

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 24.
June 11, 2023

A reading from *The Power and Meaning of Love*

By Thomas Merton

The difference between real and unreal love is not to be sought in the *intensity* of the love, or in its subjective *sincerity*, or in its *articulateness*. These three are very valuable qualities when they exist in a love that is real. But they are very dangerous when they are associated with a love that is fictitious. In neither case are they any sure indication of the nature of the love to which they belong, though it is true that one might expect a person to feel an intense, sincere and articulate love only for a real object and not for an unreal one.

The trouble is that love is something quite other than the mere disposition of a subject confronted with an object. In fact, when love is a mere subject-object relationship, it is not real love at all. And therefore it matters little to inquire whether the object of one's love is real or not, since if our love is only our impulsion towards an 'object' or a 'thing', it is not yet fully love.

The reality of love is determined by the relationship itself which it establishes. Love is only possible between persons as persons. That is to say, if I love you, I must love you as a person and not as a thing. When we love another 'as an object', we refuse or fail to pass over into the realm of their spiritual reality, their personal identity. Our contact with them is inhibited by remoteness and by a kind of censorship which *excludes* their personality and uniqueness from our consideration. We are not interested in them as themselves but only as another specimen of the human race.

To love another as an object is to love them as 'a thing', as a commodity which can be used, exploited, enjoyed and then cast off. But to love another as a person we must begin by granting him or her autonomy and identity as a person. We have to love them for what they are in themselves, and not for what they are to us. We have to love them for their own good, not for the good we get out of them. And this is impossible unless we are capable of a love which 'transforms' us, so to speak, into the other person, making us able to see things as they see them, love what they love, experience the deeper realities of their own life as if they were our own. Without sacrifice, such a transformation is utterly impossible. But unless we are capable of this kind of transformation 'into the other' while remaining ourselves, we are not yet capable of a fully human existence. Yet this capacity is the key to our divine sonship also.

[Source: *Celebrating the Seasons*]

SAINTS OF THE WEEK:

Barnabas the Apostle, 11 June. Though not named among the twelve apostles of the evangelists, Barnabas emerges in the Acts of the Apostles as one of the most significant of their number. He sold his estate and gave the proceeds to the Church, since all things were to be held in common, and clearly became a leader. He is described as a Levite from Cyprus so, like his friend Paul, was from the Greek world rather than that of Palestine, and he introduced Paul to the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. He was sent to Antioch apparently to guide the Christians there in their relations with non-Jewish converts, promoting the concept of all being one in Christ. He broke with Paul to go to Cyprus and tradition has it that he was martyred there in the year 61.

Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, 16 June. Born in 1692 at Wantage in Berkshire, Joseph Butler was the son of Presbyterian parents and studied at the dissenting academy of Tewksbury. He abandoned Presbyterianism in 1714 for the Church of England and, after studying at [Oxford](#), was ordained priest in 1718 and began preaching the sermons which won him his fine reputation. He became Bishop of Durham and now ranks among the greatest exponents of natural theology and ethics in England since the Reformation. He died on this day in 1752.