What happens when eros meets agape?

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community
Sixth Week in Extraordinary Time
February 15, 2025
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Liturgy Team: Anna Davis, Jeanne Schmitt, Cathy Alexander
IT Team: Cheryl Brandi and Michael Rigdon
Theme: The Power of Love Shared vs The Love of Power Taken by Force

(**Maryal**) We warmly welcome you to our inclusive Catholic Community of Mary Mother of Jesus in Sarasota, a church without walls. **All** are welcome here. We invite you to pray the liturgy where it says "**All**." And please, as Sally often said, "Sing your heart out!" Everyone will be muted during the service. During the shared homily and prayers of the community, we invite you to unmute yourself to contribute, and then re-mute yourself again. Please have bread and wine or juice with you as we pray the Eucharistic Prayer.

(**Elena and All) We begin our joy filled celebration together in the name of the Holy One, Source of all Being, Jesus, Eternal Word, and Holy Spirit Sophia, our Wisdom within. Amen.**

(**Elena**) Today we celebrate the reality of Holy Mystery's Power of Love as opposed to the Love of Power. Let us focus on sharing the gift of Love, which is given to each of us, and the many ways we can experience that love as alive and operative in our lives, by the **power** and grace of The Holy One, who loves us unconditionally.
We are capable of **loving** because God has first **loved us**. And **God IS LOVE**.
Wait for IT!!! (I have loved you with an everlasting love)

Gathering Song: " I Have Loved You with an Everlasting Love"
https://youtu.be/WSRb2-hwNw?si=I1cwnQ5PcszpQh-t

Opening Prayer:
(**Elena**) O Holy One, voice in the listening heart, your gift of Love to us is beyond measure, and your patience without limit. We gratefully acknowledge your Loving presence among us and within us. As we gather to celebrate Eucharist this afternoon, we offer you thanks and praise for the gift of our humanity, the consciousness and freedom that allows us to know and love you and one another. We ask that you continue to graft us onto your wholeness, so that with absolute self-confidence we may experience an impassioned desire to share your Infinite and Abundant Love with everyone. **Amen**

Transformation Rite
(Maryal) We pause now to remember the times we have not born fruit in caring for self and others. A time perhaps when we have failed to respond to your command to love each other as you have loved us. Take a moment to recall one missed opportunity, one broken or damaged relationship.
(*Pause briefly and extend your hand over your heart)*
ALL: As we ask for and receive forgiveness, we open our hearts to your Infinite Love, embracing and healing us. Let it be.

The Sign of Peace
(Elena) It is fitting that, having asked for Divine and mutual forgiveness, we now extend an expression of Peace to each other.
(Elena): Grant us Your peace, O Loving God, that following the example of Jesus and with the strength of the Spirit, we may be eager to spread that love and peace to everyone, everywhere, with no exceptions**, as we reject all ideation of Love of Power.**
All: Amen. **May the peace of our gracious and loving God be always with us.**
(Elena) Let us turn to each other and with praying hands offer one another a sign of peace.
NAMASTE 3x

Joyful Gloria:
(Anna D) Let us **All** lift our voices in praise.
Glory to the Holy One who surrounds us, who lives within us, whose sacred Word is shared by us in our world and beyond.

Glory to the Spirit of Life, who offers us peace, peace in our hearts and peace with one another as we reach out and ask for blessing.

Glory to the Spirit of Life who invites us to learn the lessons of our mistakes.

Glory to Jesus who teaches us how to live the Gospels, and invites us to be loving healers of heart, body and soul.

Glory to You, O Holy One, whose presence is with us indeed. You give us the strength to live your gospel message*, foregoing all inclinations to Love of Power.*

We depend upon your ever-present Spirit to expand our consciousness to include your ever expanding universe as we journey in the present and rejoice in your call to courageously strive for justice and equality for all, sharing the Power of Love, with everyone everywhere, with no exceptions.
Glory to the Spirit of Life. Amen!

(**Maryal)** The readings chosen today will hopefully provide information that may serve to add to our pool of knowledge as we enhance our understanding of the concept of Love. How, when and where we have been led by God to experience This Power of Love through a different lens. Agape. We are continuously called to enter into a transformation that will enhance our relationship with the God mystery, a relationship immersed in the ever loving energy of Love; in whom we live, move, and have our being.

