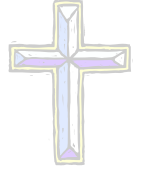


LEARNING how great love is**CLASS 4**

Studying what the Lord teaches us about sexuality

Introduction

Jesus Christ teaches generous and honest love. Generous love is the highest form of love, whether between spouses, in families, or among friends. To love others is to wish the best for them in all things. Real love is precious and guards life in all of its forms. Real love would never practice abortion or euthanasia. True, thoughtful, and caring love is honest and chaste.

**These are the things we will talk about in this fourth lesson:**

- Jesus shared with us the great **commandment** to love God and neighbor.
- **Generous** love of other persons is the most basic kind of love.
- We are called to a love which guards life and **truth**.
- Real love guards **life** in all forms and at all stages.
- True and generous love is lived with a **chaste** heart.

Christ is the BEST teacher of love

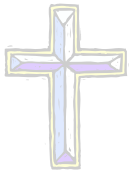
Nothing is greater than generous and honest love, the kind of love that Christ taught us.

No one can have a happy life unless he or she has learned how to live in generous love. By the example of His own chaste life, Christ taught us to love this way because without love like this the world simply does not work well.

Unless we have found God, and learned to love Him, unless we have come to love one another on this earth, life becomes thin and hollow.

That is why Jesus said that the greatest **commandment** of all the commandments is:

- ♥ that we should love God with all our hearts and minds and strength;
- ♥ and that we should love one another as He has loved us.



In fact, Jesus said, *everything* we have to do to be happy, and to be good people, and to win heaven, is summarized in those two commandments. There is nothing we have to do but love rightly with honest hearts! (See Matthew 22:40.)

That is why St. Augustine once said: "Love, and do whatever you will." For if we love truthfully and well, we will want to do what is right. We will want to do what pleases God. We will be glad in leading **good lives**.

We will not understand how true and good our Catholic faith is if we do not understand this: how important love is! For what Christ the Lord teaches us above all is that we are to love generously. And the Lord does not just tell us to love. He gives us the grace and the desire to love with the generosity that makes life joyful.

Discussion: Thoughts about LOVE

- ? Does Jesus say we should love good people, or even those who have done wicked things? Why?
- ? Recall the story of "Beauty and the Beast." It reminds us that people often have to love *before* they feel worthy of being loved. Do you think this is true?
- ? Should we love people because they are so good, or because God, who is so good, calls us to love them all?

Generous love leads to FULFILLMENT and happiness

The most basic kind of love is the generous love of persons.

First is the great joy of loving God as our Friend, with the gladness with which saints like Francis of Assisi loved God and saw His goodness everywhere.

Then there is the happiness of loving other people.

Homes are made happy by love. Children are made happy by being loved by their parents and the good things they do out of love. And parents are made happy by the love of their children, who give them greater **happiness** than anything else could.

Christ said: "This is my commandment — that you love one another." And really this is the one important thing: that we all honestly love one another.

Even to do good things for other people would not help much if we did not first love them. We ought to give food to the hungry and care for the sick.

But we ought not do this as if they were not worth much and we were the better for helping them. We do not do these things to make ourselves feel better. We ought to do good things because we really love others and they are really dear to us. This is life in the Holy Spirit; this is the life of grace, the kind of life Christ taught.



Generous love is not only great; it is the **happiest love** there is.

When others love us with generous love, our hearts are happier. When we love others with generous love, our hearts get greater. When we love generously and are loved generously, the whole world gets better.

It should fill us with wonder and joy that so many people love us with generous love.

Only love has enabled us to survive! When we were very small, and could do nothing to help ourselves, there were people to love us. They fed us, and kept us warm, and got up nights when we were hungry or sick, and took good care of us. Even when they were tired, and things went wrong, they watched over us. They counted us as dear to themselves and did every kind of **good thing** for us.

**Life is
happiest
when we
have
friends.**

We have been loved by God and by many others. And so we too owe love to those who need love.

FRIENDSHIP: a generous kind of love

Life is happiest when we have friends.

"You are my friends," Jesus said to his disciples, and He says that to us too. Do you know Christ well enough to say, "He is my friend"?

True friends are true to each other. If I am your friend, it means that I like you. And, more than that, it means that I find you very dear. If anything bad happens to you, I feel as bad as if it happened to me. If anything **good** happens to you, I feel as glad as if it happened to me.

If we are friends, we do not like each other simply to get "what's in it for me." *You* are the reason why I like you.

Friendship is generous. If we are friends, of course you can use my games. And I know you will give me things you have that I need. Friends make life larger, happier, and better.

Friends want each other to have what is truly good and to have lives that are both happy and pleasing to God. Friends never do any harmful thing to each other deliberately. **Friends** do not persuade friends to do evil and stupid things, but to live in ways that make life really glad.

Reflection: GOSPEL images

- ♥ What kind of love does Christ urge us to have in the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
- ♥ What kind of love does he call us to in the parable of the Good Samaritan? (Luke 10:30ff)
- ♥ What kind of love does Christ have for us when he says: "You are my friends?" (John 15:14ff)

Generous love guards LIFE

Loving persons generously is more than just liking them. When we love someone, we want that person to have every kind of really good thing. We want him or her to be healthy, happy, and good. We want him or her to be a great person, the kind of person that everyone loves.

