

The True Meaning of Love: A Reflection on Sacrifice

This Sunday, we light the fourth candle of Advent, symbolizing love. As we reflect on the true meaning of love, we are reminded that love is not just a feeling but a choice and a commitment. There are different forms of love, each with its own unique characteristics.

Eros love is characterized by exciting and intoxicating emotions, often associated with the initial stages of a romantic relationship. However, this type of love, built on passion or attraction to satisfy selfish ends, does not last. In contrast, **Philia** love is a more enduring bond.

Philia love is an affectionate and lasting bond that develops after a deep and long-lasting relationship. This type of love is built on mutual respect, trust, and affection, often seen in relationships between children and parents, and among siblings. Philia love lays the foundation for the highest form of love.

Agape love is the highest form of love, characterized by selflessness, generosity, and unconditional acceptance. It is a love given without expecting anything in return. As we recall, God is love, and He expressed His nature of love by giving us Jesus. This ultimate act of love is what we celebrate at Christmas.

Love requires sacrifice. It involves putting the needs of others before our own and being willing to make difficult choices for the sake of those we love. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of the ultimate sacrifice He made for our sake. Born in a humble manger, surrounded by animals, and cared for by Mary and Joseph, Jesus' birth restored God's eternal plan for humanity to share in His divinity.

In our daily lives, we can show love by making sacrifices for the sake of others. We can prioritize their needs, listen to them, and be present for them. As Mother Teresa once said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Examples of love and sacrifice can be seen in the daily acts of kindness and generosity that we often overlook. They can also be seen in the sacrifices made by soldiers, firefighters, and teachers, as well as in the simple acts of prioritizing family time.

As Saint Augustine wisely said, "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like."

In summary, love is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses **Eros**, **Philia**, and **Agape**. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of the importance of **Agape** love, which is characterized by selflessness, generosity, and unconditional acceptance. May we strive to show this type of love to others, making sacrifices for their sake and doing small things with great love.

Merry Xmas and prosperous New Year in advance

Blessings.

