



Our Easter program this year is called, "Love Lives."

Jesus says, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Jesus shows us love by laying down his life for us. Love lives for us when we sacrifice for others and lay down our lives for them.

Week 6: May 16 - May 22

SUNDAY

This weekend is our invitation to ministry weekend. At Nativity, we encourage every member to be a minister. Serving in ministry is a great way to both grow your faith and make a positive impact on others.

If you serve in a ministry, pray today that God will use it to help you grow closer to him and bring others into a relationship with him. If you do not serve in a ministry, ask God to show you where he is calling you to serve.

MONDAY

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12

Paul writes to the Ephesians and describes different roles of leadership in the Church. He writes that the leaders job in a parish is to equip the holy ones or members of the Church for ministry. Ministry simply means giving our time and efforts so that God brings his grace and blessing to the world through us. It is the leadership of a church that responsible for mobilizing members to use their gifts

God has created you to do some definite service in this parish to build up your faith and make a positive impact on others. When you don't serve in the parish there is something God wants accomplished that remains undone. When you don't serve there is a way in which your personal growth is stunted. On the other hand, when you serve you grow in Christ and others do as well.

Pray today to deepen in an understanding of how ministry helps you grow as a follower of Christ and makes a positive impact on others.

TUESDAY

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:18

The First Letter of John challenges us to love. In the verse above, John says that it is not enough to love in

word or speech but that love must translate into deeds and actions. Love doesn't just make promises and express warm feelings, love works. Love serves. Love rolls up its sleeves and gets to work because actions speak louder than words.

John compares and contrasts words and speech with deed and truth. We would have expected him to say something like "Let us not love with words and speech but with deeds and actions." Instead he contrasts "words and speech" with "deeds and truth." John is underscoring that for love to be real and true it must be practical.

Pray today for the grace to put love in action.

WEDNESDAY

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. 1 John 3:19-20

John says that it is through service of others that we know we belong to the truth that is God. When we serve, our hearts are reassured of God's love for us. We don't serve to earn God's love, but when we do serve we become more aware of God's love for us. We become more aware as God's love flows through us to help others.

You are reassured of God's love for you when you experience God working through you to bring others closer to him. If you have never experienced the thrill of God using you then you are missing out on a big part of the Christian life.

Tell God today that you are available to be used by him. Let God know you want to experience the thrill of bringing others to him.

THURSDAY

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 1 John 3:19-22

When we serve, our hearts are reassured of God's love for us and because our hearts are reassured of God's love for us, we have greater confidence before God. People who serve God and his kingdom have the greatest confidence that God is with them and for them.

Every one of the people described in the Scriptures as having a close relationship with God, worked to build his kingdom. They worked to serve his purposes. As they freely served God's purpose and worked towards the better future God was creating, they grew in their intimacy with God.

Pray today to have greater confidence in God. Ask God that as you serve others your confidence and trust in him will grow as well.

FRIDAY

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. 1 John 3:19-23

Jesus commands us to love one another. We express our belief and trust in Jesus when we do what he asks us to do. Serving in ministry is a way to follow Jesus' command to love one another. It is a vital way in which we put love into action.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta said, "Everyone can do something beautiful for God. This is God's wish for us to serve through love in action." Pray today that your work in ministry will be a way to do something beautiful for God and help you to grow in love for him and others.

SATURDAY

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
serve the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful song.

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Know that the LORD is God;
he made us, his we are;
his people, the flock he tends.

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

The LORD is good:
his kindness endures forever,
and his faithfulness, to all generations.

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Psalm 100

Group Discussion: Week 6 of "Love Lives"

Questions:

1. Why can it be easier to say we love God than to love the people around us?
2. When is a time someone did a favor or helped someone you loved and you felt like they did it for you. How can we keep in mind that other people are God's sons and daughters and that they matter to him?
3. What is your attitude towards God's commandments?
4. Do they tend to feel burdensome?
5. How does faith in Jesus help us to love others?
6. What has been your main take away or lesson from this series?

Scriptures:

- ❖ "Those who say I love God and hate their brothers are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." -1 John 4:20-21
- ❖ "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child." -1 John 5:1
- ❖ "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments." -1 John 5:2
- ❖ "For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith." -1 John 5:3-4
- ❖ "Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" -1 John 5:5