

Outline of Fr. Patrick Winslow's Lecture on Lesson 19

I. Pastoral Points

- A. Last week focused upon the necessity of Faith and Hope in the Christian life. Love was referenced, but not overtly addressed. Now, Jesus jumps into the mechanics of Christian Love, the superior of the three supernatural virtues - the absolute necessity in the Christian life.
- i. He begins with the image of Christ as the true vine, His Father the vinedresser and we the branches - the mechanics and inner workings of Christian Love.
 1. We must live/abide in Christ if we are to bear fruit.
 2. To live/abide in Christ is to live in His love.
 3. To live/abide in His love is to love others as He loved us.
 4. It is like a gear system - if one moves it must necessarily move the other.
 - a. The necessity of Love for the Christian becomes clear - Love is what binds us to Christ and in turn to the Father.
 - b. Without it there is no Christian life. In verse 12 He calls it His commandment.
 5. How does this affect you and me?
 - a. We must begin by dispelling romantic imaginings.
 - b. Enter into the reality that is your life - your vocation.
 - i. Vocation - one's calling - all vocations are a call to abide/live in a life of love in a particular way.
 1. Marriage, Religious Life, Priesthood, etc.
 - ii. What is your vocation? This is where you are called by Christ to live/abide in love. Not somewhere else.
 - iii. This is the fundamental principle of spiritual theology - holiness is found *within* one's vocation. It the particular way in which each of us is called to love.
 - c. 'Alternate lifestyles' often referred to as one's 'orientation.'
 - i. It is telling that the word *orientation* is used.
 - ii. This word comes from
 1. Facing east - the posture of the Church in prayer as she awaits the coming of Christ - as the sun rises in the east so too will Christ the true light of the world return.
 - iii. The word orientation often refers to lifestyles that are not postured toward the coming of Christ and the world to come but are rather postured away from this inevitable future.
 - iv. To be truly oriented is to be truly postured toward the coming of

Christ and His kingdom - *regardless* of anyone's particular fancies whether they be attractions to the same sex; aberrant attractions to the opposite sex; attracted to sex outside of marital love; attracted to spoons or potatoes.

v Everyone should be oriented toward Christ.

ii. Verse 15:2. (Read aloud)

1. "every branch that does bear fruit He *prunes*, that it may bear more fruit."

a. → the Christian is a work in progress.

i We learn how to love, in the loving, by following our call to love. We are being perfected as we move along.

ii When I speak to married couples, I say "you will bring out the best in each other and the worst in each other."

iii Marriage is a vocation, a call, to love through which one is being taught how to love and one's faults are exposed that they might be pruned.

iv Pruning is unpleasant. We don't like love to be unpleasant. Yet, there is no other way. Love will be painful and unpleasant at times until we are sanctified.

v People can look back in their past and be grateful for the most challenging, unpleasant and difficult times of their lives - because by way of them they were pruned.

iii. In this passage...

1. ...the mechanics of Love.

a. How it unites us to Christ, and in turn to the Father.

2. ...the necessity of Love in the life of the Christian.

a. Thus all paths/vocations that Christ leads us down are paths/vocations of love.

3. ...and it is in and through our path/vocation where we not only exercise love, but we learn to love and we are purified that we might love more - we are pruned.