

**Agape the Key to Gods Presence - Part 1****PETER KREEFT**

The greatest treatise ever written on love "(agape) is I Corinthians 13. Its first three verses are about the all-excelling value of agape. The next three verses are a 15-point description of agape. And the last six verses are about its *destiny*.

Love is not one of the charismatic gifts, like tongues or prophecy or miraculous healing. It's not called a "gift" but "a more excellent way" (12:31) that is, it's the way to use the gifts. It's the thing that makes the difference to everything else. Even good things, like tongues or giving yourself martyrdom, are no good without agape. Agape is the catalyst that creates value. It's what makes a child's hand-drawn birthday card infinitely more precious than the grudging gift of a million dollars. Agape is listed by Paul as one of the "fruits of the Spirit." Tongues are one of the "gifts of the Spirit." What's the difference between the gifts and the fruits?

First, the gifts were immediate. For example, one receives the gift of tongues suddenly and all at once. But the fruits, like physical fruits, take time to ripen. Second, the gifts are more external: They are given from without, and the recipient of a gift is essentially passive. But the fruits are more internal. They too are graces from God; but like a plant we must do the growing, through our own free cooperation. We must train ourselves in them as habits. Third, the gifts are primarily for the community, for the edification of the Church and world. But the fruits are for individual holiness. They're important because they perfect the most important entity in the world, the one that will still be alive after all the galaxies have died: yourself.

The gifts of the Spirit are listed in I Corinthians 12:4-11. Tongues is well down the list. The fruits of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Love heads the list, then joy and peace.

In the first three verses of chapter 13, Paul compares the infinite value of agape with the finite value of five other crucial things. Even if I have these other things in their fullness, but do not have agape, I have nothing at all.

For agape is not "outside" these other valuable things. It's the heart and soul of all value.

The five things Paul mentions are put in a hierarchy, from the lowest to the highest. The first is the gift of tongues. If I speak with the tongues (languages) of men other earthly languages that I've never learned but I am miraculously given, as the disciples were at Pentecost if I have this but lack agape, my speech is mere noise. What transforms worthless noise into worthwhile speech is agape.

To appreciate this point we must understand the very high value the Greeks, to whom Paul is writing, gave to language. They saw it as that which most clearly distinguishes man from beast. They defined man as the animal who had language.

The Greek word for language, or speech, or word *-logos* is much more important in Greek than any of the words we use to translate it. For *logos* means not only (1) word but also (2) thought and (3) the object of thought, or truth. John 1:1 could be translated: "In the beginning was the Thought" or "In the beginning was the Truth." Jesus is called the Word of God, the speech of God, the tongues of God. Language is so important that Jesus Himself is called God's language.

Paul next compares agape with something much more vital than tongues in fact, the most important of all charismatic gifts (14:1-5). This is the gift of prophecy. A prophet is a mouthpiece for God. He speaks not for man to God, but for God to man.

Jesus said that the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets was John the Baptist (Luke 7:28). Therefore John must have prophesied with agape, yet his style was harsh rather than kind. Agape calls for kindness on some occasions, harshness on others. It was Jesus' agape for the Pharisees that made Him harsh to them. It was shock therapy, which they needed.

The third thing Paul compares with agape is understanding, in fact the very highest kind of understanding, the understanding of "all mysteries" i.e., the great hidden truths of God like the Trinity, or God's hidden plan to save the whole world through Christ. Understanding these things is far greater than prophecy, for these mysteries are the "things into which angels long to look" (1 Peter 1:12). Our anti-contemplative, practical age appreciates supernatural mysteries about as much as a medieval mystic would value a stock market tip. Yet even this is nothing without agape. Agape is greater than understanding because it's the essence of our final end, while understanding is only its accompaniment. The accompaniment divorced from the essence is like bass notes without a melody.

Fourth, Paul says love is even greater than faith. This is remarkable, for faith is even greater than knowledge. The whole Christian life begins in faith, progresses in faith and culminates in faith. Only in heaven will knowledge replace faith, when we no longer see "through a glass darkly," but face to face. Without faith no one can please God (Heb.11:6); without faith no one can be saved (John 3:18). Jesus was constantly exhorting faith and bemoaning the lack of it. Faith is the key that unlocks the doors to God's presence. Jesus sought nothing more than faith except agape. Faith is the necessary beginning of the Christian

life, but agape is its essence and its consummation. Faith exists for the sake of agape, as the root exists for the sake of the fruit, the beginning for the sake of the end. "Faith without works, [of agape] is dead" (James 2:26). But even the works of agape are no substitute for agape itself. The fifth and last thing Paul mentions is this: Good deeds without agape are nothing, for God does not want deeds first of all, but hearts. Even He cannot give Himself our free love. That's the one thing we must do, and that is most precious to Him. Agape is essential because it will lead to everything else we need. It will lead to the true worship of God; in fact, it is the true worship of God. It will lead to discernment of God's will. When Jesus was asked how we could know whether His teaching was from God or not, He replied, "If your will were to do the will of My Father, you would understand My teaching, that it is from Him," (John 7:17). We do not understand things by loving them (in fact, lust for things blinds our understanding), but we understand persons only by loving them. And God is a person, not a thing.

