

'THE DEPTH OF LOVE' - HOMILY - 29 OCTOBER 2017

At present in Brisbane, Queensland Ballet is performing Peter Pan.

The stage is visible as usual.

Later in Acts One and Three, the whole length, width and height become the stage.

Peter Pan and Wendy and some others fly and dance within the total space.

The effect is extraordinary.

Though not on stage, you can feel yourself within the space, soaring and dancing and in wonder.

THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE

There is a temptation in life to miss the wonder of God's love.

Tempted to try to limit and control God.

Whereas God really invites us into the depth of loving in its many dimensions.

The wonder.

The intimacy.

The freedom.

Within the loving of God.

Entering into the love of God.

Gifted by God.

TODAY'S GOSPEL

In **Matthew 22:34-40** we hear the question to Jesus and his reply.

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

He said to him,

***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind."***

This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The depth of loving and being with all our heart, soul and mind.

LOVE IS ALWAYS JOURNEYING

"As St Bernard reminded us,

"amore est in via",

love is always on the way, love is always journeying."

[Pope Francis 27th May 2016]

CAN ANYTHING PREVENT US FROM LOVING GOD IN THIS JOURNEY?

St Paul in his Letter to the **Roman 8:38-39** says,

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels,
nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

*nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

The love of God is so deep that NOTHING can separate us from this depth of love.

WITHOUT GENUINE LOVE WE ARE NOTHING.

St Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians 13 says,

*'If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,
but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
And if I have prophetic powers,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.
If I give away all my possessions,
and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, *
but do not have love, I gain nothing. '*

WE DON'T SEE THE LOVE OF GOD FULLY YET - ONLY PARTIALLY.

St Paul continues,

*'For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;
but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.
When I was a child, I spoke like a child,
I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child;
when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.
For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.
Now I know only in part; then I will know fully,
even as I have been fully known.
And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
and the greatest of these is love.'*

THE LOVE OF GOD

*The love of God, truly, comes towards us;
it is like a swelling river that engulfs us without overwhelming us.
The more we allow ourselves to be taken up by this love,
the more our life will be renewed.'*

[Pope Francis 3rd Sept 2016]

*The Christian vocation is first and foremost a call to love,
a love which attracts us and draws us out of ourselves'*

[Pope Francis 29th March 2015]

LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE THIS LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR?

St Paul continues the quote above in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**

'Love is patient; love is kind;

*love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.'*

In loving God and neighbour, Pope Francis spoke of us as being the face of Jesus

[Pope Francis 21st May, 2013]

*"You tell us that to love God and neighbour is not something abstract,
but profoundly concrete:
it means seeing in every person the face of the Lord to be served,
to serve him concretely.
And you are, dear brothers and sisters, the face of Jesus.'*

Our vocation is to love, to be the face of Jesus
and to see the face of Jesus in others.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

In Luke's Gospel we remember the mission account of Jesus in Nazareth
and later the parable of The Good Samaritan.

In Matthew's Gospel we remember **'THE STORY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT'**.

These accounts show us that all are our neighbour,
including our traditional foes,
and the poor and marginalised,
and the hungry, thirsty, lonely, sick, naked and imprisoned.

IS LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR ONLY A HANDOUT?

*'Accompanying on its own is not enough.
It is not enough to offer someone a sandwich
unless it is accompanied by the possibility of learning
how to stand on one's own two feet.'*

[Pope Francis 10th Sept 2013]

*'True faith is one that makes us more charitable, more merciful,
more honest and more humane.
It moves our hearts to love everyone without counting the cost,
without distinction and without preference.
It makes us see the other not as an enemy to be overcome,
but a brother or sister to be loved, served and helped.'*

[Pope Francis 29th April 2017, Mass in Cairo]

In the ballet Peter Pan, the Darling children fly with Peter Pan in wonder.

As sisters and brothers of one family, to be loved,
let us fly together in God's love.

Loving freely in God.

Let us love God and our Neighbour more deeply, more fully and in wonder.

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – The Depth of Love – 29 October 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/102917.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook29102017>]

Other:

Qld. Ballet – Peter Pan highlights - 4min video <http://bit.ly/QldBalletPeterPanHighlights>

