

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

190 – March 1st, 2017

Love and Law; Responsibility for One's Neighbor

The history of humanity is a great search for love, accompanied by marvelous successes and many failures. The human heart's deepest aspiration is the desire to love and be loved. Man has been created by love and for love and only in love can he grow and be fruitful.

It is surely our experience as well: Love is what is essential to our human life. And we also know the other side of the coin: Only the one who lives without love is sterile – only the egoist fails in his life.

In this way, at the same time Christ has personalized the Commandments. He has made a task of them who always have another person as an aim: God or man. It is not about being content with the strict fulfillment of the laws, but one must seek the person of the legislator behind them: God himself.

The precepts, in the background, are nothing more than an invitation to increase and deepen our personal love toward God and toward others. Therefore, precisely, the law of love has no limits. Thus, we also never finish to fulfill it perfectly in this world.

In this way we understand that love is the greatest of all the virtues. For example, fidelity, respect, humility, obedience are only worthwhile according to the measure in which they contain love, as far as they are forms of loving.

St. Augustine expresses it in a concise way: "Love and do what you want!" So, the one who loves can only want what is good. Love is enough for him. Love is everything for him.

St. Augustine refers to true love, generous love which goes out of itself and places itself on the way toward his neighbor. This unselfish love extends itself, including our enemies. We should also love them as the Lord asks us: "Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that!" (MT 5, 46)

In this context, we want to reflect on our responsibility with a brother who is at fault: in a grave and public fault. Then Jesus invites us all to work for the correction of the one at fault. Because no one is exempt for watching over for the good of all. Each one is responsible for the destiny of one's neighbor.

This responsibility for one's neighbor is not easy to do because it demands much courage and loyalty. And we, in general, are cowards, we prefer to not complicate our existence interfering in the problems of others. Nevertheless, the recompense and the fruitfulness of such action is great: if he listens to you, you have saved your brother.

One must take that step with discretion, but also with perseverance: first privately, then with others, then with the ecclesial community: If he does not even listen to the community, then consider him a pagan or a publican.

This does not mean that because of it we are dispensed from loving him or converting him. But we cannot maintain confidence and friendship relationships with him. To fraternize, both have to be in agreement. One cannot give oneself to whom one rejects, nor forgive the one who believes himself beyond reproach, nor maintain dialogue with the one who strives not to listen. We cannot force him to change, but neither ignore his mistake or his stubbornness.

Moreover, his unity, his understanding, his fruitfulness will make Christ himself present. They will offer themselves and the world the revelation of that presence which has reunited them. And that power to make Christ present is the best testimony and the supreme fruitfulness of a fraternal community, responsible and solidary, of a community which knows how to love without reserves and without limits.

Dear brothers, may our own community be, everyday more, a community which by its great love shows the face of Christ to the world which surrounds us.

Translation: Carlos Cantú, Schoenstatt Family Federation, La Feria, Texas USA 01232017
cantu_carlos@hotmail.com