

Seventh Sunday of Easter

“WHEN I FALL IN LOVE, IT WILL BE FOREVER”

John 17:20-26

Seventh Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Analysis by Marcus Felde

20I ask (not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word) that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world

25Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

*“When I Fall in Love”When I fall in love it will be forever
Or I’ll never fall in love.*

*In a restless world like this is,
Love is ended before it’s begun;
And too many moonlight kisses
Seem to cool in the warmth of the sun*

*When I give my heart it will be completely,
Or I'll never give my heart.
And the moment I can feel that you feel that way too
Is when I fall in love with you.*

*Lyrics by Edward Heyman, music by Victor Young
Sung by Nat King Cole, Celine Dion, and others*

DIAGNOSIS: “TOO MANY MOONLIGHT KISSES”

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *“Love is ended before it’s begun.”*

For whom is Jesus praying in chapter 17? For whoever needs to be filled with the love of God, defined here as the love with which the Father has loved the Son (v. 26). Let’s see, who could that be? Just about anyone whose behavior is symptomatic of their not knowing themselves loved. Anyone who acts cheated, scorned, wounded, overlooked, helpless, hopeless? This text does not identify them, or rather us, but Jesus here prays for them/us.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Lonely, Fickle Hearts*

Often as not, such people (they or we) would be just fine, they wouldn’t act that way, if the ones they did depend on for love did not continually disappoint them/us. “In a restless world like this is, / Love is ended before it’s begun; / And too many moonlight kisses / Seem to cool in the warmth of the sun.” Ain’t it the truth! Yet people still hope to find a person or institution that will reward them with some version of love or approval, perhaps in exchange (!) for devotion on our part. And aren’t we often as faithful as dogs to those who disappoint us? (See John 5:40: “And yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”)

In the song "When I Fall in Love," the singer resolves not to give his heart to another until he is sure that she already loves him "completely," which could be tricky if she is thinking the same way (hence not the way Immanuel Kant would have found a wife). Thus: "And the moment I can feel that you feel that way too is when I fall in love with you."

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *No Love of God in You!*

"Or I'll never fall in love again." What a horrible option. Yet love songs (and lovers) consider this option quite often. Not to be loved, never to be loved, never to love? That is not life, and "not life" is death. Jesus said to those who would not accept his testimony and receive life from him, "I know that you do not have the love of God in you." Not to have that love in you is tantamount to death, the intrinsic reward of those who cry "eleison" to another kyrios.

PROGNOSIS: "UNTIL WE REST IN THEE" (Augustine)*

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *What Wondrous Love This Is*

In the song, we imply the eternal solution: we can only love eternally and with a whole heart one who already loves us that way first. What good news it is when someone not only professes such love for us, but when a) the love is an action-dying for us his friends, and b) the one who loves us in that manner is God. "Greater love has no one than this"(John 15:13).

Today's gospel reading dwells on this divine solution to the human problem: Jesus is praying here for the fulfillment of the mission he has been sent on, to reveal God's glory by making his love known to the loveless, thereby making them one with each other. It is God's love in Jesus Christ which creates, through our partaking in the eternal love, the unity which is the theme of this whole chapter. And the glory of that love is to save and

redeem us. This is a love which does not “cool in the warmth of the sun.”

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *When We Fall in Love*

God thus creates our love by his love of us, revealed powerfully by his loving us in Christ Jesus, his Son. We do indeed now, as a result of his love, “give our heart” to God and “completely” love God, because in this otherwise “restless world” [Nat King Cole], our “restless hearts” [Augustine] have found the only one in whom we may rest.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *Beloved, let us love one another.*

And the world will know it. The truth will come out, the truth that is our love for one another, which so strongly resembles the evident love of the Father for the Son who for one thing, would not let his Son lie in the grave but raised him up and gave him the best name around. The world will see also that this love is available to them, that they don't need to keep shopping for a love that will do.

**The full quote: “You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Augustine, Confessions.*