C.S. Lewis On LOVE
(Elena*)* *The Four Loves* is a book by C. S. Lewis written from a series of radio talks in 1958 and published in 1960. The book examines love from Christian and philosophical perspectives. In his book, Lewis distinguishes between Need-pleasures (e.g. water for the thirsty) and Pleasures of Appreciation (e.g. the love of nature). To his exploration of Need-love and Gift-love, he added what he called "a third element"— Appreciative-love. Lewis then addressed four categories of love. He did this by defining and explaining the four Greek words for *love* used in the Bible.—storge (affection), phileo (friendship), eros (romantic), and agape (sacrificial). Because *"God is Love" (1 John 4:8)* understanding how the Greeks distinguished love is helpful. Borrowing from Lewis's writings, let us consider how we should/might understand love.

(Maryal) First Reading: From "The Four Loves " by C.S. Lewis

First Reading: CS Lewis's Words About Love *"To love at all is to be vulnerable, love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make of keeping it intact…you must give your heart to no one not even an animal…lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket — safe, dark, motionless, airless — it will change, it will not be broken it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable."*
This is a truth that is hard to hear. If one's heart is hard and cold as stone, one is safe and protected from outside forces. But sadly, one is also shut out from receiving love—both the love of God and the love of others. When we come to Jesus in trusting faith, He removes our hearts of stone and gives us new hearts of flesh (Ezek 11:19, 2 Cor 5:17). He gives a warm and tender heart that is able to receive the greater love of all — the agape love God so freely gives. And when we receive God's love, His love "grows" in our hearts in a way that we are able to freely, generously, and graciously love others. Agape love, loves the unlovable, gives to the undeserving, accepts the repulsive, expects nothing in return, and rests in Christ. It is the

fuel that fills our tanks (hearts), the power that stirs our souls, and the joy that gives us strength. It comes from God and it is the riches of Christ's glory and grace "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5), and, therefore, we can love others as we are loved. *1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us. John 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*."
These are the inspired words of CS Lewis and Scripture passages and we respond:
May it be so.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 107
(Cathy) Response: O that we might learn to see, hear and think with our hearts!
~Know yourself! Let your aim be to recognize who you are. Aspire to live as sons and daughters of Divine Love, to enshrine the earth with divinity. To honor all relationships as sacred and to live in peace and in balance with all living things. Acknowledge the sacredness of every path, albeit different from your own; in this way you honor the Great Mystery and the wonder of all Life!
Res: O that we might learn to see, hear and think with our hearts!

~Enter the holy temple of your heart, and learn to still the tumult of the mind. For, to be serene even in the midst of chaos, is to know the efficacy of calmness. Peace dwells in the heart of silence, compassion and mercy abide there as well. Come let us give thanks to the Heart of all hearts, giving praise for the unlimited gifts of Love.
Res: O that we might learn to see, hear and think with our hearts!

~ Pray for the well-being of all life, and learn to dance in harmony with the cosmos!
Awaken all you who are asleep, let us plant seeds for the commingling of heaven and earth.
For the Energy of Love radiates in everything, and receptive hearts are purified by its Fire.
Blessed are the children of Light, for they know their home in the Universal Heart.
Res: O that we might learn to see, hear and think with our hearts!
(Adapted from Nan Merrill)

Second Reading: The Original Greek Translation of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
(Jeanne) Luke 6: 17, 20-28
Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and be cured of their diseases. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him……sooo much energy surging from him, so many people healed.
Then he spoke:
~You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding.
~You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.
~You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning.
~Count yourself blessed every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens……skip like a lamb, if you like! ---for even thought they

don’t like it, I do…..and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

(Anna) ~But it’s trouble ahead if you think you have It made.
What you have is all you’ll ever get.
~And it’s trouble ahead if you’re satisfied with yourself.
Yourself will not satisfy you for long.
~And it’s trouble ahead if you think life’s all fun and games.
There’s suffering to be met, and you are going to meet it.
~There’s trouble ahead when you live for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests----look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

This is a passage found in the gospel book attributed to Luke and we respond: **So be it.**

Alleluia: https://youtu.be/o1rc7ojQtJU
(Jeanne) Gospel Reading:
This is from the Beatitudes of Peace by John Dear, notice how active and powerful this version of the beatitudes reveals itself. From John Dear, “I learned that some scholars are rethinking the original Greek translation of the Beatitudes. The passive "Blessed are …" is not accurate, they say. Better the more active phrase: "Walk on! Walk forth!" If true, it rings a different tone, a tone of doggedness, support, encouragement. Our Loving God cheers us on that we might go the distance in LOVING pursuit of justice and peace. Something along these lines:

~Walk forth, you poor in spirit, you humble and powerless. Keep going. Don't be discouraged by your poverty. The reign of God is yours.

~Walk forth, you who mourn the victims of war and hunger. Keep going. You will be consoled.

~Walk forth, you meek and gentle and non-violent. Inherit the earth and enjoy the blessing of creation.

~Walk forth, you who hunger and thirst for justice. Don't give up. You will be satisfied. "Justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

~Walk forth, you merciful. Keep showing mercy in a merciless world. Forgive everyone. Be compassionate to everyone. Show mercy to everyone. Mercy will be yours.

~Walk forth, you pure in heart. Keep going. Be filled with the light of peace and see Christ in the poor, in the enemy, in one another.

~Walk forth, you who make peace. Keep on going. Speak against war. Organize peace vigils. Write Congress, demand the troops come home, work for nuclear disarmament. Become who you are, the sons and daughters of the God of peace.

~Walk forth, you persecuted for justice. Keep going. Don't give up. You stand on the shoulders of Dr. King, Dorothy Day and Mahatma Gandhi. Your reward will be great, for this season. If you ever struggled with, 'why am I here,' you are here for this season. If you've ever wrestled with 'why has God given me the opportunity and the intellect and the ability to go to places that I go?' It is for this moment to stand up and raise a moral dissent against the forces of injustice. It is our time! Many have stood before. But it is our time now!"

Inspired words shared by John Dear and we respond: May it be so!

Shared Homily

(Anna and All) Statement of Faith
We believe in the Holy One, a divine mystery beyond all definition and rational understanding, the heart of all that has ever existed, that exists now, or that ever will exist.

We believe in Jesus, messenger of God's Word, bringer of God's healing, heart of God's compassion, bright star in the firmament of God's prophets, mystics, and saints.

We believe that we are called to *follow Jesus as a vehicle of God's love, a source of God's wisdom a*

We believe that God's kin-dom is here and now, stretched out all around us for those with eyes to see it, hearts to receive it, and hands to make it happen.

Prayers for the people of God (Jeanne)
Response: All: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~ As we prepare for the sacred meal, we pray for the needs of the people of God in our community and around the world and for the earth and all universal life sustained by God.
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~ We pray for all suffering from natural disasters all over the world, that they not lose hope and that they feel the light of your love**.**
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, give wisdom to those who negotiate to bring about justice, peace and a better quality of life to all people, that all may live in a fully human way.
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~We pray for the people who live in war-torn countries that they may live in peace without fear, and that goodness and sanity will fill the hearts and minds of those that would cause them harm**.**
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~ We bring to the table all those who are in need of healing of **body and soul** from cancer and all other chronic illnesses. Grant them O Holy One an increase of faith and the strength of hope to endure.

R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~You are the Way, The Truth and the Life, awaken in us the courage to set aside all pettiness and all half-truths that keep us divided from one another.
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~We bring to the table our MMOJ intentions found in our community prayer book.
R: Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.
~And for what else do we pray? Begin with, "I bring to the table." **And we all respond**:
Grant us, Holy One , hearts open to see, hear and share Your Love.

Holy One, may we respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers in loving prayer and solidarity. Amen

Offertory:
Preparation of the Gifts Offertory Song: "Here is My Life" by Joe Wise
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsHM7_XZT5A

(Maryal) Blessed are you, God of all Creation, Earth and the Universe. This bread is your community of Mary Mother of Jesus, offering **our spiritual evolution** into the heart of Christ. May this bread become spiritual nourishment for our journey.
All: Praise and glory to our Creator, Shekinah, and Jesus the Christ forever.

(Cathy) Blessed are you, God of all Creation, Earth and the Universe. This wine is our desire to make co-creator choices in our own lives and for humanity. May we grow in faith, hope and love by following the way of Jesus Christ, our wise elder brother.
All: Praise and glory to our Creator, Shekinah, and Jesus the Christ forever.

(Anna D) Grateful for your covenant with us, which extends to us the heritage of light and life and love, we gather together in hopeful openness, joined with all living creatures, **and we sing:**

Holy, Holy, Holy by Karen Drucker https://youtu.be/nTewBnxBy30

Eucharistic Prayer
(Maryal) Holy Mystery you have loved us with an everlasting love. dwell in us.
(Maryal and All): and you bestow the power of love in every living being and earth itself.
(Maryal) Let us lift up our hearts**.**
(Maryal and All): We lift up our hearts to our Loving Creator in whom past, present, future and all that exists are One.

