



THIS IS LOVE: NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON AS AN ATONING SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS.

1 JOHN. 4:10

Monthly Reflection:

August 2020

Time and again, we have heard of God's love. Yet, this seemingly all too familiar concept is indescribable for words! The realisation of God's unending love for us marks the beginning of our spiritual journey. Our perennial search for the depth of His love defines the progress of our pilgrimage. "Love is not loved" was the sigh of St. Francis of Assisi. There are two dimensions to this soul rending note. The first being a deep awareness of Christ's personal love for us. And the second, our pathetic sense of incapacity to reciprocate this love. This is where we also begin our spiritual journey!

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 Jn. 4:10) Here, the word of God conveys that our journey of loving God and man begins at the moment of our response to God's personal love for us. This reflection takes us a step forward in this love. Luke 15 is a beautiful meditation of this love.

The parable of the lost sheep is not about our love for God but about His love for us." What man of you having a hundred sheep and one being missing would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go in search of the lost one." This is the question Christ poses to us. You know how much a sheep costs. Yet you do not ignore the loss of one, being content with the ninety-nine you have. You would still go through the brambles in search of the lost sheep. It is evident that we need not place this parable in the same context as that of the Good Shepherd. In this parable, we have an ordinary shepherd in search of a lost sheep; either because of the value he personally places on that single sheep or because he feels accountable to his employer for his sheep. This is not really a story of love!

The narrative then shifts to the parable of the widow who lost her silver coin. Christ asks us which woman who having lost one of ten coins does not sweep the whole house to find the lost coin. Therefore, we realise that the logic behind this parable is not love, but value. We human beings are like that. We would strive hard to attain anything which is of great value in our sight. When the story assumes the proportions of life, it becomes clear that Man is the most valuable thing to God.

We search for the lost sheep and the lost coin because both are of great value to us. We do not comfort ourselves with the thought that only one has been lost. Like you and I, God who knows the intrinsic value of a human soul does not sit back saying, 'I am only losing one soul, I have ninety nine other saints on earth, let this one go.' To be more precise, God who incarnated and sacrificed himself to save the millions of sinners living in the world, would have done the very same even if I were the only sinner among hosts of other saints on earth. This is the love of God! My individual value in the heart of God is not diminished in any way by the tens of thousands of others who are close to him. The value He has attributed to me is none lesser than the value of His own Life and Death!

