



Brotherly love

Fr Tadros Malaty

LOVE: ITS CONCEPT AND LEVELS,

BROTHERLY LOVE (I)

LOVE: ITS CONCEPT AND LEVELS,

LET US LOVE

With the beginning of 1964, I felt deeply committed to write about love; for it is not only a characteristic of mankind, but the essence of man's life: his spirit, his soul and his body with all its talents and capabilities as well, therefore, we do not exaggerate if we say that man is a loving creature, ...

This commitment was embodied in 3 volume about sacred love, however, I feel that they were written as separate articles that needed cohesion due to the conditions in which they were written, although some asked me to reprint them I started rephrasing them so that I may amend the previous work since I felt deeply uncomfortable.

I frankly say that love will remain to be the main topic that does not only occupy our writings and addresses but our feelings and behaviors.

Love is above language and cannot be expressed?

I want to affirm that I do not write searching for Love but yearningly, through the Holy Spirit, that true Love would inflame inside us to live a satisfying evangelic heavenly Love for our life,

YOUR SERVANT IN THE LORD

TADROS YACCOB MALTI

OUR NEED FOR LOVE

Since his existence, man was, is still and will forever be occupied by the word Love. I do not exaggerate when I say that it is the only thing that accompanies us even after death as Saint Paul says: "Love never fails (1Cor 13:8).

Man remains longing for Love yearning for being loved by others and pouring his love upon others,

The devout believer asks for love until he reaches true solicitude and real piety, then he roars for God's love, giving his heart as a fire flaming with love, Husbands want to love their wives and to be loved by them, fathers, friends, teachers, sons and brothers all want to love and be loved. I go as far as saying that even evil lustful people, criminal and hard-hearted people tend to love and desire for it even if they do not practice it.

This love is confused in the minds of many people. Therefore, they do not know how to distinguish between it and lustful, social or sentimental love. They even put utilization and egoism under the veil of love. By doing so, they deceive themselves before deceiving others, giving a sacred picture for evil motives.

LOVE AND INSTINCTS OR MOTIVES

God created many instincts or urges for man without which he loses his humanity, his vitality and perhaps his whole life, such instincts are vibrant energies that differ from one person to another. Man inherits them by nature to grow and direct them. He can grow them to make of him a mature active human being. He can press them for some time: the result being the narrowing of his heart, the suffocation of his soul, the loss of his vitality and finally, his whole destruction.

Man can elevate such instincts directing them to the right way. Thus he lives strong and mature in everything. He can, otherwise, direct them in an opposite way, thus destroying his humanity and spiritual life. (I)

The instinct of fear for example, protects you against mistakes, so you do not throw yourself in fire or in a river... You can develop that instinct, through the Holy Spirit, to be Holy fear of God that pleases the heart. Thus you say with David: "Unit my heart to fear thy name" (ps 85). You can also use the instinct of fear wrongly, fearing people cowardly. You even fear disease and death and worry about your and your son's future in dismay. You reach the extent of fearing nothing and everything and live a life of worry. The rage instinct rouses you against your brother. You, thus, long eagerly, to insult and blame others, being pleased with people's destruction... Sometimes, when you have no one to put in him your poisonous anger, you become angry at the animals or you resort to animals to show your anger; you sometimes destroy a pen, tear a book in your hand or even tear your garment... On the contrary, if you struggle to give such an instinct to the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, you do not become angry with others but with yourself, your sin and your evil desires. Then, you become through the Lord, a strong man able to control and curb yourself being better than that "who takes a city" as the wise Solomon says.

What is said about fear and anger instincts is typical of all instincts such as the love of possession, fatherhood, motherhood, sonship and the sexual instinct... All these instincts are strong vibrant energies that not be denied or ignored by the believers. They should not be repressed wrongly or being deviated from the path of the Holy Spirit.

Such instincts, urges and sentiments are not manmade to be feared and escaped from by him. They are created by a good by a good man loving God who always creates good things.

Such energies that destroy the relation of many people with God are the same which helped, as strong and effective devices in the hands of the Holy Spirit, all repentance and saints.

According to saint John Chrysostom, the whole body, if used well, becomes like the harp in the hands of the harpist and the rudder in the hands of the pilot, useful and helpful to the soul.

Here, I only talk about the sexual and helpful to the soul.

THE SEXUAL INSTINCT IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE.

The sexual energy working in us is part of our entity and not an evil that we desire to get rid of or a despised profane or a shameful defilement. It is rather the gift of the good-maker who have granted for us for the coherence of mankind, their unity, their growth and their peace.

Man grows and with him his sexual instinct. Then, it is becoming of him to realize that it is God's gift that he has to thank Him for. Through that instinct, if it is in the hands of the honest Lord who grants purity and chastity continence man's life, thought and behavior become mature.

The child grows after an innocent childhood during which he lived with immature instinct. His thoughts were promoted without resistance or struggle in purity and chastity. He thinks he would remain with his calm body and tranquil senses concerning Sex and with an innocent soul that would not distinguish between males and females. In a short time, he finds himself confronting here, he feels ashamed of himself, God, his parents, the church and the whole society. He thinks that he is the most evil man who must be considered among adulterers and corrupt peo; people and does not deserve to live with Christ. no longer.

Due to this bitter feeling the growing child passes through, he resorts to other means. He may resort to introversion and isolationism to be hidden from God and people's looks. He struggles alone with his all capabilities to control his soul and curb his instincts, deprive his sentiments and fighting his body. Since he does not sin physically, people think of him as an innocent saint while he sees himself as a sinful criminal who has in side him an active volcano and an unending conflict. He hates faith and abandons chastity (continency) and purity...

