

## **A Reflection on Love & a Thought on Violence**

### **Introductory Prayer**

#### **The Nature of Love**

*Love is always patient and kind;  
It is never jealous;  
Love is never boastful or conceited;  
It is never rude or selfish;  
It does not take offense and is not resentful.  
Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth;  
It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.  
Love never fails, never ceases. (1 Cor. 13:1-7)*

If I live my life to perfection, doing what is right and good on behalf of others; but act with compulsion and without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I take care of the needs of everybody in the world, especially the poor, because of my own need to help; but am without love even for myself, then I am nothing at all.

If I am efficient and successful in all that I do for the sake of justice, but act out of drivenness and without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am cultured and refined, and in touch with the pain of existence but am absent from the pain of persons in the present moment who need my empathy, and if I act without love and compassion; then I am nothing at all.

If I have the gifts of wisdom, insight and understanding but am not engaged with those around me in the present moment and am without a spirit of compassion and love; then I am nothing at all.

If I am faithful, loyal and obedient and never deviate from the law; but am judgmental and blaming and am without love; then I am nothing at all.

If I live in a pain-free world of dreams and plans, enjoying optimism and pleasurable options; but am not addressing present problems and am avoiding people in actual distress and am without love; then I am nothing at all.

If I am strong and powerful but lose my best self in a spirit of resentment, retaliation and vindictiveness; and know nothing of the vulnerability of love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am settled and accommodating, holding onto a sense of distance and calm; but am not journeying inward to know and appreciate my weaknesses and gifts and am neglecting my own legitimate calling to love myself, then I am nothing at all.

## A Thought on Violence

*“There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence.  
The rush and pressures of modern life are a form of its innate violence.*

*To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns,  
to surrender to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything,  
is to succumb to violence....*

*The frenzy of the activist... destroys our own inner capacity for peace.  
It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root  
of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.” (Thomas Merton)*

## Prayer

Lord in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, competely, we accept You and we thank You and we adore You and we love You with our whole being, because our being is in Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your Spirit. Fill us then with love and let us be bound together and united in the one spirit which makes You present in the world and which makes You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. And may all that keeps us from love, from peace, from joy, from gratitude be transformed within us. Amen

(adapted from Thomas Merton and from Nan Merrill)

