

## God Is Love (6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Year B)

### 1 John 4:7-10—God is Love

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God; for *God is love*. <sup>9</sup> *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.* <sup>10</sup> *In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.* (1 John 4:7-10)

1. **Revelation:** “the love (Greek *agapē*) of God was made manifest among us” (4:9)
2. **Incarnation:** “God sent his only Son into the world” (4:9)
3. **Passion:** “to be the expiation for our sins” (4:10)

### The Living Tradition

**Augustine:** If nothing were said in praise of love in all the pages of this epistle, if nothing at all were said in the other pages of the scriptures, and this were the one and only thing that we heard from the voice of the Spirit of God, that *God is love*, we wouldn’t have to look for anything else. (Augustine, *Homilies on 1 John* 7:4 [trans. Boniface Ramsey])

**Catechism:** But St. John goes even further when he affirms that “God is love”: *God’s very being is love*. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, *God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, and he has destined us to share in that exchange. (CCC 221)

**Thomas Aquinas:** *Objection* 1. It seems that it was not necessary for the reparation of the human race that the Word of God should become incarnate... *For God of His omnipotent power could have restored human nature in many other ways...* [However,] Augustine says (*De Trin.* xiii.): *Nothing was so necessary for raising our hope as to show us how deeply God loved us. And what could afford us a stronger proof of this than that the Son of God should become a partner with us of human nature?* Thirdly, with regard to *charity*, which is greatly enkindled by this; hence Augustine says (*De Catech. Rudit.* iv.): *What greater cause is there of the Lord’s coming than to show God’s love for us?* And he afterwards adds: *If we have been slow to love, at least let us hasten to love in return.* (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 1, art. 2)

**Thomas Aquinas:** It seems that there was some other more suitable way of delivering the human race besides Christ’s Passion... since God could have liberated mankind solely by His Divine will... *On the contrary*, St. Augustine says (*De Trin.* xiii.): *There was no other more suitable way of healing our misery than by the Passion of Christ...* In the first place, *man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return*, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation; hence the Apostle says (Rom. 5:8):

*God commendeth His charity towards us; for when as yet we were sinners ... Christ died for us...* It was accordingly more fitting that we should be delivered by Christ's Passion than simply by God's good-will. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 46, art. 3)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (6<sup>h</sup> Sunday of Easter, Year B)

1. What does it mean to say that "God is love"? According to the apostle John, what are the two key events by which the "love of God" was "manifested" among us?

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### For Further Reading

1. Saint Augustine. *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*. Translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2008.
2. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. 5 volumes. Translated by the English Fathers of the Dominican Province. Reprint. Allen, Tex.: Christian Classics, 1981.