Therefore, Saint Augustine says (2) that not all who control themselves or prevent themselves from desires seeking for purity are chaste. Many people searched for chastity and got something else. The adult may also resort to his counterparts asking to know about the sexual life. They give him information out of market books and romantic films after reflecting their own imagination; thus the information turns to be full of poison. Here the adult inevitably falls victim of dissoluteness and carelessness, if not in front of the society, in his deep soul.

Here, the importance of the church and parents care for the children is highlighted. The adult, who experiences the kindness of his or her father of confession and the openness of his heart and feels the love his parents and their open-mindedness, does not resort to his counterparts to know about the sexual life which may affect his construction or lead to his destruction.

The Spiritual father: In-co-operation with the parents, the spiritual father opens his heart to the adult to know his feeling and answers what the adult may consider strange or profane.

In such an age, the person has a natural tendency towards the other sex especially if this stands for an example in his mind whether concerning beauty, morals, scientific and artistic capabilities, hobbies and perhaps religion...

If the spiritual father, through the Holy Spirit, opens his heart for the child to reveal his feelings towards the other sex whether as a group or individuals or a certain person, he can easily, by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, direct the energies of the child, through Divine grace, towards God. They, thus, turn to be a construction device of righteousness in the church and a mighty strength towards God's and people's love in an endless struggle.

The child in that age, or rather man in general, urgently needs to be comfortable towards his body with all its energies. He needs to know its abilities and value and to feel that all its belongings, in the first place, are not profane. On the contrary, his members, by the Holy Spirit, are the members of Christ. Only then, he realizes the truth experienced by Saint Augustine who experienced evil in its bad state. He had an illegitimate son of eleven years and a beloved visiting him daily when he realized that truth. He knew that the evil profane energies, by true repentance and submission to the divine Grace turn man into a famine torch of love, thus he loves God, the church, all human beings and even his resisting enemies...

Whoever reads the writings of Saint Augustine sees how his energies have turned to construction... The Holy Spirit did not destroy his evil energies and instincts but sanctified them to work God's kingdom...

To understand the sanctity of the sexual instinct in our life, it is becoming of us first to understand the sanctity of the whole body.

THE BODY AND LOVE

If man is a loving creature who yearns to love and be loved, we cannot practice love towards others or receive their love for us or even understand the true love unless we know our body with all its energies, feelings and instincts. We have to know the role of our body in our life and our look to it through the evangelic factual and religious thought.

Some may be confused because of the words of the apostle Paul concerning the body. He says: "O wretched man that I am? Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (ROMANS 7:24) and for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (GAL 5:17). Such confused people wonder:

Did Saint Paul look to his flesh as a corrupt resisting body that should be get rid of?

Did his flesh

Was his flesh a prison to his soul that it wanted to be free from its evil?

Did the Apostle want to destroy the members of his body so that his soul be enflamed with love towards God and people?

MAN IS A WHOLE ENTITY:

Although man consists of body and soul, each having its characteristics, he does not have doubleness in his entity or nature. He has his human one entity. When it was mentioned that God created man to his image his image and likeness, (GEN 1:26), this did not only mean the soul separate from the body, but also the human entity as a whole.

Father Gregory Blamos was affected by Saint Irinaos and Saint Gregore the Bishop of Nisos, when he said: “The word man does not mean the soul or the body but the two together since they were created together to God’s image and likeness”.

The body is not only a place for the soul where it dwells for a time and, then, leaves without return. The body does not deal with it as a guest but as a partner in everything, even in the Eternal Glory. In eternity, man will be as a whole: body and soul, having the image of Incarnated word of God though this entity will carry a new nature becoming of Eternity.

In other words, the body is not a temporary component in man’s entity; but rather a partner of the soul. It is one with it in its struggle, downfalls, Eternal glories and even condemnation.

The great scholar Tertian says: “It is true that the soul cannot pass through life alone. We cannot separate even our thoughts from the body though they are more thoughts... what takes place in the heart is the activeness of the soul in with, and through the body” (3)

The body does not only carry the reflections of the soul as if there is time, short as it is. The soul does something to affect itself while the soul and the body interact together without separation. Therefore, we should not wonder that the Holy Scripture calls man as a whole as “a soul” or “a body”.

What the body practices, even eating and drinking, takes place with the participation of the soul. The body also contributes in what the soul does, even in its thoughts. Man is not two beings: the body and the souls each working separately from the other.

Through this perspective, the church looks to man as a whole, body and soul, as being holy in the Lord where the Holy Spirit dwells in Baptism and Mairon anointment sacrament. The spirit directs man as a whole towards Divine life witnessing for God through His Kingdom existing inside man.

BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE FLESH

If the body is combined with the soul in one entity, participating with it in all inward and outward behaviors, why did Saint Paul complain of his body calling it “the body of this death” (Romans 7:24) and considering it lustful against the spirit (GAL 5:17)?

Saint Paul did not despise Man’s body but warned us against it, though in the Hebrew language, there is no difference between the body “Soma” and the flesh “Sarks”.

The “Soma” is created by God and it is good not evil; - as some Manichaeans and some agnostics claimed. “Sarks” means the fallen man, soul and body.

Soma is the good creation of God. Therefore, we should not despise it as an enemy that we should get rid of; we must not consider it to be a dwelling place for the soul as Plato claimed.

Saint Paul looks to his members in awe and sanctify considering them “the members of Christ” (I or 6:15). They must not be corrupted or used as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin but as instruments of righteousness unto God” (ROM 6:13).