

Love one another. Simple. Love one another. So very simple. So why are we so bad at it? I don't mean anyone here personally; I mean humankind for sure. And as far as Christianity goes, we could certainly do better.

Now don't get me wrong, we are pretty good at loving our family members and friends. But the further we get away from our blood relatives and neighbors, the harder it gets. "Stranger danger" tends to be natural in toddlers. Maybe it's built-in for our own protection. But let's face it, there's a global crisis of mistrust going on that's splitting us apart every level and it's nasty.

Let's think about it. We're all unique in some ways. And that uniqueness, that diversity, is healthy. It's natural and it's good for us collectively, but it's still uncomfortable. We can struggle to get along even with those we care about the most. You ever work with a loved one on a project or in family business? Not always easy.

Last Sunday, on Mother's Day, my sweet wife asked me to arrange and hang a series of family pictures and paraphernalia on one of the walls in our family room. It was "challenging" for both of us. Now it wasn't the same degree of stress you might find hanging wallpaper, but it was interesting.

Advice for young couples recently married... you might want to wait a year before trying wallpaper. Why ruin the honeymoon?

So, throughout the picture collage ordeal that was last Sunday, I started to realize there are divergent ways people might attack such a project, like our floor plan here. There are those that are artistic and creative. They view a wall space / floor as a canvas. Without any extensive planning, they just start putting pieces up, adjust a little here and there, and it somehow looks great. God bless them.

Then there are those math, science, technical types who have to map it out on a Cartesian grid, get all the dimensions perfect, set it in some geometric pattern, calculate where every nail and bracket will be, and then attempt to put it all up. But due to husband error, I mean human error, it won't be perfect, but it's close... enough... one hopes.

Then there's the other very practical, realistic, and efficient folks. They realize that when they take the old stuff down, they are going to have a bunch of nail holes and markings. So, they arrange the old stuff to cover it up or reuse the same brackets and it works well enough. Again, God bless them.

All of these approaches are valid. Each one gets the job done and they all work because the reality behind it all is the same. There is a wall/floor with limited space and set dimensions. And we have to engage with that reality to cooperate and make progress so we can attain our common goals.

A big problem in the world these days, as I see it, is that we can't seem to agree on the base realities anymore. Is there an absolute right and wrong, or is everything subjective? How many genders are there now? What is gender? Can we say we know anymore? Should someone's relationship preferences be what defines them? I hope not. Aren't we all children of God? If someone disagrees with us politically, is it ok to physically or financially destroy or "cancel" them? Do the ends justify the means? Everyone claims they are backed by science, but as far as I can tell, people only see what they want to see. As Pontius Pilate said, "What is truth"?

Well, that's what we're faced with. Welcome to the 21st century.

Now I'm not saying we must agree on politics, or vaccines, or sport's teams, ok definitely not sports teams, but we have to define and agree on the reality behind it all.

Now as Christians it's not necessarily our job to get people to recognize and agree on basic logical truths (like $1+1=2$) or obvious physical realities of the world, as much as we'd like to. But perhaps we can live our lives and interact with others in a way that demonstrates the “spiritual” realities that exist.

We are a broken people. We tend to fail on our own. We fall into sin of every kind, and it destroys us from *within and without*. But we are not doomed to failure. The spiritual reality is... there is a personal loving God who created us and was willing to sacrifice Himself so we can be healed and *raised up* beyond our wounded humanity. And that person is Jesus Christ. And those that follow Him, truly follow Him, spread His Love, so that others can know Him.

How? We love others as Christ did, so they can feel His love. We show mercy and patience with others so they can know of His mercy. We sacrifice for others, so they can begin to understand the sacrifice He made for us. We do this in our everyday lives as parents, siblings, coworkers, neighbors, and friends. Many do it through their occupation: nurses, doctors, teachers, coaches, religious, bus drivers, you name it. God Bless you all.

But are we called to go further? Think of all the volunteer service organizations out there. In essence, aren't they just further opportunities to love? They're countless... just within our parish we have the Knights of Columbus, Steven ministry, nursing home ministries to name a few. When we participate in these organizations, we have the opportunity to experience and exercise the Love of Christ. We show caring and mercy by our willingness to help *in the name of Christ*. In the work of our parish St. Vincent dePaul conference I get to tell those we help, our friends in need, that our ability to help them was made possible by the financial sacrifice of our parishioners who did so in the name of Jesus Christ and the Church.

And here's what you may find surprising: when we stop focusing solely on our wants and desires and instead give ourselves to others in friendship and service, we find the joy that Christ promised us. When we center ourselves in the reality of Jesus Christ and work together in His name to serve our neighbor, then the diverse gifts each of us has, the creative, the technical, the practical, all come together to achieve what we cannot do separately. When we come together "in communion" as the Body of Christ, then we love as He did, whose resources, compassion, and joy are endless.

The world will come around eventually. As Lincoln said, "You can't fool all the people all the time." All the lies and deceptions that distort reality will be exposed when things get too painful to ignore. That's when the reality and message of Jesus Christ will win out just as it did in the early Church. People will be searching. We can help them find Him. Let us have faith in the merciful, overpowering, unfailing love of Jesus Christ. Let us demonstrate that faith through our love of one another as Christ loves us.

