

Second Hand Preacher

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 31, 2016

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Love is a vast and intense subject. Art, writing, and so many other forms of media try to capture it, but love can also be so specific for the individual. We were made to seek love and most of us spend our lives looking for and hopefully sharing it with those around us. Love makes life worth living. God is love in its purest form. When we seek God, we ultimately seek love. God loves us first making it possible for us to love others. The love of God is the most powerful force in the universe.

St. Paul tries to capture love in these brief verses to the Christians in Corinth. He loves them whole heartedly, but he worries about them as well. He has seen them act selfish and be divisive. Paul knows that the church is weaker when all the members do not love as they should. Paul wants to take them out of petty disputes into a universal love. He wants to make them better. He describes this high form of love in order to help them realize just how important they are. If they can love each other and God, then they can build up the Body of Christ.

This is the challenge given to us. Many of us hear this over and over at weddings. We can see why this can be so powerful for two people starting a lifetime commitment. This reading can be a road map in how to live a vocation of love. A simple exercise to try would be to insert the name of your beloved into the reading at the word love. Does it ring true? Of course it won't be perfect, but hopefully you can see many of the characteristics of love in that person you desire. It would also be important to insert your own name for love in order to see where one could grow in everlasting love. As a priest, I sometimes put God in the place of love and it reads perfectly. I am not perfect in my commitment to God, but I try to work on it each and every day.