

Relationality

A Basic Dimension of our Nature as Persons

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic
Rev. Fr. Eduardo Mayo, OFM Capuchin
May 4, 2024

The Catholic perspective of a person takes the whole being of a person (i.e. a collection of different characteristics), which is different from the worldly perspective that takes on merely the gender of the person. God loves our totality. He loves us as we are, including our faults. Similarly, we are called to love as Christ loves and to be His disciples. When we remain in the love of God, love will not run out.



1. Relationship. We are built for relationships. Relationship is the state of being connected:

- 1.1. By Bond: being connected by blood or marriage; the foundation may be strained but cannot be denied or destroyed.
- 1.2. By Behavior: how two or more people behave toward each other ("tropa" feels like family; they know each other well).

2. How is our relationship with God and others measured?

- 2.1. **Covenant with God:** a covenantal bond or discipleship is more than an exchange of promises; it is a solemn giving and receiving of others. We are no longer "our own." We take on duties and encumbrances for the sake of the other and we take on sacrifices. Only God stays true to the covenant and keeps renewing, "love as I have loved you" (John13: 35).
- 2.2. **Fraternity:** we have a fraternity with each other that is defined by charity. It is a recognition of the universal fatherhood of God as creator of all persons, "*imago Dei*." This highlights the special nature of our ecclesial fraternity as adopted children of God. Every time we say "Our Father," it is a privilege that God gives us. This highlights our responsibility over the welfare of other persons (regardless of culture, race, creed, gender) and creatures. Since God chose us, we are responsible to bring others to the Father, share the Father, and live in love.

3. Our behavior leads to discipleship (Greek "mathetēs"). An apprentice is one who learns and hones a skill from a master teacher. God has been seeking to perfect us in His image, "be holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). It is a formation of the heart in "holiness."

- 3.1. The Lord allows struggles. We deny ourselves, take up our cross, because we learn love through practice. "Holiness" is not simply religiosity; it is training the mind and heart to exercise the gift of freedom towards God and others.
- 3.2. Discipleship is oriented towards forming an apostle, i.e. an ambassador, or messenger, who is sent as a representative, and is made ready, armed, clothed, equipped to set on a journey.

4. The path: Human Person (*imago Dei*) to God:

- 4.1. Knows: reason (rationality) > TRUTH
- 4.2. Wills: love (affection) > GOOD
- 4.3. Freedom for excellence

5. Levels of Charity (love in action):

- 5.1. Erōs – passionate love; desire, exclusive
- 5.2. Storgé – familial love: it is natural, instinctual (among siblings)
- 5.3. Philía – fraternal love; solidarity formed through long hours together (e.g. school)
- 5.4. **Agape**— universal, unconditional love associated with God and Jesus. It is a conscious choice that is oriented towards desiring and contributing to what is truly good for the other, regardless of cost.
- 5.5. **Charity (Love in action)**
 - the image of love: the Cross
 - the constancy of love: the Eucharist
 - the resiliency of love: Confession
 - the witness of love: Marriage (one loves an imperfect person forever)
 - the service that is love: Consecration

CONCLUSION: Growing in discipleship is a learning in love. We don't learn love until we hurt because agape love is unconditional. This is the core of the Christian mission, for oneself and for the world. When we see our lives in the light of God, then we begin we see our purpose.

REFLECTION: When you love, what are you willing to offer/surrender?

Scribes Ministry: Transcribed by: Jo Advincula
<https://lordsflock.org/teachings/digests>
#Discipleship, #Love

