

November 9, 2020

I offer you today the words of my friend Richard Rohr by means of his daily meditations which you can find at cac.org.

We are in very conflicted times and our emotions are raw and our feelings very sensitive, that is my experience and I am sure I am not alone.

We have been dealing with many conflicted and conflictual situations for awhile, and there is no end in sight and the potential for more trauma is high, I do not need to tell any of you that.

The reality of personal and collective experiences of violence both in the giving and in the receiving in thoughts words and deeds is ever present and none of us have immunity. I have said it many times but when we think that there are two and only two sides to any story or positions in arguments or on any issue, we are mistaken and letting our insecurities drive our buses.

I will let Father Rohr speak now:

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. —1 John 4:7-8

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. . . . This I command you: love one another. —John 15:12-14, 17

Love is perhaps the last thing anyone wants to be reminded of in these days following the election in the United States. Yet our resistance to love is precisely why we need to talk about it! We have strayed so far from love; and yet, love is the essence of who we are, and how we are called to treat one another.

“Whoever *loves* is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). Unfortunately, many Christians think, “If I read the Bible, I’m born of God; or if I go to church, I know God; or if I obey the commandments, I know God.” Yet the writer of 1 John says it’s simply about loving. Note that the converse is true also:

“Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8). In the Gospel of John, Jesus takes this to its logical conclusion. He does not say, “There is no greater love than to love God.” Instead he says, “There is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends” (John 15:13).

The beginning and end of everything is love. Only inside of this mystery of the exchange of love can we know God. If we stay outside of that mystery, we *cannot* know God.

When most of us hear the word “commandment,” we likely think of the Ten Commandments; that is not what Jesus is referring to here. He speaks of a “new” commandment surpassing and summing up the “ten” of the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 20:1–17; Deuteronomy 5:6–21): “This is *my* commandment: Love one another” (John 15:17). He also says that the entire law and the prophets are summed up in the two great commandments: to love God and to love one another (see Matthew 22:36–40).

Perhaps we don’t want to hear these commandments because we can never live up to them through our own efforts. We’d like to whittle this down to a little commandment, like “Come to church on Sunday,” so that we could feel we have obeyed the commandment and accomplished love.

But who of us can say that we have fully loved yet?

We are all beginners. We are all starting anew every day, in utter reliance on the mercy, grace, and compassion of God.”