

"If God be for us,
Who can be against us?"

(Rom 8:31)

Realities & Actualities

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

"Lord, to whom shall we Go?
You have the words of eternal life.
And we believe and are sure that
You are that Christ, the Son
of the living God"

(John 6:68-69)

CHARITY

**"Walk worthy of God...Let Brotherly Love continues...
Let us not be weary in well-doing"** (Heb 13:1+Gal 6:9+1Thes 2:12)

"No man has seen God at any time.

If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1John 4:12).

"And now abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity"
(1Cor 13:13).

The word "**Charity**" encompasses hand in hand all the acts of Christian love and mercy, compassion and passion, self denial and righteousness, time, service and substance. Christianity is referred to in the world wide as the religion of Love and Mercy, because everything the Father and Jesus did was motivated by unconditional "Love", infinite compassion and copious loving-kindness. Over the centuries, Christianity remains the only beacon of good and brotherly love. Christian **charity, faith and hope** are the basis of all the New Testament doctrines where Jesus through **grace not law** reduced about 630 commandments to only two, which are summarized as follows:

"Love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul... and to walk in all His ways... You shall love your neighbor as yourself... And Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you... That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust... There is none other commandment greater than these" (Deut 11:13; Jos 22:5; Rom 13:9; Matt 22:39, 5:44-45; Mar 12:31).

In the whole Bible, the word and verb "**love**" is used over +/- 311 times, while the word "**Charity**" with nuances is used from Greek in the New Testament only about 115 times, which prompt us to ask what is the difference in meaning and application? Although both are translated from the Greek word "**Agapē**" and both theologically denotes supernatural virtues of impartial love; yet "**love**" is mainly an affection bestowed on personal relation basis, people we know or come to know, while "**charity**" is "**grace**" of **altruism, philanthropy**, goodwill, benefaction, kindness, translated in random and purposed almsgivings, donations, services and handouts, in short, extending a helping hand to all needy strangers, have-nots folks and godly causes of this world.

From the Greek words "**Charism**" (power/Charm) and "**Charity**" (Almsgiving), we get the English word "**Charisma**" and "**Charismatic**" (=magically charming masses) to theologically means: one who almost performs miracles in showing interest and affection to others by means of humble service, personal disinterested touch, and pure brotherly love and beneficence, whether uttering kind words and encouragement, or healing broken hearts and minds, comforting desperate or mourning souls, or sharing the good news of God's word with them, or giving of one's self, time and substance. Jesus covered the subject of "**Charity**" in many of His teachings, like when He said, "**If you have two cloaks, donate one... If you fed, quenched the thirst, visited the sick and those in prison of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me"** (Matt 25:32-45) because "**If you love them that love you, what thank (reward) have you? For even sinners love those that love them"** (Luk 6:32). **What Jesus advocating here is His Sacrificial kind of love, many a time a one way street.**

As humans, after all, we can only approach love and charity's altar with the best our humanity can master and impart, with which **we become born again** as Jesus said to Nicodemus (John 3:1-10), instinctively fluent in the language of love towards God and charity towards our neighbor and enemy, and we partake implicitly, explicitly

and practically in their different realities as long as we do not neglect our priority: "But if any provide not for his own (him/herself) especially their household, he/she has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Tim 5:8).

The golden premises of "Charity" can be gleaned from these verses:

"But if your brother/sister/neighbor be grieved with your meat (possessions, assets, status), now walk you not charitably. Destroy not him/her with your meat (possessions, assets, status), for whom Christ died...And through your knowledge shall the weak brother/sister perish, for whom Christ died? ... **Did not He (God) that made me in the womb made him/her too?**" (Rom 14:15+1Cor 8:11+Job 31:15), bearing in mind: "Him/her that is weak in the *faith* receive you, but not to doubtful disputations" (Rom 14:1).

Therefore, let us search our hearts and heed these passages so that we honor Christ with our works in love and charity towards one and all:

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging... As every man/woman has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, **as good stewards of the manifold grace of God**... Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1Pet 4:8-10, 12).

"According as **His divine power** has given unto us that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that called us to **glory and virtue**. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: **that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to **your faith virtue**; and to **virtue knowledge**; And to **knowledge temperance**; and to **temperance patience**; and to **patience godliness**. And to **godliness brotherly kindness**; and to **brotherly kindness charity**. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he/she that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he/she was purged from his/her old **sins**" (2Pet 1:3-9).

Then "**If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins**" (Heb 10:26).

**We may not avoid
Growing OLD,
But we may avoid growing
STONE COLD.**