

1 Cor 12: 31 – 13: 13

12³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

13¹If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Tips for personal prayer:

The theme of charisms, so felt in the Corinthian community, leads to the great Hymn to Charity. Verse 12,31 is the hinge between the previous passage and this one. The context is very clear: wisdom, knowledge, freedom... if one does not have charity, is of little use. The situation of the community of Corinth is such that, despite the many gifts and boasting, it finds itself divided, living in sin, and risks scandalizing those around it. Even the Eucharist is lived as an occasion for division instead of a force of communion. To this community, as the summit of the whole letter, Paul addresses his praise to Charity. It is none other than that foolishness of the cross which is capable of giving itself by renouncing everything for the good of the other, it is the true wisdom of God, that which men consider a weakness, but which has the power to conquer and save the world.

- = Have you had the experience of recognizing the signs of "charity" in the ministerial drive and creativity of the laity? What have you learned from them?
- = Have the initiative, perspective and sensibility of the laity in their ministerial service ever caught your eye? To what conversion does the Spirit invite you?
- = What invitations does the Spirit make to you to accompany the laity in your missionary service?