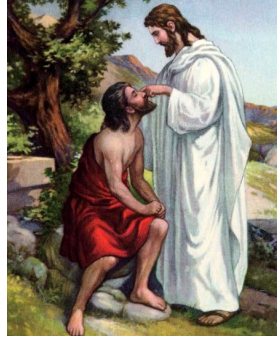


QUINQUAGESIMA

THE COLLECT

O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



1. When are all our doings nothing worth?
A. When we have not _____ (I Corinthians 13:1-3)
2. What is the Scriptural meaning of the word charity?
A. Love, good-will, brotherly-kindness.
3. What kind of gift is it here called
A. that most _____ gift
4. How do we obtain this most excellent gift?
A. By the Holy _____ (Galatians 5:25)
5. What other term is here given to it?
A. the very _____ of peace and of all _____
6. If we have not charity, how are we esteemed before god?
A. We are counted _____ (I John 3:14)

INTRODUCTION.

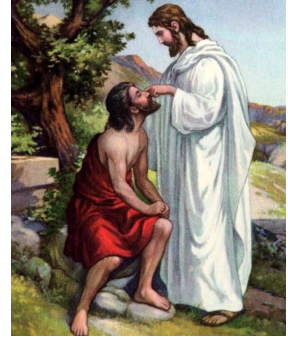
Repentance and faith we have learnt are part of our preparation for Lent, but there is one other preparation better than either, and that is the grace of love. We learn a great deal about it in the chapter we read, but it is summed up in one verse by St. Peter, "*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*" This verse tells us the position of love (above all), it tells us to possess love (have love fervent), and it tells us to practice love (love covers a multitude of sins).



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I. THE PLACE GIVEN LOVE IN THE BIBLE. *It comes first.*

1. St. Paul thought and wrote a great deal about faith, zeal, and liberty, but he says in this chapter that love is higher than faith, or cleverness, or almsgiving, or zeal, and in another place he tells us love is higher than liberty, *i.e.* love will keep us from doing many a thing which we have a right to do (Romans 15:1) when by doing it we might hurt someone else. St. Paul tells us that Love is patient and kind; love makes us glad when others have success; love doesn't put itself forward; love hopes for the best, and thinks the best of others.
2. St. Peter thought a great deal about courage, patience, hope, and work, but he says love is "above all". St. Peter tells us that Love prevents sin in ourselves and in others. It also forgives sin. We shall forgive those we love easily, as God forgives us.
3. Our Blessed Lord tells us that love sums up all of God's law (St. Matthew 22:36-40).

II. THE REASON IT IS FIRST.

1. Love is something we share with God. God has no *faith*, for He knows all things and all hearts. God has no *hope*, for with Him all things are certain; but God *loves*, and St. John says God is love. So when we love we are like God, and to have love is to have God in our hearts. All other graces are gifts from God, but love is God Himself.
2. Faith and hope receive blessings, but love gives as well as receives. (Remember St. John 3:16, "God so loves, that He gave," &c.); and "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (see Acts 20:35).
3. All people cannot be learned, or clever, or great, but all can love. All cannot preach or speak other languages, but all can love.
4. Love is the mightiest power. We cannot force people to be good, however strong we are: we cannot persuade people to be good, however clever we are: but we can win people to be good by loving. It was the great power of Jesus. How it drew the sinful woman to Him, and drew Zacchaeus, and drew St. Peter after his denial. We know that we are often kept from wrong and try to do right because of the thought that father, or mother, or sister, or teacher love us, and we love them. A little child's love will often draw a father to be good. A kind word will draw us when nothing else will.

III. CULTIVATE (GROW) LOVE.

The best way to "grow" love is to first pray God to give us His Holy Spirit more and more. Then, do acts of love to those around you.

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