

*Advent Catechesis: the Fourth Week*  
*A Time to Love*

Scripture Readings

**Sunday Lectionary: Jesus and John the Baptist: Matthew 1.18-25**

Weekday Readings:

Monday: Loving Your Enemies: Matthew 5.38-48

Tuesday: On Fasting and Lasting Treasure: Matthew 6.16-24

Wednesday: Jesus Causes Division: Matt 10.32-42

Thursday: The Great Commandment: Matthew: 22.34-40

Friday: Preparations for Jesus' Death: Matthew 26.1-13

Saturday: The Great Commission: Matthew 28.16-20

Collect: Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and as we are sorely hindered by our sins from running the race that is set before us, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

\*\*\* Things to talk about: (1) Advent as a time for love, (2) some passages about love from Matthew's gospel, (3) love!

\*\*\* Question 1: suppose you asked a little kid what it means to *love* somebody — what do you think they'd say?

\*\*\* C.S. Lewis's Four Loves from *The Four Loves*:

- *storgê* = affection

- *philia* = friendship

- *eros* = romantic love

- *agapê* = *caritas*, charity, divine love?

\*\*\* Matthew 22:34–40:

<sup>34</sup>When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup>and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup>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.’ <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Question 2: What word for love is used here, and what do we learn about love in this passage?

\*\*\* Matthew 10:34–39:

<sup>34</sup>“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, <sup>36</sup>and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. <sup>37</sup>“Whoever **loves** father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever **loves** son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, <sup>38</sup>and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Question 3: What word for love is used here, and what do we learn about love in this passage?

\*\*\* Question 4 (multiple choice!): Which is the right account of love?

a. Responsive: love is a response of the lover to qualities that he perceives and values in the beloved? (for instance, the beloved's beauty, charm, wit, or whatever else we might consider valuable and hence loveable.)

b. Volitional: love is simply a choice or decision on the part of the lover, to love the beloved no matter what, come what may.

c. Relational: love is valuing a person with whom one is in a relationship and seeing that relationship as a good reason for valuing it and them.

d. Other: love is \_\_\_\_\_. (You tell me what!)

\*\*\* An account of love I find really helpful (from Eleonore Stump). Love emerges from the interaction between two desires: (i) desiring what is good for your beloved and (ii) desiring union with your beloved, in accordance with the nature of the relationship you have with them.

\*\*\* Matthew 5:38–48:

<sup>38</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39</sup>But I say to you: Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also, <sup>40</sup>and if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give your coat as well, <sup>41</sup>and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. <sup>42</sup>Give to the one who asks of you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. <sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall **love** your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you: **Love** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you **love** those who **love** you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Question 5: What word for love is used here? What does it mean to love one's enemies?

\*\*\* Wright's interpretation of Jesus's three examples, and his conclusion: love in Matthew 5:38–48 is creative, healing and restorative, "reflecting the astonishingly patient love of God himself, who wants Israel to shine his light into the world so that all people will see that he is the one true God, and that his deepest nature is overflowing love."

\*\*\* Matthew 1:18–25:

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Question 6: What does it mean to say that Advent is a time for love?