart and Don Black 1991  
*Only Love: The very best of Nana Mouskouri*



Love, love changes everything:  
hands and faces, earth and sky.  
Love, love changes everything:  
how you live and how you die.  
Love can make the summer fly,  
or a night seem like a lifetime.  
Yes, love, love changes everything,  
now I tremble at your name.  
Nothing in the world will ever  
be the same.





Love, love changes everything:  
days are longer, words mean more.

Love, love changes everything:  
pain is deeper than before.

Love will turn your world around,  
and that world will last forever.

Yes, love, love changes everything,  
brings you glory, brings you shame.

Nothing in the world will ever  
be the same.



Off into the world we go,  
planning futures, shaping years.  
Love bursts in and suddenly  
all our wisdom disappears.  
Love makes fools of everyone:  
all the rules we make are broken.  
Yes, love, love changes everything:  
live or perish, in its flame.  
Love will never ever let you  
be the same.  
Love will never ever let you  
be the same!