

Love Is Our Mission

The Family Fully Alive

Chapter 2: The Mission of Love

Reading Guide

If you have not yet done so, please watch the introductory video for Chapter 2. It will give you a window into the chapter and make your reading and study of the catechesis more fruitful.

It will be beneficial for you to spread your reading of the chapter over a number of sessions. Take time, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, to consider in your mind what these things might mean (Lk 1: 29) and then ponder them in your heart (Lk 2:19 & 2:51).

1. Before reading

Begin your time with a prayer, asking for God's help to understand what you are about to read. Here is a traditional Catholic prayer asking the Holy Spirit for assistance:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

2. Reading the catechesis

Rather than reading a chapter straight through, read it one section at a time. For example, in chapter 2 there are four sections, each with its own heading. The first is "Scripture gives content and shape to the meaning of love" and it covers paragraphs 21-24.

Begin by asking yourself what the subheading probably means. Then read and reread the section from start to finish at a rate comfortable for you. Underline what you consider to be especially important statements and write questions and comments in the margins. These are great active reading techniques.

3. After reading a section

After reading the section, take some time to "digest" what you have just read. One way to do this is by responding to the text.

We recommend you answer in writing, *one* of the following generic questions or *one* of the directed questions. The generic questions can be asked of any section of this book. The directed questions pertain to the section specifically.

Generic questions

- What did you think the heading meant before you read the section? Has your understanding of it changed after reading?
- What most surprised or impacted you in this section?
- What most confused you or what did you disagree with the most in this section?
- If you were to summarize this section, what would you say it was about in one or two sentences?
- What action does this section call you to take? Does this change seem possible to you? What barriers do you think would stand in the way of you taking this action?

The following are directed questions for each section of this chapter. Choose one of them to answer in writing if you don't select one of the generic questions. A space is provided for you to write your response.

Scripture gives content and shape to the meaning of love

Directed questions

- How does either human history or salvation history appear to be an instruction in how to love?
- What is the connection between being created for communion and having love as our mission?
- Why does it take humility to love in God's way?
- Look up one of the Gospel images of God's love cited in § 24 and write about how it applies to you personally.

Your response:

Marriage is an essential biblical image for God's love

Directed questions:

- Why is marriage such an apt image of God's love for humanity?
- What is your personal response to Pope Benedict XVI's teaching that "God created the universe in order to be able to become a human being and pour out his love upon us and to invite us to love him in return"?

- What is your response to the physical and sensual language of divine love in the Old Testament (§ 27)?

Your response:

The Bible is not sentimental about marital love

Directed questions

- Why are adultery and prostitution apt images of infidelity toward God? What would your “adultery” toward God look like?
- How is God’s mercy not sentimental? How can God’s mercy even be said to have a hard edge to it?
- How does Christian love make the erotic, the affective, and choice distinct?
- The catechesis says that “This kind of love has dimensions we discover as we yield to it” (§31). What is “this kind of love”? Have you had experience “yielding to it”? Have you discovered “new dimensions” of love by yielding to it?
- What does this statement mean to you: “[God] wills only the best, the true and ultimate good for his people” (§31)?
- What do you think this claim means: “God’s *eros* always integrates with his compassion and patience” (§31)?

Your response:

Marriage, love, and Christ’s sacrifice on the cross

- How might marriage based on “rights and responsibilities” seem better than marriage based on “mutual self-giving” but actually be worse?

- How is both marriage and Christian love a kind of “cruciform self-sacrificial communion” (§32)?
- What is the “new and unexpected definition of love” that Christ gives us (§36)?

Your response: