

Second Sunday of Lent
March 16, 2025
Year of the Holy Spirit

“Love is not loved!” (Jacopone da Todi [1230-1306] religious poet who became a Franciscan after his wife died.)

There is an old Christian teaching which appears, at first glance, to contradict much of what we have believed concerning God. The saying: “The higher an entity is, the greater is its simplicity.” When we apply this teaching to God, we profess God to be absolute, perfect simplicity.

This statement challenges us who have heard it said so often: “God is too (insert any word here) to be understood.” He is too great, beyond my intellect to be understood. This is true; however, God is still absolute, perfect simplicity.

For us to begin to grasp this saying, we must ask ourselves how we understand simplicity. Let us begin by showing what simplicity is not. Simplicity is not stupidity. It is not a form of reductionism (reducing a thing to a more basic part). It is not acting child-like. One may attempt to escape reality through taking on “child-like” behavior, but this not simplicity. Finally, to define something as simple does not mean that thing or task possesses simplicity.

True simplicity is found in a single devotion which is based in the heart and influenced by the intellect. Love, most specifically, the love perfectly present in God is this absolute, perfect simplicity. God is the perfection of this single devotion. He loves the Son so completely, perfectly that this love is His Holy Spirit. Jesus displays this perfect simplicity of love by His Incarnation, His life, His suffering and death. The Gospel, we heard proclaimed today, shows us Jesus who radiates this love before His apostles. The Spirit inspires us to respond to the perfect love of God, by returning our love through simplicity. We need not complicate this. We need only seek to love God first and foremost in our lives. All other things, our actions and our thoughts, will be “baptized in the fire of the Holy Spirit.” Meaning, we allow the Spirit to burn away any dross within us which does not lead us into a deeper love of God. We will find ourselves slowly being transformed. And, we will in turn love Love.