

'If I could speak in any **language** in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making **meaningless noise**' I'm paraphrasing the first verse of chapter 13 of Paul's first letter to the Church in Corinth, which we've just heard, in which Paul explains that while we might have faith, without love we are nothing.

But one of our **basic** human **needs** is to love and to feel **loved**, -and to hear others **tell** us they love us. But, how many of us ever use the word '**love**'? Don't we tend to feel a bit **awkward** when we hear the word? Fortunately, for the **tongue tied** among us, Paul tells us that love may be expressed in **many** ways, which might be referred to as part of the '**language of love**'.

We are all made '**in the image of God**' and created for relationship with him. but **how can we** have a **loving relationship** with him, whom we have **not seen**, unless we are able to develop relationships with the people **among** whom he has placed us?

Our behaviour towards **others** will need to involve many God-given gifts- such as **patience, kindness, forgiveness, and persistence** if, through our relationship with them, they are to feel '**valued**' and '**special**'. A tall order, perhaps, but God has promised his **Holy Spirit** will help us and, of course, Jesus has already shown us how to relate to others.

The **first** relationship which springs to mind is that between **spouses, or partners**. However, this wider definition of the **language of love** applies to **all** relationships, starting within the family but extending to **every** relationship between individuals.

Each person's unique '**language**'- that is, *the ways of expressing love and concern which the other will immediately recognise and react to*- contains a number of basic elements;

**Words of affirmation**- These are words we should repeat often; as they assure the other person that they are valuable, and that they matter to us. If we can find the words which '**ring the right bell**', they will be very powerful. Just think about it! Don't we all feel loved when we are **given encouragement**, when we receive **kindness**, or when we are **complimented** on something we've done, or are planning to do.

**Use of our time** - We express our love for someone by the way in which we **plan** our days. Most of us probably think we have too much to fit into each day. But, if we can't find enough time to spend alone with our loved one, giving them our **undivided attention**, will they **believe** us when we tell them we love them.

So, in mapping out our time, we might think in terms of **togetherness, quality time, and quality conversation**. More **listening** and less **telling** are essential ingredients of this language.

**Physical touch** - **Touching** is one powerful expression of love. We all need frequent hugs! Physical contact is a sign of recognition, and can be especially significant at moments of crisis or emotional distress.

When we reflect on these thoughts and actions, we'll probably all agree we could do a lot better. But we should not be ashamed to admit when we think we've fallen short. The important thing is to **keep on trying**.

Jesus has told us to **love God** with all our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength - because that is how God **loves us**. He has made us in **his** image and given us the capacity to return that love, to him and to other people. We can only fully understand and appreciate **his** love and concern for us through **our** interaction with **others**.

If **we** feel that inner warmth when someone loves us, thanks us for a kindness, or praises us for something good we've done, don't you think that **God**, who has **done** and **is doing** so much for us, even giving his Son for us, would dearly love to hear from us?

On Tuesday, its **All Saints Day**, our Patronal Day, and today we recall that in Christianity, **saints** are all those who are '**in Christ**'. Those who have **accepted** Christ into their hearts, with his message of the hope of salvation. We are all at different points in our **journey of faith** but, as we travel, let's bask in God's love, but also remember to **thank** the one who **loves us**, **travels** with us, and is **preparing a home** for us with **all the saints** in his **éternal kingdom**.