

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” 1 John 3:1.

Dear Christian friends:

Love is a central theme within the Christian faith. It is a gift of God’s creative presence. It is a major topic within our whole lives. February has been appointed the month in which “love” is celebrated. Valentine’s Day will mark the Gold Medal event for chocolatiers! More chocolates are sold for Valentines than for any other festival. They are a delight for the day and assist in our body’s immune response. Valentines Day will be a day for sentimentality. It is a celebration that allows us to be cupid-like for a spell.

Our culture functions within a multi-facet of love. We know that love can be an encourager, helping to build up a person’s esteem. Love can also be used coercively, when it is used to manipulate someone into guilt or harmful submission. The love that God extends to us is the greatest gift of all. It is a love that the person transformed by Christ can allow to grow and flourish under. This is the love that John encourages his readers to recall and nurture.

Shortly after Valentine’s Day we will celebrate Ash Wednesday and thus move into the season of Lent. This season is established as a deliberate time for us to reflect upon who we are by nature and whose we are by virtue of Christ Jesus. It is a time for us to remember that we are sinners and saints at once and the same time, while living in the flesh of our Baptism. Thus in Lent we reflect upon our propensity toward sin – the event that leads only toward death. The days and weeks of Lent are a wonderful time to focus once again upon the gift of love that God extends to us. It motivates us into good and righteous living. It ameliorates the soil that nurtures growth for the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

These days of winter are a good time to sit quietly with the Bible, to read, ruminate and relish the wonderful story of God’s redeeming love. These days are good to rejuvenate, restore and recreate through the gift of God our Creator. These are good days to allow God’s Holy Spirit to nurture us into all good things.

So celebrate with some chocolate this month, but celebrate the greatest gift - God’s redeeming love revealed through Jesus as the Christ; the love that is eternal and wholly redeeming.

In Christ forever,

Pastor Kevin.

PS: I will be doing some of that rejuvenating and reading sitting pool and beach side for a few days in Mexico.