Love one another. So simple. Love one another. So very simple. So why are we so bad at it? I don't mean anyone here personally; I mean humankind for sure, and, in some respect, even all of Christianity. We aren't very good at it. Or at least we could do better.

Now don't get me wrong, we are pretty good at loving our family members and friends. But the further we get away from our blood relatives and neighbors, it gets harder. "Stranger danger" tends to be natural in toddlers. Maybe it's built-in for our own protection. But let's face it, there's a global crisis of mistrust going on that's splitting us apart every level and it's nasty.

Let's think about. We're all unique in some ways. And that uniqueness, that diversity is healthy. It's natural and it's good for us collectively, but it's

still uncomfortable. We can struggle even with those we care about the most. You ever work with a loved one on a project. Not always easy.

Last Sunday, on Mother's Day, my sweet wife asked me to arrange and hang a series of family pictures on several corkboard pallets on one of the walls in our family room. It was challenging for both of us. Now it's not the degree of stress you might find hanging wallpaper, but it was interesting.

Advice for young couples recently married... you might want to wait a year before trying wallpaper. Why ruin the honeymoon?

So, throughout the picture collage ordeal that was last Sunday, I started to realize there are divergent ways people might attack such a project. There are those that are artistic and creative. They view a wall space as a canvas they can create on. Without any extensive planning, they just start putting pieces up, adjust a little here and there, and it somehow looks great. God bless them.

Then there are those math, science, and engineering types who have to map it all out on a Cartesian grid. They get all the dimensions measured out, make sure it's a perfect in a geometric pattern, calculate where every nail and

bracket will be, and then attempt to put it all up. But due to husband error, I mean human error, a few imperfections are noticed but it's close... enough... one hopes.

Then there's the other very practical folks, who are efficient and realistic. They realize that when they take the old stuff down, they are going to have a bunch of nail holes and markings so they arrange the old stuff to reuse or cover it up and it works well enough with the least amount of effort. Again, God bless them.

All of these approaches are valid. Each one gets the job done and they all work because the reality behind it all is the same. There is a wall with limited space and set dimensions. And we have to engage with reality to cooperate and make progress so we can attain our common goals.

A big problem in the world these days, as I see it, is that we can't seem to agree on the base realities anymore. Is there an absolute right and wrong, or is it subjective? How many genders are there now? What is gender? Can we say we know anymore? Do relationship preferences be what defines us or ...condemn us? Aren't we all children of God? If someone disagrees with us,

is it ok to physically or financially destroy or “cancel” them? Do the ends justify the means? Everyone claims they are backed by science, but as far as I can tell, people only see what they want to see. As Pontius Pilate said, “What is truth”?

Well that’s what we’re faced with. Welcome to the 21st century. Now I’m not saying we have to agree on politics, or vaccines, or sport’s teams, ok definitely not sports teams, but we have to define and agree on the reality behind it all.

Now as Christians it’s not necessarily our job to get people to recognize and agree on the physical or logical aspects of the world, as much as we’d like to. But perhaps we can live our lives and interact with others in a way that demonstrates the spiritual realities that exist.

We are a broken people. We tend to fail on our own. We fall into sin of every kind and it destroys us both from without and within. But we are not doomed to failure. The spiritual reality is... there is a personal loving God who created us and was willing to sacrifice Himself so we can be healed and raised up beyond our wounded humanity. And that (person) is Jesus Christ.

And those that follow Him, truly follow Him, spread His Love, so that others can know Him.

How? We love others as Christ did, so they can feel His love. We show mercy and patience with others so they can know of His mercy. We sacrifice for others, so they can begin to understand the sacrifice He made for us. We do this in our everyday lives as parents, siblings, coworkers, neighbors, and friends. Many do it through their occupation, nurses, doctors, teachers, coaches, religious, bus drivers, you name it. God Bless you all.

But are we called to go further? Think of the volunteer service organizations out there. In essence, aren't they just further opportunities to love? They're countless... Knights of Columbus, Steven ministry, XXX, St. ~~Vincent de Paul~~. When we participate in these organizations, we have the opportunity to experience and exercise the Love of Christ. We show caring and mercy by our willingness to help in the name of Christ. In my work in our parish St. Vincent dePaul conference I remind our friends in need that our ability to help them was because of the financial sacrifice our parishioners made in the name of Jesus Christ and Church.

And here's what you may find surprising, when we stop focusing only on our wants and desires and instead give ourselves in friendship and service to those in need, we find the joy that Christ promised us. When we center ourselves in the reality of Jesus Christ then and collaborate in His name to love our neighbor then the diverse gifts we have collectively, the creative, the technical, the practical all come together to achieve what we cannot do separately. When we come together in communion as the Body of Christ then we love as He did, whose resources, compassion, and joy are endless.

The world will come around eventually. As Lincoln said, "You can't fool all the people all the time." All the lies and deceptions that distort reality will be exposed when things get too painful to ignore. That's when the reality and message of Jesus Christ wins out as it did in the early Church. People will be searching. We can help them find Him. Let us have faith in the merciful, overpowering, unfailing love of Jesus Christ. Let us demonstrate that faith through our love of one another as Christ loves us.