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Abide in Love

Sometimes I am asked by a person in a specific relationship/friendship, " Sister is this love?", " Do you think he really loves me?"..." Is this girl really for me" ?

It is a cry, a longing for assurance, affirmation and hope that the particular relationship is actually love, the love one has waited for, in a word that, "*This is it*".

So much that passes for love, in the name of love in our present culture and society is a mockery of real love, that is a love given by God, a love given to fulfill his purpose, whether it be manifested in the covenant of marriage, friendship or the consecrated life.

There is a statement, a response to this question, and questions like it, which is once illuminating and challenging, and it is simply this:

"LOVE ABIDES!"

Love abides, love remains. In other words, that which can genuinely be called *love* remains, endures and abides.

It is a love that is not diminished by storms and turmoil, suffering and trial. It is a love that is always, PRESENT and PRESENCE, it is not apparent one day and absent the next... *love abides*.

Love is not effusive today and avoidance tomorrow ... no, *real* love abides in *all* situations and in *all* circumstances. As St. Paul tells us, it "endures all things, believes all things and hopes all things. Love never falls away ...".¹

In the Gospel of St. John, we read, "Abide in me, and I in You", and, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love!"²

Love abides, remains within the Beloved; it is a mutual indwelling that is constant ... this is Christ's example, his witness to *real, to authentic love*: He abides and if we love Him we will abide in Him.

In the same way when we want to ask the question in reference to a specific human love, let us ask ourselves ... "does that love abide?" does it remain with me through thick and thin, through all the vicissitudes of life, has it stood a test of time?

If we can say yes, then it in all probability this is a share in the Divine Life – and it is real love.

Jesus Christ Himself – "the image of the invisible God"³, "Who is Love"⁴, shows us the immeasurable depth of this enduring love – *this love for us*, in that He remains forever with us, abides amongst us in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar ... He *abides!* HE IS THERE ! He is *here* ... in our midst. "**I AM** ... I AM PRESENCE, for I am love." He is the exemplar of genuine love. Look no where else, for "Greater love hath no man."⁵

Jesus Christ abides in his Holy Word, He Abides within his Holy Catholic Church, He has promised that He will never leave us orphans, ***He and his love , abide.***

If we can say of any relationship, he or she does not abide, we must have the courage to face the reality – that, as well meaning each may be ... it is not love.

When another truly wants to abide in your presence, in your life, then rejoice ... for you are loved indeed!

A Cloistered Poor Clare Colettine Nun

¹ 1 Cor. 13.7-8: " ... ómnia suffert, ómnia credit, ómnia sperat, ómnia sústinet. Cáritas numquam éxcidit ..."

² St. John 15.19: "Si præcépta mea servavéritis, manébitis in dilectióne mea, sicut et ego Patris mei præcépta servávi, et máneo in ejus dilectióne"

³ Col. 1.15: " ... qui est imágo Dei invisíbilis ..."

⁴ 1 St. John 4.8: " ... Deus cáritas est."

⁵ St. John 15.13 "Majórem hac dilectiónem nemo habet ..." *

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