#### **Schedule of Events:**

##### **Tuesday, May 21**

7:30 a.m. Confessions

8 a.m. Mass

6:30 p.m. Chapel Night

##### **Wednesday, May 22**

7:30 a.m. Confessions

8 a.m. Mass

6:30 p.m. Pastoral Council meeting

##### **Thursday, May 23**

7:30 a.m. Confessions

8 a.m. Mass

##### **Friday, May 24**

7:30 a.m. Confessions

8 a.m. Mass

##### **Saturday, May 25**

4 p.m. Vigil Mass

##### **Sunday, May 26**

7:30 a.m. Confessions

8 a.m. mass

9:30 a.m. Confessions

10 a.m. Mass

5 p.m. Nazareth Night



#### **MASS INTENTIONS**



**For the Week of May 21, 2019 –May 26, 2019**

##### **8:00 A.M. – Tuesday, May 21**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann, Rai & Thaddeus Pellegrin*

##### **8:00 A.M. – Wednesday, May 22**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann*

##### **8:00 A.M. Thursday, May 23**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann, Fr. Joey Lirette*

##### **8:00 A.M. Friday, May 24**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann*

**4:00 P.M. Saturday, May 25**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann, Loyd Savin, Eldred & MayBelle Ellender, Wilbert & Elsie Hebert,  
Linda Ann Hebert, Salome H. Matherne, Matthew S. Matherne, Peter W. Hebert,  
Samuel Dominic Hebert, Michael Lee McGee, Wayne G. Cancienne, Cindy R. Broussard,  
Wilbert Dupre Sr., Jerry & Matthew Arceneaux, Eric, Joel & Frank Rogers  
Clinton & Wilma Picou, Dolores Viteaux, Cynthia Charpentier, Geri Rhodes, Robert Stutts (DA)*

**8:00 A.M. - Sunday, May 26**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann, Lawrence & Eula Mazerac, Rhea P. Voisin & Eddie Voisin Jr.,  
Sue Bueche, Mary Eve & Vayne Bascle, Lionel Bascle family, Arthe' Breaux family,  
Arthur Lee Fabre, Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Fabre, Mr. & Mrs. Irby Petit, Aubrey Lee Boquet,  
Cindy R. Broussard, Keri Lynn Niette, Vin & Joyce LeBlanc family, Gilbert & Rita Bergeron family  
Sterling & Mary Ellen Authement, Sterling Authement Jr., Mark & Randy Naquin, Marion & Irma Bascle,  
Norman & Eunice Falgout, Eugene & Leona Theriot, Israel & Mae Authement, Tel Meeker,  
Larry Falgout, Dean & Dot Bascle, David & Iris Bascle, Tessa Dupre, Allen Theriot, Craig Dupre,  
Butch, Eugene Theriot Jr., Earline Theriot, David Percle, Francis & Iris Theriot, Patricia Grabert,  
Becky Gautreaux, Phillip Theriot, David Massey, Jenna Theriot, Norman Falgout Jr., Chris Boudreaux,  
James Bergeron, Margie & Elton Thibodaux, Paul Jackson, Angela Authement, Meva Blanchard,  
Peyton Pellegrin(B), Melissa Authement(B), Wilma, Eugene & John Dusenbery, Veronica Trahan,  
Terry Lirette, Amelie Thibodaux, Ella Mae Guidry, Jesse Fanguy Sr. Ann Hebert, A.J. Theriot*

**10:00A.M. - Sunday, May 26**

**All Donors and Benefactors of St. Ann Church & in Memory of:**

*Parishioners of St. Ann, Geraldine Dupre, Mr. & Mrs. Eldred Hebert Sr,  
Herbert, Celina, Joyce, Deborah & Ronald Belanger, Rosie & Richard Lafont  
Living & Deceased Members of the Naquin, LaJaunie, LeBoeuf & Lapeyrouse Families  
Ruth Pinell, Maxine Christoffersen*

**MEMORIALS FOR THE WEEK OF May 5 , 2019**

The Sanctuary light burns this week for *Doris Arceneaux* requested by Steve & Nellie Bergeron.

The Altar Candles are in memory of *Remy Reulet* requested by Randolph & Kathie Bascle.

The missals are in memory of *Macon Bascle* family requested by Randolph & Kathie bascle.

**STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE**

**May 11 & 12:** Envelopes: \$ +Loose: \$+ \$ (Online)

**Thank you for your generosity!**

**CHURCH CLEANING: Week of May 27- Leslie B., Tim, Mona, Darlene L., Kellie B.**

<b>MASSES</b>	<b>MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST</b>	<b>COMMENTATOR/ LECTOR</b>	<b>ALTAR SERVERS</b>	<b>USHERS</b>
<b><u>May 25 &amp; 26</u> SATURDAY 4:00P.M.</b>	Randolph, Kathie June, Yvonne	Elia, Connie	Tyler, Donte'	Steve B., Dave, Ollie
<b>SUNDAY 8:00A.M.</b>	Christine, Doug Jesse, Dana	Nick, Hayes	Lee	Dickie, Bob, Carol
<b>10:00A.M.</b>	Mindy, Lisa, Gerald, Melody	Cindy, Sofie	Kailey, Hailey, Peyton, Brianna	Lanny

