



ONE MASS, ONE FAMILY

2015 -16

CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE, MERCY, JUSTICE, HOPE

◆ St. Clare Church has adopted the theme of ONE MASS, ONE FAMILY to guide our Faith Formation journey as a community, both children and adults. One Mass indicates that we are one worshipping community. It is the Eucharist—Jesus Himself, that is the reason for our community. As ONE FAMILY, we help each other become formed in the ways and truth of Jesus Christ. Whether it is in our liturgies, our children and adult education, our sacramental preparation and celebration, our outreach and service actions or in our family/community gatherings, all of us, together are called to be witnesses to this communion in Jesus' name and to the love, mercy, justice and hope of God.

For each liturgical season, we will unfold one of God's gifts. Ordinary Season (Sept. - Nov.) - God's Love; Advent and Christmas Season (Dec. - Jan.) - God's Mercy; Lenten Season (Feb. - March) - God's Justice; Easter Season, Pentecost (Apr. - May) - God's Hope

On God's Love:

"Whoever does not love, does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:8). To begin this series on God's Love, we will focus on God who created all of us only because he loves. He loved us first and because he is Love, it is in his nature to share this, to go out of himself and pour out himself, hence he created us in order to share. This is God's love shown most intimately in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus in order for us to come back to Him and bring to perfection our relationship with God. Every creature has an imprint of the creator, therefore every one and everything that has been made by God has an imprint of that Love. Thus, every human being and all of creation has been marked with an indelible dignity that cannot be removed and must be honored and respected at all times. In the next few weeks, we will unfold this message of Love through these weekly reflections by looking into the reflections of church leaders, official teachings of the Church, and the lay Faithful. Reflect on the reflections and be formed. Make it a part of your prayer life. Listen to what the Holy Spirit may inspire you to realize in your faith life. Live it out!

At the recently concluded World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, "Love is Our Mission" was the theme adopted. This is our mission, the mission of our Church Family. How do we begin to understand this mission? Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI have some thoughts to share.

Our Father will not be outdone in generosity and he continues to scatter seeds. He scatters the seeds of his presence in our world, for "love consists in this, not that we have loved God but that he loved us" first (1 Jn 4:10). That love gives us the profound certainty that we are sought by God; he waits for us. (Pope Francis Homily given at the conclusion of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, USA, September 27, 2015)

Pope Benedict XVI said in his encyclical DEUS CARITAS EST, that to understand God as Love, there needs to be a better understanding of the kind of Love that Jesus has shown to us. Even in his humanity, Jesus has shown that God's Love is an *experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice. (paragraph 6 Deus Caritas Est, Benedict XVI).*

Pope Francis in one of his daily homilies at Casa San Marta, said: *The one who loves, gives. . . Gives things, gives life, gives oneself to God and to others. On the other hand, [is] the one who does not love, who is selfish, always seeks to receive, always seeks to have things, to have advantages. Stay with an open heart, not like that of the disciples, which was closed, which did not understand anything; remaining in God and God remaining in us; remaining in love."*

Points for Reflection:

- What is my experience of love?
- How have I experienced God's love?
- In my daily life, who do I give myself to? How do I give myself to others?