

Valentine's Day: Love (Feb. 14)

To pray and work for Church Unity is a very special part of the vocation of the Society of the Atonement. There are two Commandments common to the religion of the Jew, the Protestant and the Catholic, and if all Jews, all Protestants, all Catholics obeyed these two Commandments fully and perfectly, neither Paganism or Communism would long continue to threaten the destruction of Christian civilization, and the war clouds which hang heavily with mumbling thunder of destruction over Europe and America would disappear very quickly and the sun of justice, with its warm beams of love, prosperity and peace, would flood the earth.

Those two Commandments are: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [Mk.12:30]

The division of Christendom into East and West a thousand years ago was not produced by doctrinal differences, for the Orthodox East was in Creedal agreement with the West, save in some minor details. The cleavage came about through the failure of both the Latins and the Greeks to fulfill the new Commandment, which Christ gave to his disciples "that you love one another as I have loved you." [Jn.13:34] It sprang out of the racial hatred of the Greek and the Roman.

The religious wars of Germany, France, Spain and England with their terrible toll of life were the first fruits of that spirit of hatred toward their Christian brethren.

It was the preaching of the love of God and of our neighbor by St. Francis of Assisi, which healed the divisions of Christendom in his day.

The prayer, which Jesus Christ addressed to His Father in Heaven in the upper room of Jerusalem on the night of his betrayal to be crucified because of the hatred of the high priests against him was "That they all may be one, as you, Father, in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us." [Jn. 17:21]

The Friars of the Atonement call upon their listeners, whether they be Catholics, Protestants or Jews, to fulfill the great Commandment of the Law: You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. In the fulfillment of those two Commandments you will answer the prayer of Christ to his Father: "That they all may be one as you, Father, in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us." (Fr. Paul Radio Talk of St. Anthony House, Mar. 6, 1938)