

Homily based on the readings from January 6, 2026 (1 John 4.7-10;  
Mark 6.34-44)

*God is love.* It is impossible to identify any single phrase in Holy Scripture that embodies the *totality* of the Christian message – but this one comes incredibly close. We have probably heard these words so many times that they no longer seem surprising, but the claim that is being made is absolutely *astounding*. Saint John is not simply saying that *God loves us* or that *God wants us to love each other*. He is making an assertion about God's fundamental *nature* – about his very *essence*. *God is love*, and likewise *love is God*. The two concepts are utterly indistinguishable.

This principle, in fact, is the foundation for everything we know about God. For example, it points directly toward the mystery of the Holy Trinity. In the words of C. S. Lewis, the popular Protestant author:

All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that “God is love.” But they seem not to notice that the words “God is love” have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.

Our late Holy Father, Pope Benedict, made a similar observation:

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one because God is love and love is an absolute life-giving force; the unity created by love is a unity greater than a purely physical unity. The Father gives everything to the Son; the Son receives everything from the Father with gratitude; and the Holy Spirit is the fruit of this mutual love of the Father and the Son.

This teaching also makes it clear what God is expecting from each of *us*. Even though the demands of our lives can sometimes seem complicated,

at a basic level there is only *one* requirement – that we serve as beacons of God’s love:

Beloved, let us love one another,

because love is of God;

everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

As a starting point, we must commit ourselves to loving God unreservedly, along with our brothers and sisters who are created in his image and likeness. At a deeper level, though, God wants us not just to follow his *example*, but to unite ourselves *fully* with his inmost *nature*. In other words, he wants *us* to be love, just as *he* is love.

How is that possible? How can *any* of us be changed into something we are *not*? The answer, of course, will become apparent in a few moments. In the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood, we have the opportunity to *share* in his divinity – just as he humbled himself to share in our humanity. In the words of Saint Augustine, “[i]f we receive the Eucharist worthily, we become what we receive.” Every time we

partake of Holy Communion, we take a step closer to *becoming* love.

God *is* love, and – through the unfathomable power of his grace and mercy – someday *we* may be as well.