

Our Joy becomes more complete the closer we get to the Son!

I had a **lunch meeting** on **Monday** at a **Restaurant** that a **TV** off in the corner. I glanced up at it a few times **whenever** someone at our table would say, “*News Flash!*” and **sure enough** in the corner of the Screen it said **Breaking News** and scrolling across the bottom of the screen was a **description** of **some breaking news** that they wanted their viewers to know about.

Well, imagine that you’re watching TV and the **Breaking News icon** comes up and the description says: “*God loves Satan as much as he loves the Blessed Mother!*”

What would you think? **No way ...** this had to be a mistake!

What would you do? **Shout “heresy”** and demand **they turn the TV off.**

“*God loves Satan as much as he loves the Blessed Mother!*”

Would that be ... breaking news?

- **Would that be new news** to you?
- **And if it was old news** to you ... **it would** certainly be **new news** to the world.

We all know who Satan is ... he lives apart from God and he works against God.
We all know who Blessed Mother is ... she lives at the right hand of Jesus in
Heaven and she always says yes to God.

They’re total opposites when it comes to **co-habiting** and **co-operating** with **God.**

So how could it be that **God** loves them **both the same?**

To explore this, let’s begin with the definition of God we just heard in our **Second Reading.**

There, **St. John** tells us **clearly** and **simply** that ... “**God is love.**”

Well **if that’s true** ... **if God is love** ... **then** actually **all He can do** ... is love.

If the essence of God is Love ... **then His existence is Love.**

If God is love itself ... **then** all he can do ... **is love!**

And so, the Breaking News ...

that God loves Satan as much as the Blessed Mother ... would be true.

Satan is evil ... and the Blessed Mother is without sin?

Yet God loves them both the same.

Yes, God loves every creature whether we accept and appreciate His love or not!

All of us are loved by God.

But **the way we use our Free Will determines whether ...**
we get to experience His love or not.

If we draw close to God ... we will be warmed by His love.

But if we turn away from God ... we will grow cold without it.

Consider the Sun in the sky.

It's a **mighty star** that radiates thermonuclear energy out in all directions.

9 planets revolve around it in our Solar System.

Mercury being the closest planet to the Sun experiences extremely **hot temperatures.**
The **surface temperature** there is **800°F!**

Earth being further away from the Sun has a **surface temperature** of **60° F.**

And **Pluto**, being furthest away, has the frigid surface temperature of **-390° F!**

It's the same Sun shining on all 9 planets ...

but they each experience its warmth to different degrees....
depending on their nearness to it.

Now, think of **Jesus as the Sun** ... with **all creatures** revolving around Him.
Picture **the Son** being **the Sun!**

Well, with **the Blessed Mother** seated at Jesus' right hand,
she would benefit by being nearest to the Love that He releases to all
and **her heart** would be **on fire** with **the Love of God.**

While, **Satan**, who's been thrown out of Heaven,
he would be farthest away from the Love God releases to all ...
and **his soul** would be frigid cold ... yet burned as by dry ice!

As they say in **Real Estate** ... **location, location, location.**

Location is everything! In both the **physical** and **spiritual** world.
And **the nearer you are to God** ... the **better for you!**

God's love is being poured out on all ...
blessed are those who position themselves to receive it!

How much love is **God** making available to us?

Jesus tells us in the **Gospel**, saying, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you."

Wow!

Jesus is saying that **He** loves us on **the same level** that **The Father** loves Him!

Remember the Sun in the sky ... it has **one status** ... it's **on!**
There aren't certain days where it's **half on** ... or $\frac{3}{4}$ **on** ... it's **just on!**

And there aren't any days where **the Sun** is **off** ... no, it's **on** all the time!

And so it is with God in **the way** He radiates Love ...
He has **one status** ... He's **on** ... all the time!

God, who is **love** ... is radiating love ... to every creature ... all the time.

And so ... to say that that God loves Satan as much as the Blessed Mother ...
is not heresy ... it's **the truth!**

We are not the Blessed Mother ... **nor** are we **the devil** ...
We are **His children** ... journeying through this life on our way to Heaven ...
and **how wonderful** to know ... **that we are loved!**

We are loved with the love that **the Father** has for His Divine Son, Jesus!

God wants **us** to know this!
In the **4 verses**, of our **Second Reading**, we heard the word **love** ... **9 times!**
In the **9 verses** of our **Gospel Reading** we heard the word **love** ... **another 9 times!**

It's **as if God** is saying, "*Did you get it?*" "*Did you get my message?*"
"*I love you!*" "*Do you know that I love you?*"
"*I loved you first.*" "*I loved you into existence and I want to love you in eternity.*"
"*I love you now and I always will.*"

All of us long to be loved ... **well**, hear those words coming to you ... from **God!**

The **reason** that **God** **loves us** is because "**love**" is his very nature.
God is love ... and **therefore** all He can do is love.

