

Solemn Profession Sr. JonFe  
 Carmelites  
 6-26-10  
 St. Ann's Long Grove

Words like “poverty” or “chastity” or “obedience” seem so foreign to much of our society

- They are so counter-culture
  - When we are a consumer society and you vow poverty
  - When God’s gift of sexuality is so exploited and you vow chastity
  - When for many numero uno is me and you vow obedience.

And, there are some, no doubt, who would wonder how anyone could waste their lives especially living in a cloistered community.

But with Samuel, Sr. JonFe, you have said *Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening* and in reply you have heard Jesus’ words as recorded in John’s gospel: *As the Father has loved me, so I love you. I tell you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. I call you friend.*

Each of us has been called, chosen, elected

- Not because of any merits of ours, because it was while we were still sinners that God loved us
- At our baptism, our re-birth to eternal life, God elevated us from creatures made in his image and likeness
  - To adopted children, brothers and sisters in Christ, heirs of the kingdom

And you have heard the Lord’s command: *This I command you: love one another.*

And so you come today not to the end of a journey, but to the continuation of a journey begun in baptism and now lived in solemn vows.

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians Paul affirms that Christ possesses the sum total of redemptive power and that spiritual renewal occurs through contact in baptism with the person of Christ. True Christian asceticism consists in conquering

personal sins and the practice of love of neighbor in accordance with the standard set by Christ in today's second reading.

*Put on as God's chosen one: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiving and over all these put on love.*

It is about this love that I would like to speak.

English uses the same word "love" to denote:

- Love of pizza
- Love of my dog
- Love of my spouse
- Love of God

Obviously, there is a great deal of difference between those words.

Greek has three words for "love"

- Eros
- Philos
- Agape

Eros

- We derive our word "erotic" for the Greek
- But, in Greek it means the passion of love
  - The feeling of love
  - Hopefully that passion of love of God and your community of sisters is present
- Somewhere along the line, you fell in love with the Carmelite Community
- When we speak of "falling in love" it is this kind of love--eros
- But, if we can "fall into love" we can also "fall out of love"
- There will be days in religious life, like days in marriage when one or the other is not "loveable."
- There will be times in religious life as in marriage when "passion" is on hold
- So this cannot be the kind of love that Jesus commands. It is no always sustainable.

## Philos

- “Philadelphia” the city of “brotherly love” or “sisterly love”
- This is the love of friendship
- Hopefully these sisters with whom you live will be best friends
- Best friends seeks the best for their friends
- But, best friends come in and out of our lives too.
- And you may not be best friends with everyone in community
- So this cannot be the kind of love that Jesus commands.

## Agape

- The love that God has for us
- In fact, it is this Greek word that is found in the scripture texts today.
- It is an unconditional love of God, not based on anything we have done
  - God loved us while we were still sinners
- It is the choice to love. God decides to love us and there is nothing we can do to make God stop loving us.
  - God may not like what we do at times, does not love our sins, but never stops loving us.
    - Even if we are unfaithful, scriptures says, God remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.
- Agape love is reflected in true married love.
  - I take you for better or worse
  - In good times and in bad
  - In sickness and in health
  - I will love you and honor you all the days of my life
- It is reflected in your solemn vows to be a part of this community of sisters: for better or worse, in good times and bad, in sickness and health, all the days of life.
- It is a love that is not based on what the other can do, but on your choice to love them
- This kind of love cannot fail.

May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment.