

Rome, 1970

The Essential For Today

When Pope Paul VI gave his commentary on the Creed, he made two affirmations that found a special echo in our hearts and gave ancient truths a new resonance.

He defined God as: 'He is Who is and he is Love.'¹ Among the characteristics of Christ he recalled that 'He has given us his new commandment, to love one another as he has loved us.'² Before the Council, although these truths had always existed, it was clear to the people above all that God is he who is, and that Jesus has saved us.

Now the word *love*, which denotes the essence of God, and the *commandment of love* which sums up Christ's desires, further clarify these pivots of our faith.

Not only that, but this more explicit definition of who God is, and the Christian people's resulting faith in this definition could be the *keynote* for the beginning of a general renewal in the life of the Church.

It is one thing in fact to know we can turn to a Being who exists, who has pity on us, who has paid for our sins. It is another thing to live and feel ourselves at the centre of the special love of God, with the resulting banishment of every fear that holds us back, of every loneliness, every sense of being orphaned, and every uncertainty.

When a girl knows she is loved, life changes for her: everything around her seems more beautiful and every detail takes on value. She herself is inclined to be better and condescending towards others.

Infinitely stronger is the experience of Christians when they acquire a deeper understanding of the truth that *God is love*.

Then the boring everyday life brightens up, a tragic life is made sweet, a dramatic existence peacefully calms down, and we're prepared to change our own limited programmes to fit in with others planned in heaven.

Such people know they are loved and believe with their whole being in this love. They abandon themselves to it confidently and wish to follow it.

Whether the circumstances of life are sad or joyful, they are lit up because there is a reason which is love behind them, and love has willed or permitted them all to happen.

Beneath every fact, every circumstance, every meeting, every duty, there is the will of One who certainly loves without deceit and who orders everything for good.

The creatures who were weak and hesitant before, begin to have a relationship with the creator which gives them confidence and makes them strong, understanding and loving.

Soon after this revelation and the declaration of love made by its God, the soul cannot resist declaring its own love to God.

And so begins the ascent towards the goal we are all called to: to be perfect Christians, to be saints.

God's love, belief in his love, to love in answer to his love, these are the absolute musts of today.

They constitute the essential thing the present generation is waiting for. Without them the world is in danger of running off the rails.

To discover, or rather, to rediscover that God is love is modern people's greatest adventure.

(taken from: *Yes Yes No No*, London 1977, pp.47-50)

¹ *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, vol. VI, Città del Vaticano 1968, p. 302.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.