



WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW A SECRET?

Part 2

for older children, aged 11 and over

Dear Children!

In our last talk, we spoke about secrets and we said that a secret is something that only a few people know. We also revealed a secret to you that most of the world does not know — or, if it does know, they don't care much or anything about it. The secret was about HEAVEN and HELL! While most of the world just thinks about the things of the world, there are some things more important than the passing things of the world—HEAVEN and HELL are far more important than anything the world has to offer. They are even far more important than life or death! Life lasts only a few years — 60, 70 or 80 years, if we are lucky. But Heaven or Hell last FOREVER AND EVER AND EVER!

So we said that we must avoid all worldly things because they risk making us lose Heaven and end up in Hell. We also said that to make sure we get to Heaven, we need to think more about God and the things of Heaven; read more about God and Heaven; talk more about God and Heaven; receive God in Communion as often as we can and to mix with people who put God and Heaven first, above all the things of the world. We finished by saying that we should focus more on God and God's grace! Forget the pleasures and treasures of the world. Do not live for them! Do not run after them! *"Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God"* (James 4:4). That is the secret of getting to Heaven! That is the secret of avoiding Hell! In our next talk, I promised to tell you another secret — AN EVEN BIGGER ONE!

What could that bigger secret be? What could be greater than Heaven or Hell? I think you already know the answer, but, like many or most people, I don't think you really believe it! What is there that you already know, in theory; but perhaps don't really believe in practice?

Well, it's this! GOD LOVES YOU! I will say it again. GOD LOVES YOU! I mean, GOD REALLY LOVES YOU!

Don't believe me? Well let's take a look at what Holy Scripture and the saints and mystics say.

THE BIBLE ON GOD'S LOVE FOR US



“For **God so loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believes in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting” (John 3:16).

“Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should leave this world to the Father: **having loved His own**, who were in the world, **He loved them to the very end**” (John 13:1).

“**God is charity**. By this has **the charity of God been shown towards us, because God has sent His only begotten Son into the world**, that we may live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God first, but because **God has loved us first**, and He sent his Son to be a payment for our sins” (1 John 4:8-10)

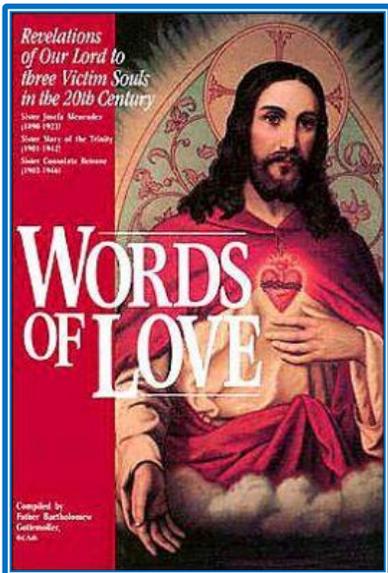


“For **the Father himself loves you**, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God” (John 16:27).

“You were once dead in your sins and offences, for in the past you walked along the paths of this world, led by the devil and his spirit, which now works on the children of the unbelievers. We followed and communicated with this spirit of the devil and world in times past, through the desires of our body, fulfilling the will of the body and of our thoughts; and we were children deserving the anger of God, just like all the rest. But **God, who is rich in mercy, through His excessive charity, by which He loves us**, even

though we were dead in sin, brought us all to life in Christ (by whose grace you are saved) and has raised us up together, and has made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:1-6).

THE SAINTS AND MYSTICS ON GOD'S LOVE FOR US



There is a wonderful little book called *Words of Love*, compiled by Fr. Gottemoller, that takes quotes from visions that three mystics had of Our Lord — Sister Josefa Menendez (1890-1923); Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity (1901-1942); and Sister Consolata Betrone (1903-1946). Here are some of those quotes of Our Lord, concerning His love for souls.

“Ah! If only souls knew My Heart ... mankind is ignorant of My Heart's mercy and goodness: that is My greatest sorrow.” (*The Way of Divine Love*, Sister Josefa Menendez, p.82).

“Yes, **I love all souls**, but with very special affection those who are the most weak and little.” (*The Way of Divine Love*, Sister Josefa Menendez, p.399).

“Do not make Me out to be a God of rigor, whereas I am nothing but **a God of Love!**” (*Jesus Appeals to the World*, by Lorenzo Sales, I.M.C., p.36).

“**I am all love**, and how then could I treat severely those I so love?” (*The Way of Divine Love*, Sister Josefa Menendez, p.201).

“Write — ‘The Gentle Heart of Jesus’ — for everyone knows that I am holy, but not all know that I am gentle!” (*Jesus Appeals to the World*, by Lorenzo Sales, I.M.C., p.36).

BUT WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR ME?



