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Amor Dei pro omnibus

Lillian Zimmerman
St. John Fisher College

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Amor Dei pro omnibus

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The word love comes from the Old English lufu, which is similar to the Old High German luba meaning to love which comes from the Old English lēof meaning dear, and the Latin lubēre meaning to please. So to love someone is to be pleased by and have the desire to please someone held dear to you. But what is love in the Christian sense of the word? Aside from speaking to God directly, the Bible is a good place to start, specifically the New Testament."



Lillian Zimmerman

The excerpt that follows is taken from Reverend **Martin Luther King, Junior's** *Love Your Enemies*, a speech delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama on 17th November 1957.

“I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Love is creative, understanding goodwill for all men. It is the refusal to defeat any individual. When you rise to the level of love, of its great beauty and power, you seek only to defeat evil systems. Individuals who happen to be caught up in that system, you love, but you seek to defeat the system. The strong person is the person who can cut off the chain of hate, the chain of evil. And that is the tragedy of hate that it doesn't cut it off. It only intensifies the existence of hate and evil in the universe. Somebody must have religion enough and morality enough to cut it off and inject within the very structure of the universe that strong and powerful element of love”.

Amor Dei pro omnibus

The word love comes from the Old English *lufu*, which is similar to the Old High German *luba* meaning to love which comes from the Old English *lēof* meaning dear, and the Latin *lubēre* meaning to please. So to love someone is to be pleased by and have the desire to please someone held dear to you. But what is love in the Christian sense of the word? Aside from speaking to God directly, the Bible is a good place to start, specifically the New Testament.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (Matthew 5:44-46)

We are called to love everyone, friends, family, neighbors, and yes, even our enemies and persecutors so that we may be the children of God the Father in Heaven. This calling seems simple in its essence, but in fact it is not. God's love for us is so pure and powerful we cannot even hope to love anyone with that level of intensity and commitment, but it is our example to strive for. We are told not to love those who love us because that is easy and self-rewarding. We

do not love to be loved and feel better about ourselves; we should love others because it is the right thing to do.

This free love without the expectation for reciprocation is not easy to give. In fact it is an everyday struggle to try and love the people that spit in your face and push you to the ground. Our natural human instinct is often to stand up and fight back, but that is not seen as loving each other like God wants. We should not seek restitution during this life because that action would push us farther away from God. While not everyone believes in the Christian God, this pure love of everyone should be a universal belief for the world. Acting out of love for everyone would make the world a more positive, supportive place were fewer people suffered.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:17-19)

Restitution is wrong in the eyes of God. While this does not mean that people should borrow money and goods from another and not expect to have to pay them back, but that the person loaning the goods or money should not demand interest and repayment. This call to love one another would promote a situation where a person would be happy to loan the goods out because they love the person they are loaning them to and the person receiving the loaned items would repay this deed as soon as possible because they love the person loaning the goods to them.

God makes it clear that we are not called to judge each other that judgment is to be saved for Him and only Him. In judging one another we push God away as well as we forget to love our friends, enemies and oppressors. This is the evil chain that holds us down, preventing us from reaching out to love one another. This would not only hurt ourselves, but those around us, the ones we are called to love. This love for each other should supersede everything else except for our love of God the Father. If we could love others like this, there would be no need for revenge or compensation.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23:34)

Forgiveness is one of the best examples of love of another. By forgiving a person of their faults you are telling them that even though a mistake was made it will not affect your opinion or treatment of them. Jesus preaches forgiveness for all, and this is going to be the only way we can get over our differences and past issues. Forgiving is not the same as forgetting, it's more or a calm remembrance of what happened but no longer blaming the other person for the pain caused. With this act of love the past would never be forgotten, but would not be repeated, thus enacting this love that Jesus promoted throughout his whole life.