(Extend hands in blessing over bread and wine for the Invocation of the Holy Spirit.)
(Elena and All): Come Sophia Wisdom Holy Spirit and settle on this bread and wine. Fill them with the holiness and wholeness of our brother Jesus the Christ who is calling us to justice, peace, equality and dignity for all. We give thanks and praise this day. Amen.

(Maryal and All) On the night before he died, Jesus gathered with his friends and washed their feet so that they would follow his example in service of human consciousness and evolution into Jesus the Christ.

(Elena and All) When he returned to his place at the table he spoke the blessing, broke the bread and shared it with them saying, "Take and eat of the bread of life. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you."

(Maryal and All) Jesus then raised the cup of blessing, spoke the grace saying, "Take and drink of the covenant made new again through my life in each of you and in your community. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you."

(Elena and All) Jesus, who was with God in the beginning of the creation of the heavens and earth, is with us now in this bread. The Spirit of whom the prophets spoke in history, is with us now in this cup. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith - Christ dies, Christ rises, Christ comes again and again and again.

Great Amen by **Linda Lee Miller** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy76fpfkNsg

(Anna Davis) This is the bread of life and the cup of blessing. Through it we are nourished and we nourish each other. All are welcome to the Feast.

(Maryal and All): What we have heard with our ears, we will live with our lives. As we share communion we will become communion, both Love's nourishment and Love's challenge to grow in consciousness and obedience to the call of the Holy One in Jesus the Christ.

(**Maryal**) Take and share communion with the words "(I am) or (You are) love for the world." Take and share the cup with the words "(I am) or (You are) hope for the world.

Let us take a Moment of Silence to focus on Divine LOVE Present within us.

Communion Meditation "There is only Love" by Karen Drucker
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdDhH8hoQ5c

(Anna Davis and All)
Holy One, You call us to speak truth to power;
we will walk with integrity in your presence.

Holy One, You call us to live the Gospel of healing and justice; we will live justly.

Holy One, You call us to be Your presence in the world; we will love tenderly.

(Cathy and All) Let us pray as Jesus taught his companions to pray:

O Holy One, you are within, around, and among us.
We celebrate your many names.
Your wisdom come, your will be done, unfolding from the depths within us.
Each day you give us all we need.
You remind us of our limits, and we let go.
You support us in your power, and we act with courage.
For you are the dwelling place within us, the empowerment around us,
And the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen
(Adapted from Miriam Therese Winter, MMS)

Prayer of Thanksgiving
(**Elena and All**) **Loving God, may this Eucharist in which we shared Christ's healing** love, **deepen our oneness with you and with one another. May wonder and thanksgiving fill us with knowledge, understanding and experience of your love and compassion for us, your sacred people. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Christ**.

Prayers of Gratitude, Introductions and Announcements

Community Blessing (Everyone please extend your hands in mutual blessing.)
(Maryal and All): May our hearts be glad on our journeys as we dream new dreams and see new visions.
~May we live and work for mercy, peace and justice, in our hearts for ourselves and our brothers and sisters…whoever they are and wherever they are.
~May we learn to bless, honor and hold in reverence one another and thus grow in gratitude and humility.
~May we continually strive to have the faith of a mustard seed, so we can move mountains that are barriers to justice and equality.
`May we be the face of God to the world, reflecting a compassionate and caring presence to everyone we meet.
~And finally, as we go forth from this sacred space, let us purposefully look with new eyes and hearts to recognize our call, to Spiritual growth and evolving consciousness.
Thanks be to God. Let it be so!

Commissioning
(**Elena)** Full of Christ's peace, let us go out in haste to share the Good news of the Divine Presence dwelling within. Remember, that as the face of Christ to the world we are absolute existence and a field of infinite possibilities. Let our service continue with hearts full of zeal and desire to answer our call to be the loving voice of the Holy One at all times. And at all times may our lives be a testimony to God's LOVE. Let us joyfully sing our hearts out.!
All: Amen and Alleluia !!!

Closing Song: Testify to Love – Wynonna Judd **https://youtu.be/g1rYmj1AN44**

If you would like to add your intercession to our MMOJ Community Prayers book,
Please send an email to jmeehan515@aol.com

If you would like to invite another person to attend our liturgy please refer them to www.marymotherofJesus.net where the day's liturgy is found. Zoom instructions are also included there.

NEW PO BOX:
Please send donations to:
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