

What is This Thing Called LOVE?

By David Melechinsky

American society recently received another mighty push down the precipitous slope into degradation, decay and despotism with the Supreme Court's iniquitous *Lawrence* decision, aimed at overturning the anti-sodomy laws of the State of Texas. While there has been some public consternation over this profound attack upon what little remains of Christian Order in America, it has been distressingly quiet in comparison with the tumult that *should* have been raised. Whenever a public official or a private citizen publicly points out how civilized nations have always dealt with the issue of sodomy, one can predict that the hate-haters, the self-righteous judges of self-righteous judgmentalism, and those who are intolerant of intolerance will resume their perennial pontificating of their anti-dogmatic dogmas in order to impose their amoral morals upon the rest of us. Were it not for the tragic consequences to our society, the spectacle of officials and citizens admonishing the few officials who still have the guts to practice the work of Mercy "To admonish the sinner," and failing to see their own pitiful hypocritical bigotry in the matter, would be hilarious.

We have been hearing a lot of emotionally-charged rhetoric concerning "love" and "hate" that illustrates the total ignorance of the meaning of those words on the part of many, if not the majority, of those who mouth them. The word "love" is possibly the most beautiful, and most abused word in the English language. Someone can say, "I love God", or "I love my wife", or "I love my Country, or "I love my children", or "I love my friend", or "I love my neighbor", or "I love my dog", or "I love football" or "I love chocolate", and most people will think they understand. But the kinds of "love" appropriate to all these objects of those "loves" are as different as anything can be. Someone who truly loves God desires to promote the glory of God, and to be with Him forever, and to help others to know and love Him as well. He who really loves his wife desires to make her happy and safe, to see her good qualities replicated in the building of a family with her, to sacrifice himself, even his life, if necessary, to protect her, and to help her secure eternal happiness in the next life. She who loves her husband obeys his just wishes, and desires to assist him in fulfilling his duties as a man, that he may be worthy of her love and loyalty, and of eternal salvation. Those who best love their children are desirous of raising them properly, to prepare them for life in this world and the next, and sacrifice their own personal interests and preferences for their children's good. He who loves his Country wants to see it act honorably and justly, and desires to keep it free and safe from enemies, foreign and domestic, even if he must give his life for that cause. She who properly loves her friend enjoys her company and helps her in need. He who correctly loves his neighbor may or may not *like* his neighbor, but treats him as he himself would be treated, with courtesy and respect for his person, but not necessarily for his ideas or deeds if they are unworthy of him. The person who properly "loves" football enjoys watching or playing the game, but (we hope) does not sacrifice all for its sake, recognizing it is just a game. And she who "loves" chocolate desires to consume it for the pleasure it gives her. Love of God constitutes the highest form of love, for God Is Love. This kind is followed closely by love of family, country, and neighbor for love of the God Who made them. This kind of love is called *Charity*, and is primarily concerned with *giving*. The kind of "love" that consumes something for pleasure is more properly called "desire". This kind

involves **taking**, and is obviously of the lowest kind. Alas, how common it is to find these two very different things being confused! Just as there **are indeed** those who sacrifice all on the altar of sports or food, or some other triviality, so are there many deluded people who establish relationships with others for the purpose of **consuming** each other for their own selfish pleasure, often putting each other at risk for incurable, fatal diseases, or worse, eternal damnation, and dare to call that “love”. Such relationships are easily recognized by the chronic disputes, insecurity, dishonesty, promiscuity, and/or shortness of duration that characterize them. These incidents are more properly called examples of **lust** than of love, and cause great harm to everyone involved, causing, among other problems, habits that are as addictive as drugs, leading its victims from one destructive relationship to another. Children that result from these selfish alliances are frequently either slaughtered in the womb, or brought up like wild animals that travel in packs called street gangs, at great expense to taxpayers who must substitute for the absent father and/or mother, and at great cost to others by the damage they do by their irresponsible acts, not having been raised in a normal family environment that teaches respect for the rights of others. The uncountable destruction wrought by this sort of “love” rivals, if not exceeds, that brought about by hatred.

I contend that this confusion over the meaning of the word “love” has caused a great many people to go through life without ever having experienced real love. As a by-product of this deficiency, there is also a confusion over the meaning and purpose of **hate**. When a person truly loves someone or something, this love necessarily results in an abhorrence for anything that threatens the well-being or honor of the beloved. This abhorrence is called “hate”. When directed against **evil deeds** and the **false ideas** that spawn and support them, hatred is a proper, necessary, and inevitable component of love. In fact, he who is incapable of this type of hatred is also incapable of that highest love known as Charity. However, when hatred is directed against **persons**, it is misdirected and uncharitable. Our modern society, unfortunately, fails to draw distinctions between persons and their deeds or ideas, and creates false divisions in mankind by pushing people into identifying themselves with their ideas and actions, usually for political or economic exploitation. Owing to our nation’s false national ideology that pretends that all ideas and beliefs are equal and somehow sacred, conflicts frequently arise, in which hatred is directed against the **people** who **have** false ideas that cause behavior that is destructive, rather than against the **ideas themselves**. But people are not ideas, nor are they deeds. People are made in the image and likeness of God, and, as such, are good in their essence. Whether they are what can be called “good” or “bad” people depends upon how they utilize the free will God has granted them. Ideas, beliefs, and deeds, by contrast, can be good or evil in their very essence. And, let us never forget, ideas and beliefs have consequences. Nobody can truly keep his beliefs to himself, for they will affect everything he does. He who **does not act** according to his **beliefs** must eventually **believe** in accordance with his **acts**, or go mad. A Nazi, therefore, is not Nazism, but is rather a person, potentially capable of much good, but who has unfortunately been deceived by a foolish and dangerous ideology that prompts him to do evil things. A robber is not robbery, but a person who, because he falsely believes or “feels” he has an excuse that is superior to the laws of God and Man, commits the sin of robbery. A prostitute is not prostitution, but a person who commits the sin of fornication for profit. A sodomite (the legal term for one who practices certain unnatural sexual **acts**) is not sodomy, but a **person** who **commits** the **sin of sodomy**. A sinner is not sin. **None of the above persons have to continue doing what they have been doing**. With a little Divine Grace, some repentance, and a bit of humility, all these persons are capable of

casting aside these sins and errors as being unworthy of someone redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. And *many have done so*, to their great happiness. Therefore, if we would truly love our neighbor, who is a sinner, we would gently inform him that he was created by a loving God for higher things than wallowing in sin. We would also correct, publicly if necessary, those who would tell the sinner that there is nothing wrong with his sin, for to tell any of these afflicted souls that there is nothing wrong with their false ideas or the evil deeds that they help generate, would be criminally irresponsible and *very unloving*. It would be equally wrong to hold up a sign, as some well-intentioned but apparently ignorant people have done, telling them that God hates them. God, being Love, loves *all* His creatures, even the worst sinners, but He also *hates sin* for the harm it does to the sinner and to society. If we would truly love our neighbor, so should we all. Ω