

been translated into the English word charity (in other languages, something equivalent), meaning to the average person charitableness or charitable good works. When Saint Paul wrote this Epistle he had only one thought in mind and that was “love of God.” No doubt, for him “love of God” involved God’s commandment of love of neighbor. In the Latin, the word *caritas* has an implication of love, which is stronger than charitableness. If love is missing, our every action is barren.

If there is no interior conversion, interior change, interior resolution, interior desire, and genuine interior intention to love God with all one’s heart, even if we “deliver our bodies to be burned, and have not charity (love) it profits us nothing.” These words are grave, serious, and fearsome, to be sure.

No matter how wonderful our devotion may be, no matter how praiseworthy our spiritual work may be, no matter how dedicated we may be to the work of God, if we do nothing about our anger, our pride, our self-importance, our impurity, our uncontrolled temper, our selfishness, our disobedience, then no devotion, regardless of strict dedication, will carry efficacy with it. All will be wasted. If I do nothing about SELF, I am only “a sounding brass.” If we are truly serious about saving our souls, about “passports”, about keeping God in our lives, then the reconstruction of the interior spiritual life of the soul has no equal in its importance. No other way will work. What a horrible fate, that after a long life of prayer and sacrifice and all else, damnation waits! “And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and have all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing!”

Love (*caritas*, in its absolutely correct meaning and interpretation), is the only “passport” to our Father’s House. The various degrees of glory in Heaven are established by the intensity of the love one has for God while yet on this earth. Only after death overtakes us will we be able to fully understand the miraculous power of a single act of love for God, but then it will be too late! After death we lose our ability to show love and to gain merit. It is now that our offerings to God must be made, now while we are still among the living. It is now, while we are yet on trial, while we are yet struggling to prove ourselves, while we are yet in a state of probation, that the sincerity of our love for God gains worth! The moment of death, the moment the soul leaves the body, is the final moment of proof – the final moment of trial. It is then all over, and our condition of life, at that precise and most precious moment, for good or for bad, is what we present to God for judgment. It is at that precise moment that the starkness of reality hits us. May the saints and the angels be there with us. *(Concluded on page 11)*