

How do we know that someone loves us? By their deeds. And note this is not about one person earning the love of another – that false trap that can bedevil us and our liturgy – but about someone revealing who they are to us whatever we might do or say or think. *God is love* St. John will eventually conclude: words that summarise the whole gospel, the good news of God. The problem then is not with God but with us, for we keep projecting onto God images of God which are not worthy of God, not true to God's true nature, though this is partly metaphor's inability to bridge the gap, to be, that is, what it is trying to express.

Back to deeds again and yet still our inability to communicate this fully. Watching and listening to some of the accounts at D-Day by those who were there, brings something of this tension to the fore. It's the moments of silence that often best express how the men and women feel when they attempt to recount the suffering of it all – and the tears. Yes, it's a celebration of victory but of great loss too; incomprehensible in terms of figures but making sense when emotion is allowed its say and when we are allowed to drill down to the particular. Few of the people involved, of course, would use the word 'love' in their understanding of what they were doing or as an explanation of their heartfelt loss as their comrades fell around them, nor do they see themselves as heroes. They were simply doing their duty: *someone's got to do it*. Some even went with a sense of excitement, still too young to know the grim awfulness of it all. The fog of war seen through the fog of peace.

Where does this leave us with the Sacred Heart? Perhaps, that it's allowing room here for emotion to speak: that love is, indeed, an act told by its deeds which may not, necessarily, be fully understood. It's not firstly reason that brings the writers of the gospels, or Paul or the psalmist, or Hosea, to an understanding of God's love but a felt experience which is then re-cast in a story within a larger setting – a story of exile and rescue, of loss and recovery. Paul will widen its scope to all people. The gospel will give each particular, particular stress, as the Church begins to understand the full significance of Jesus. But the theology comes later. It's that first experience of love as a deed done to us by another which is the bedrock of our faith found, not in any general or romantic notion of what love should be, but in a particular action at a particular time and perpetuated in the daily demands made on each of us. We don't have to look far to find the significance of the Cross or the Resurrection or, for that matter, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, not earning our love but showing us how God's love is made possible for us.

In the words of today's hymn at Lauds:

*How can we pay so deep a debt?
- take the redeeming gift, and live.*

And from the psalm:

You will draw water from the wells of salvation.

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