

SACRED HEART OF JESUS: Mercy in action



*“Love is patient, love is kind;
love is not jealous or boastful;
it is not arrogant or rude.
Love does not insist on its own way,
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all
things, endures all things”*

(1 Cor 13:4-7).

Pope Francis says...

Love is not boastful

The following word, denotes vainglory, the need to be haughty, pedantic and somewhat pushy. Those who love not only refrain from speaking too much about themselves, but are focused on others; they do not need to be the centre of attention. The word that comes next is similar, indicating that love is not arrogant. Literally, it means that we do not become “puffed up” before others. It also points to something more subtle: an obsession with showing off and a loss of a sense of reality. Such people think that, because they are more “spiritual” or “wise”, they are more important than they really are. Paul uses this verb on other occasions, as when he says that “knowledge puffs up”, whereas “love builds up” (1 Cor 8:1). Some think that they are important because they are more knowledgeable than others; they want to lord it over them. Yet what really makes us important is a love that understands, shows concern, and embraces the weak. Elsewhere the word is used to criticize those who are “inflated” with their own importance (cf. 1 Cor 4:18) but in fact are filled more with empty words than the real “power” of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 4:19).

It is important for Christians to show their love by the way they treat their brothers and sisters who are less knowledgeable about the faith, weak or less sure in their convictions. At times the opposite occurs: the supposedly mature believers within us become unbearably arrogant. Love, on the other hand, is marked by humility; if we are to understand, forgive and serve others from the heart, our pride has to be healed and our humility must increase. Jesus told his disciples that in a world where power prevails, each tries to dominate the other, but “it shall not be so among you” (Mt 20:26). The inner logic of Christian love is not about importance and power; rather, “whoever would be first among you must be your slave” (Mt 20:27). In life, the logic of domination and competition about who is the most intelligent or powerful destroys love. Saint Peter’s admonition also applies: “Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another, for ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Pet 5:5). (From *Amoris Laetitia* 97 -98)

The Word of God says...

Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:42-45)