

***Third Sunday of Advent***  
***December 14, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift.” (Pope Benedict XVI, God is Love)*

A central theme in our Scriptural readings of this weekend involves healing. Whether it is physical or spiritual, the point is made that a healing will occur through the action of God with his people. One could rightly state these healings are aspects of God’s overall desire to make man whole again. Allow me to explain what I mean through the use of the word “whole.” As often said before, God and His creation displayed a union, a wholeness, in the beginning. This union/wholeness was ripped asunder due to the introduction of sin through choice. God’s desire is to redeem mankind and once again establish a union between Himself and man. Coupled with this union, man would hope to do the same establishing a union between people. It is God’s desire that we are once again made whole within ourselves, with each other and with Him.

We now pose a question to be considered: Can this union be realized in this life? Can man show love to his fellow man? Various ideas and philosophies have been formed claiming to offer a way forward toward this union, but it appears all, save one, have fallen by the wayside. Only the way established by God Himself, through His Son, can offer this union of Love we all search for and hope to find.

For you and I to understand the Love which we are being drawn toward, we must form a basic understanding of what Love is. For this reflection, let us envision love through the story of Jacob’s ladder (Genesis 28:10-22). As a brief reminder, the patriarch Jacob is fleeing the wrath of his brother Esau after stealing the blessing of their father Isaac. On one certain night, as he lay sleeping, Jacob dreamed of a ladder which stood on Earth and stretched upwards to Heaven. The angels of God were seen ascending and descending the ladder. In addition to this image, I include the discussion of Jesus and the woman at the well from Saint John’s Gospel (John 4:7-42).

Placing the two Scriptural accounts together, with our initial statement concerning “wholeness,” God wants each of us to become whole again and these two accounts offer us a way to be whole. First, like Eve who stretched out her hand to pluck the fruit from the tree, we too rise upwards seeking something to love. We have seen already, through our reflections of October, the love we seek finds its truest meaning within Love, Himself. Love being the person of Jesus. Why is this so? Because the Love of God, breathed into the womb of Mary, descends from on high to raise us towards Heaven. I offer: we are too fond of only stretching our hands upward grasping for something, whereas God desires us to both ascend towards Him and descend with His Love offered toward our fellow man. We may say, the sin of which we most need healing, is our desire to ascend toward something while failing to descend with something. In this way, we display selfishness. We want what we have striven toward, and fail to offer others what we have received as a means of thankfulness to God who is the Love we first ascended toward. This may seem complicated, but the understanding can be seen with the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus speaks of Himself as a font of “Living Water.” This living water quenches our own thirst, similar to tap or bottled water, and can become part of us refreshing every aspect of our person. In essence, this Living Water is the Love of God found flowing freely through the Holy Spirit.

Although I might have complicated this point, it is so very vital to our spiritual lives. We need to refresh ourselves daily with this Living Water. It is this Love, this Living Water, which heals us and makes us whole. Once we have been made whole, we are able to share Love, Living Water, with those around us. As the old saying goes: "You cannot offer what you do not possess." Unless we thirst for and gulp down this Living Water, we cannot offer Love to those around us. We are not filled. We are not whole. Only the Love of God, Living Water, partaken of daily can make us whole and, potentially, be the means of saving grace to those we love. This is the mission of Jesus, to make us whole. This is the mission of the Christian, to partake of Him, be made whole and then share this Love with those around us.