

Universal Family Communion
feast day tomorrow: feast of
the Holy Family.

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"Charity thinketh no evil; re-
joiceth not in iniquity, but
rejoiceth with the truth."

Fraternal Charity II.

In Catholic Social Principles by Rev. John F. Cronin it is pointed out that the virtue of charity is the unique contribution of the Christian who attempts to solve the problems of social justice. "Justice," writes Father Cronin, "is so clearly a natural virtue that all right-thinking men acknowledge its worth. Many who have no religion have become staunch defenders of justice in the social field. But the benevolence which unites does not come so easily to the non-religious man. Generous good will which goes beyond rights and seeks to bring people together is best promoted by religion."

Spiritual reform is a means of bringing about social reform. A correct understanding of fraternal charity is necessary not only to practice it individually but socially. Tuesday's Bulletin pointed out the teaching of St. Thomas on the first quality of fraternal charity--it must be sincere. Now for the second:

Fraternal Charity Must Be Rightly Ordered.

The way in which we are commanded to love our neighbor--"as ourselves"--proves that our charity ought to be rightly ordered. True and rightly ordered love prefers the greater to the lesser good.

It is clear that of all human good the welfare of the soul is the greatest. Next in degree comes physical well-being. External goods occupy the last place in the order of preference. It is natural to man to observe this order. Who would not prefer losing his eyesight than losing his use of reason? Who would not be willing to lose all his property in order to save his life?

Very few, if any, fail to observe this order in their preference concerning natural goods of which examples have been given. However, there are many who pervert this order of charity in the case of the other goods which exist in addition to the purely natural ones mentioned.

There are those, for example, who will prefer physical health or comfort to the acquisition of virtue or learning. Others will expose their bodies to danger and hardship in order to gain material wealth. This is not true love. Neither do they who act in this way love themselves sincerely.

The Principal Thing In Man. . .

. . . is his soul. Chief among the faculties or powers of the soul is the reason or understanding. He, therefore, who despises the good of the rational soul for the sake of physical welfare plainly shows that he does not truly love himself. "He that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul." (Ps. x. 6).

Now we are commanded to observe the same order in the love of our neighbor that we ought to observe in the love of ourselves. We must desire his welfare in the same manner as we ought to desire our own--this means, first his spiritual good; secondly his physical prosperity, which includes material possessions.

But, if we wish our neighbor to have material goods harmful to his health, or physical welfare opposed to his spiritual profit, we do not truly love him, because our love is not rightly ordered. We must prefer the greater to the lesser good.

Examine the two areas of your life at Notre Dame: study and sacramental. Preferring lesser goods to them--such as comfort, leisure--is proof enough that self-love is not sincere and well-ordered. You will not begin to love your neighbor "as yourself" as Christ would have it if you do not know what's good for your own soul. N'est-ce pas?