For God made all our hearts hungry for what is really good, and hungry to know the truth. God made us to love precious things like life and friendship. For when we **love** other people, we want them to be really happy and to have what is really good. So love for friends helps us to love what is really good.

The world is full of precious things that we should care about.

"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8).

It is good to have hearts that love and hunger for good things. All our life we should pursue good things well, never hurting others, so that we can find precious things for ourselves.

Abortion and euthanasia destroy LIFE

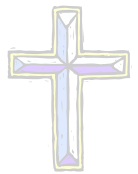
Real love, loving each person as God wants us to, is precious. But dishonest love, phony love, is not precious.

Love of some kinds of things is dangerous, and can become wrong. To love money, or to love power, to love to be important, can lead to the greatest selfishness and cruelty. So the Lord urges us to have hearts that love people generously, not hearts that love money or power.

Real love guards life and sees it as ultimately **precious**, as more than just productive, useful, or convenient.

We are called to protect and to assist those whose lives are weak because of sickness or helplessness. When people in the world today seek to deliberately

end the lives of persons who are sick and dying, this is called *euthanasia*. To end the life of an unborn child in the womb is called *abortion*. Persons who commit either act are wrong. They forget that life is a gift which only God can give or take away.



Some other kinds of love are bad. Impure love of other people is bad. It is not real love at all. It is not finding others to be dear and wanting all things to go well for them. It is not doing things that will make them happy. Instead, it is using them, even hurting them, to make ourselves happy.

Impure love is a selfish distortion of love. It does not honestly want what is good for other people. Rather, the person who loves un-chastely wants to do something that in fact hurts the other person. It hurts the other person in body and in soul.

Unchaste love is dishonest. It tells another: "I love you, and will always love you." But it does not really love. Rather, it wants to do something that hurts the other person deeply, so that some pleasure can be seized by using the other person badly. When each of the two persons is using the other badly for the sake of pleasure, this is far from honest and good love.



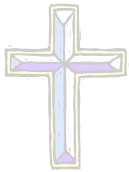
God made sex, and it is good. And falling in love can be very good. But falling in love is a serious thing. One needs to grow up to fall in love rightly. For romantic love inclines people to the kinds of affection that are meant for marriage, and **homes**, and love that lasts a lifetime and guards most important things.

Sex is not a mere toy. God made it for precious purposes. He made it to serve the enduring love of people who marry and promise generously to give all they have and all they are to each other. Sex is a happy reality, but not a trivial one. It was made to guard homes, to make the love of fathers and mothers last, and so to be strong defenses of the home. It was made so that new **young** life could be born into the world safely, and people could, with generous hearts, love the children that are born of their own generous love.

But treating sex as a toy is not love. It is rather a blow against love. It is a sin that weakens love and makes life much less happy and strong.

Generous love leads to purity and CHASTITY

True love is thoughtful and cares. It cares about everything that is really good, and certainly not just about selfishly getting pleasure for myself. Love is happy to put off pleasure for myself when being faithful to what is good requires that. And love happily enjoys good things when it is right to do so.



Chaste love is love that is honest and unmixed with dishonesty and selfishness. When a boy and girl fall in love, there are many happy ways in which chaste love can lead them also along good and happy paths.

But true love never does things that hurt others. It never leads others to sin or endangers them in any ways. It **cares** about what is really good, not just what happens for a moment to feel good.

Chaste love lasts. For it cares about good things that last. "Blessed, happy, are the pure in heart," our Lord said. And the experience of life makes us see how true this is.

Our hearts can be deceived by the unchaste images with which the world is filled. If we let our imaginations and hearts be filled with the lust that is part of the world's cruelty and dishonesty, we too can be led far from true love, and from the Lord. But if we seek to have **generous** and truthful love direct our lives, or lives get much better.

Discussion: Finding good teachers

These days sexuality is talked about wildly. It is a good thing that deserves respect. It is something so important for human life that when people speak of it foolishly or falsely they can do much harm. All kinds of people want to be "sexuality educators" for young people today. But we should have the best teachers for so sensitive and precious a thing.

- ✓ Who would be the best people for telling me what sexuality means and is?
- ✓ People who know me well and love me, or people who hardly know me at all?
- ✓ People who know what life is about, or people who are mixed up and unhappy about life?
- ✓ People who have the light of faith, and who have learned to live the kind of love Christ taught, or people who have strange visions of life, far from what the Lord teaches?
- ✓ Who are the best people to talk with about the concerns and questions we have about sexuality?
- ✓ In which of these examples of people am I like to learn about sexuality in the best ways?
- ✓ From my parents, or grandparents?
- ✓ From classmates?

- ✓ From those who teach Christ's ways to me?
- ✓ From rock stars and movie stars?
- ✓ From television?

TYING things together

Remember what we studied in this lesson:

- 1.** Jesus taught us about love through the great commandment.
- 2.** Generous love of others is the core of real love.
- 3.** Love guards truth and life carefully.
- 4.** Acts such as abortion, euthanasia, and extra-marital sex destroy life and love.
- 5.** Chastity of heart reflects true and generous love.