Let me share an experience that may help you understand this.

One day as I was learning to drive in my Dad's car. We were stopped at a red-light but I wasn't holding my foot on the brake hard enough and the car was creeping forward and was going to tap the car in front of me, **so my dad yelled stop ...** and I pressed harder on the brake and stopped the car without bumping.

My dad could see that I was **embarrassed** and he said something pretty profound,
"The car was only doing what it was designed to do."

And he was **absolutely right!**

You see, it wasn't the car's fault that it was creeping forward ...
it was designed to move unless stopped by the brake.

It was only doing what it was designed to do ...
It was doing exactly what it was supposed to do.

And it's the same with **God**.

In God loving us **He's doing exactly what he's supposed to do** ... for **God is love!**

And, if God is love, **then all He can do is love!**

That means that **God loves us** when we're **good** and **God loves us** when we're **bad**.

It means that **God loves those** who **love Him** ... and **God loves those** who **hate Him**.

God loves everyone, because that's **his nature**. **God is love!**

Yes, **God loves us just the way we are!**

It **isn't like** we have to change and be some other way for God to love us.

No, He loves us **just the way we are**.

You know, **I can remember many times** in my younger days, **praying** that **God would love me**.

That's the **very reason** that I wanted to be good, **so that** God would love me.

I didn't understand **this great truth** that God already loves me and He always will!

God's love for me and you is unconditional ... it's not based on what we do.

We have **God's love now** ...

The question is, are we experiencing **His love?**

Using **the analogy** of the **Planets and the Sun** ... **are we drawing closer to God** ...
so that we can experience more and more the warmth of His Love?

The **closer** you get to God **the more** you're able to appropriate his love!

The **further** you get from God, **the less** you're able to experience His love.

What does **Jesus** want?

Remember, His constant invitation,

“Come to Me all you who are weary and I will refresh you.”

And recall my homily last week about **the intimacy** of **Holy Communion** ...
and **how Jesus** doesn't just want to be **with** us ... He wants to be **in** us ...
bringing us ever so close to Him.

In our **Gospel** today, **Jesus** says **two times** ... “*Remain in my love.*”

How do we do that?

Jesus tells us how ... by keeping His commandments.

What are **Jesus'** **commandments**?

He gave us **two** ... love **God** and love **your neighbor**.

Why does **Jesus** want us to do that?

Because it will bring us **joy** ... **His Joy!**

He says today,

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete.”

When we unite ourselves with God by following his commands,
we're able to draw deeply on the love that is constantly raining down from Heaven ...
the love He **wants** us to have.

But when we distance ourselves from God, then we're **not able** to receive His love.

He's **still loving** you, but you're out of reach and **just not able** to receive it!

Without the love of God you will die spiritually ... and **sadly** many people do.
They die of sin ... without accepting God's renewing love!

That's why **Jesus so wants us** to follow His commands.

It's **for our own good**. It's the **only way** that we're able to receive God's **love**.

He's **giving it at all times**; and He wants us **to receive it!**

In our **Second Reading**, **St. John** tells us,

“It’s not that we have loved God, but that He loved us.”

and in our **Gospel**, Jesus tells us,

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.”

In **all of this**, God is **telling us quite clearly**, *“Hey, I loved you first!”*

That’s **what God does ... He loves!** He loves **everyone**, which is **the discovery** that the **Jews** made in our **First Reading** from the **Acts** of the Apostles. **Scripture says**,

*“The circumcised believers ... were astounded
that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles.”*

The **Holy Spirit** is the Love of God ... and it’s offered to all people.

As **baptized Christians**, the **love of God** has been poured out on us

and we’ve been loved right into God’s family.

There’s nothing we can do to make God love us more.

His love for us is already infinite and unconditional.

All we can do is accept it. It’s **His free gift** to those who believe.

So **what’s the point** of being good if we’ve already got God’s love?

The **reason** to be good is so that **we can live in His love.**

Being good enables us to receive His love,

it enables us to appropriate or process His love.

Being good enables us to have the joy of His love.

Today, let’s **give thanks** for the **truth** that we don’t have to earn God’s love?

We’ve got His love. He **loves us just the way we are.**

But He loves us too much to leave us separated from Him ...

so He calls us to live in His love.

Lets’ share this Breaking News with everyone ... that **“God is Love”!**

Realizing that **if God is love, then all He can do is love!** **Don’t you love it?**

God didn't send us His Son when the world was perfect.
No, He sent Him when the world was steeped in sin!
In this we see that God loved us even when we were unlovable.

"Children need love the most when they deserve it the least." (Jim Jernigan)

- This certainly applies to us too as the children of God.
- God's love is made evident to man in the flesh of His Son,
whom He sent into the world so that we might have life through Him.