

Homily of Fourth Sunday of Advent Year C

The last purple candle is lit today, the fourth Sunday of Advent. The candle is called Candle of Love. We can also call it Candle of Charity. Lighting the candle is our prayer that love conquers hate, and that charity conquers animosity and meanness.

Rev. John Guun, a Presbyterian Church minister, writes: "Of all the dark passions that smite the human soul, hate is the darkest. If you hate another, it hurts you more than the one you hate. Hate will make you nervous, restless, apprehensive; it will react against you physically - it will give you indigestion, it will ruin your health. Hate will poison your soul, it will rob you of all those finer and nobler sentiments that make life worth living. Hate is like a cancer - it will eat your heart out."

The life of the Blessed Virgin Mary helps us to reflect on charity and love. She is a perfect example and a model of charity and love.

The angel said to Mary, "And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God" (Luke 1:37-37). The Gospel of today tells us that Mary set out in a haste to visit Elizabeth. Mary was not directed by the angel to go over and help Elizabeth. She, by herself, realized that Elizabeth needed help, and she set out in a haste to visit Elizabeth. She stayed with Elizabeth for three months. Mary, probably, stayed with Elizabeth until Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist.

At the wedding at Cana, Mary did the same thing. She observed that wine had finished. Without being told, she proceeded to tell Jesus that there was no wine. She went further to instruct the stewards to do whatever Jesus told them to do. As a result of her intervention, Jesus provided the best wine, and the feast continued (John 2:1-12).

Mary's actions in the two events is a perfect example of see, judge and act. Mary teaches us to see with love, judge with love and act with love. Mary's actions are a challenge to us especially the times we turn blind eyes and deaf ears to situations or those in need of our help. Mary wants us to be in a haste to help. St. James says, "If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is a sin for them" (James 4:17).

Where there is charity and love, there the Holy Spirit abides. Mary, embodying charity and love, brought the unction of the Holy Spirit to Zachariah's family. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she prophesied, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Mary's encounter with Angel Gabriel and Mary's conception were never told to Elizabeth before Mary's visit. While Elizabeth prophesied, also by the unction of the Holy Spirit, the child in her womb leapt for joy. 1 John 4:16 says, "Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them." They are, therefore, able to share God's love with others.

What is the effect of my presence? What do I share with others? Hope? Peace? Joy? Love? Or, despair? Animosity? Sadness? Hate?

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