

## *27 Year A - Love must be 'two-way'*

The Scriptures today convey a great sadness of heart, the pain of disappointment. The love with which God has graced his people has not been returned. At the beginning they delighted in the blessing of God's friendship; then they came to presume upon it; then they began to ignore it, and then to abuse it.

The prophets continually pleaded with the people to express their love for God in praise and thanksgiving, and in deeds of mercy and justice - but to no avail.

Finally, there comes the warning: a love relationship in which the giving is one-sided cannot last: *'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit'* (Gospel).

In today's Mass the Church appeals to us through these texts to demonstrate our love for God in prayer (as individuals and as a community), and in charitable works and in efforts for greater justice in the world.

We are also being reminded that the love relationships we have with one another will certainly break down if we do not return the love we are given.

The Scriptures today are not only expressive of God's disappointment. they recall the hurts which we can each and all experience in our own loving - be that in our friendships, within marriage, or between parents and children: our sense of being 'let down'.

There are a number of things which can come about in our relationships with one another which will undermine our confidence, or even destroy the bond between us.

For example: we might simply feel unappreciated. We give our love and our love is received - but it is not acknowledged. There is no reciprocation either in words or in gestures of affection.

Or it might be that we feel taken for granted; that our kindness is presumed upon.

Sometimes we can get the impression that our good will is being exploited; that, because we are generous in one way or another, others can get away with doing less than they should. They can have an easier time because of all we do.

Or perhaps we see little return for the love we offer, for all our efforts. It is particularly hurtful if we see the love that we feel is due to *us* being bestowed upon another. This gives rise to anguish of heart, and to jealousy.

In matters of the heart we are all very sensitive, no matter how resilient we like to think we are. We know how very upset *we* can be and so we must try and be alert to the feelings of our friends or partners in marriage.

We all need to be continually reassured, to be affirmed.  
Perhaps we shouldn't but we do.

If we remembered to demonstrate our affection for one another day by day in little ways our relationships would be so much the deeper and so much the stronger. They would also come to produce the many fruits of love that our hearts expect - principally *joy*.

In this Mass we renew our promises of love to God and to each other. May our daily life see that love demonstrated in practice so that we can experience all of loves' rewards.