GOD LOVES YOU! GOD REALLY LOVES YOU! The secret is that most Catholics know that to be true IN WORDS, but very few really believe that to be a DAILY REALITY. That is because most people limit their Faith to the closet of their mind, and never let it out into their daily world. There is a divorce between KNOWING and DOING. We KNOW MANY THINGS about the Faith, but we DO VERY LITTLE with that knowledge. It might be the same thing in our family life. We know that we love our parents, but we do very little about it. It is limited to just words: “I love you, mom!” “I love you, dad!” But the love is not shown by actions anywhere near as often as it should be shown.

The same works in reverse. We KNOW GOD LOVES US (in theory), but we FAIL TO EXPERIENCE GOD’S LOVE (in practice). We are blind to that love of God for us. That is because we want to be loved by receiving sweet things, nice things, or beautiful things. Yet God does not love us in that worldly way.

Remember the words of Our Lady to St. Bernadette at Lourdes? Our Lady loved Bernadette and so she said to Bernadette: “I don’t promise to make you happy in this world, but in the next!” Our Lord said something similar to His Apostles at the Last Supper. He loved His Apostles and so He said to them: “Amen, amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (John 16:20). They would suffer in this world, which would lead to eternal joy in Heaven. St. Peter, who was there that night, tells us: “You shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be, for a little while, made sorrowful in various temptations” (1 Peter 1:6).

The problem for most people, about loving God, is that they also want to love the world. They want to be loved by God and they want to be loved by the world. But Jesus said that this is impossible. We must choose one or the other: “No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24). To this, St. James adds: “Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

AFRAID TO LOVE GOD

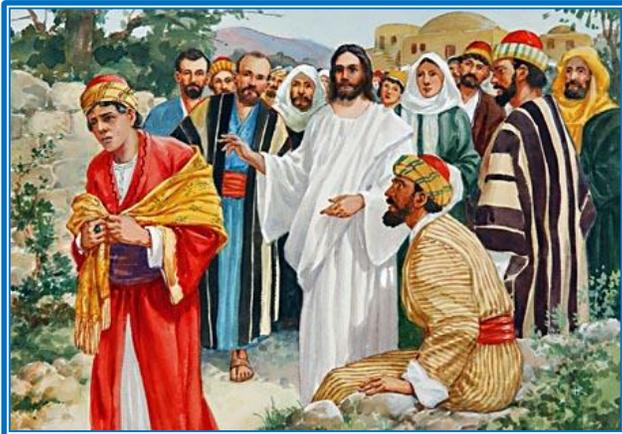


That is why we are almost afraid to be loved by God and to love God in return—because of what it would mean. For true love is “reciprocal” — that is a fancy word for what moderns might call “two-way-street”. In other words, love is two things: it is about giving and receiving. We receive love, we give love. We are happy to receive God’s love, but we are a little worried about returning it!

We are afraid that returning God’s love might mean doing certain things, or doing without certain things, that we are not ready to do at the moment! “Later!” “Tomorrow!” we say; but

we find out later that tomorrow never comes — we always put it off to the next day, to another day, to a later day. That is why our relationship with God never really takes off — it goes only so far, and then we pull back, out fear of what it may cost. We take two steps forwards and then two steps backwards. We end up going nowhere fast in our love of God.

This was the case of the young man whom Our Lord loved and asked him to come and follow Him. The young man, who was doing many good things, could not return Our Lord's love and answer his call, because, as the Bible says, he had many possessions that he loved. A case of God and mammon—not being able to love and serve both.



*“A certain man running up and kneeling before Jesus, asked Him: ‘Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?’ And Jesus said to him: ‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ The young man saith to Him: ‘All these I have kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me?’ And **Jesus looking on him, loved him**, and said to him: ‘One thing is wanting unto thee: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me. And when the young man had heard this word, being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looking round about, said to His disciples: ‘How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God!’ And the disciples were astonished at His words.*

But Jesus again answering, said to them: ‘Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God? It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God’” (Matthew 19:16-24; Mark 10:17-25).

“But Jesus said to another: ‘Follow Me!’ And he said: ‘Lord, suffer me first to go, and to bury my father!’ And Jesus said to him: ‘Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another said: ‘I will follow Thee, Lord; but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.’ Jesus said to him: ‘No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:59-62)

DO NOT BE AFRAID, SAYS JESUS, FOLLOW ME



Our Lord encourages us go forwards: *“Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting” (Matthew 19:29).*

“Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). “My sheep hear my voice: and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it” (Matthew 10:37-39).



“Let us therefore love God, because God has loved us first” (1 John 4:19). “My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

Jesus said: *“Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13), and St. John, His beloved Apostle says: “In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).*

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us” (Ephesians 5:2), for as Lord said: “As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40).