

A What can the love of God be compared to?

❖ A mother's love.

- A mother's love for her child, even in the animal world, leads her to lay down her life, if necessary, to protect it.
- This love is a reflection of God's love, which He placed in every mother. Because of sin, there are mothers who abandon their children. But God's love remains pure, He never stops loving us. We are His children (Is . 49:15.)
- In Jeremiah 31:20, God speaks of his people as “a precious child,” “a child in whom I delight.” He says of them that He will have “mercy.” The word used is *rahām*. This word comes from “womb.” That is, divine mercy is “love like that of the mother’s womb.”
- Even when we disobey Him (and we often do), we are precious to Him; He delights in us; He constantly remembers us; and His heart is moved with pity for us.

❖ Deep inside.

- When God speaks to the prophet Hosea, he uses eminently human language: “My heart skips a beat, my soul is troubled” (Hosea 11:8 NIV.)
- What causes God this intense abdominal pain?
- His son, Ephraim (who represents the people of God, and each one of us in particular,) whom He has taken by the hand in his first steps and carried in His arms (Hos. 11:3,) whom He has attracted with “cords of love” and fed (Hos. 11:4,) has continually rebelled against Him, and does not want to worship Him (Hos. 11:2, 7.)
- Her feeling is the same as that of the mother whose son was going to be cut in two by Solomon (1Ki 3:26): “Do not harm my son!” This is how God loves us!

B How compassionate and merciful is God?

❖ The compassion of Jesus.

- So far, we have seen the love of God as it is displayed in the Old Testament. As we move into the New Testament, we see God's compassion and mercy fully manifested in Jesus.
 - (1) He touched the leper because he had mercy (Mk. 1:41)
 - (2) He stopped the funeral procession from Nain because he felt sorry for the widowed mother (Luke 7:13)
 - (3) He had compassion on the crowds that followed him (Mt. 14:14)
 - (4) He had compassion on the 5,000 who had not yet eaten (Mt. 15:32)
- As he looked upon Jerusalem, saddened by its rejection, he cried out: “how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37.)
- But, without a doubt, the greatest proof of his compassion was giving his life for us (Eph. 5:2.)

❖ This is what God's love is like.

- Does 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 describe human love or divine love?
- We can say both. This is the love of God, and this is the love we reflect in our lives as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal . 5:22.) How can I reflect this love in my life?
 - (1) Worshipping God, who is love, and thus being transformed by imitation (2Co. 3:18)
 - (2) Responding to His love, being compassionate and merciful to others (Jn. 13:35)
 - (3) Asking God to transform us, because he is the only one who can do it
- Let us therefore ask God to give us a new heart for Him and for others, a pure and purified love that elevates what is good and removes the dross from within us.

C What is God jealous of?

❖ Jealousy, applied to people, has two aspects: one positive and one negative.

- Positive: be jealous
 - (1) Care or diligence put into doing things
 - (2) Passion for a person
- Negative: being jealous
 - (1) To be envious and, generally, to wish evil upon another
 - (2) Suspecting infidelity in the couple and, generally, acting violently

❖ Divine jealousy is free of negative aspects in itself, although its consequences can be negative for those who are unfaithful to the love received (Nahum 1:2.)

❖ God's jealousy comes from a passionate love for us, like the love between spouses. It leads him to desire our good intensely. God's jealousy never comes from envy, nor is it capricious or without reason, but from the desire that He be our only God.

❖ This same zeal is what led Paul to love the churches: “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2.)