

**OUR INESCAPABLE DUTY TO OBEY OUR LORD'S**

**COMMANDMENT TO LOVE**

**(Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan)**

We have the unavoidable responsibility to obey our Lord's commandment, to love one another, as He has loved us. Our Lord said, "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you," (St. Jn. 15:12). This obedience is inexcusable as our lord has asked us to love, after he has already loved us, whole-heartedly, sacrificially and all embracingly, without any ulterior motives. This commandment is for the whole mankind. Should we not then love our Lord and His children, in the same way?

The result of such a love in those who have a loving heart is fullness of joy. Our Lord said, "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full," (St. Jn. 15:11). After saying this, our Lord gave this commandment in the next verse, as the means to have the fullness of joy.

It is to be noted here that it is not to get any benefits from us that God wants us to love His Children. The full benefit of love comes to us.

Let us now see how deep and all-comprehensive is our Lord's love for us.

1) *Our Lord's love is whole-hearted.* We cannot even imagine anything more or higher than the love of our Lord for us. When infants were brought to the Lord to get blessed, the disciples objected saying that the Lord should not get distracted. But our Lord not only blessed them, He took them one by one in His arms (St. Mk 10:16) fondling them.

When one of the criminals crucified with our Lord prayed, “Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom,” our Lord replied saying, “Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise,” (St. Lk. 23:43)

Our Lord loved mankind with the whole of His heart mind and soul, and we are asked to imitate Him.

2) *Our Lord’s love is sacrificial.* All His time, talents and possessions, are given to the needy. Finally His life itself was offered for the whole mankind. We have to follow His example.

3) *Our Lord’s love is all embracing, including all sinners and enemies.* His love was beyond caste and creed. He prayed for those who crucified Him, saying, “Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they do,” (St. Lk. 23:34). We have to follow our Lord in this also.

Do we realize that any love less than this, is not sufficient? How insignificant is our love for others when it is compared with our Lord’s love. In order to be filled with this love, we must abide in our Lord. He said , “He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit; far apart from me, you can do nothing,” (St. Jn. 15:5)

The Holy Spirit inspires us to have the sincere desire, prayer and dedication. St. Paul says, “The love of God is poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us,” (Rom 5:5)

If we don’t have real love, we are nothing. St. Paul says, “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but not have love, I gain nothing,” (1 Cor. 13:3). He also says, “Let all that you do, be done in love,” (1 Cor. 16:14). “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). Our Lord speaking about the love of the

heavenly father on the just and the unjust, says, “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” (St. Matt. 5:48).

We are expected to have perfect love, as we are God’s children and God loves us to the utmost. Our Obedience to the commandment of our Lord to love is unavoidable, inevitable and inescapable. No one is exempted from this. Our worst enemy is our selfishness and self-centeredness.