

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Love** Christmas Weekday, Tuesday, January 8, 2019 **1 Jn 4:7-10; Mk 6:34-44**  
(That's why we need Christ, the definitive expression of who and what God is like.)

**“Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.”**

Although we have taken down our decorations, we are still in the Christmas Season savoring the meaning of the incarnation, as in the opening prayer of today's Mass. **We recognize outwardly Christ is like us so that we now can become inwardly like him.**

For us to do that of course it means that **we have to learn about what God really is.** This is not obvious at all, even the word “love”: “God is love.” Well the way the word love is used very often is incorrect by this standard. Nature has many forms of attraction, but they're not always what is meant here by love. Nature has many forms of attraction and repulsion. But in nature attraction and repulsion is mechanical, it is thoughtless, it is involuntary, it is unintentional, but not love, not what is met here. **Love is conscious. Love is intentional. Love is voluntary, and it expresses most favorably, most completely, the nature of God as revealed in Christ.**

Now the nature of God, as discerned by some of the ancient philosophers, was good. Well good is good. It's a good word. It's true. But love says more. So **God is good, but God is love, which is more because love involves an endurance**, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, an endurance. “Love endures all things.” **Love**, in a sense, **defines**, at least for believers, **what is really good. You could have different views on goodness.** You can have different views on all kinds of things and all kinds of words and concepts. **That's why we need Christ.** Christ is not a concept. Christ is not a word. Christ is the Word of God, not a word of us, not one of our words, but the Word of God, therefore, **the definitive expression of who and, if you want, what God is like**—who God is and what God is like. That is the Word. And that Word is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and **his life shows us, witnesses to us, what love is like.**

In today's gospel it's love being generous. Well **love is generous. Eventually on the cross he teaches us love is willing to endure all things and to suffer infinitely. This is the love revealed in Christ. This is the love we are called on to become.**