

In today's Gospel, Our Lord answers a scholar of the Law by stating the "Greatest Commandment:"

*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all your mind ...
... [and] your neighbor as yourself.*

And, this comes to us through three cultures and several languages. Perhaps you are already familiar with the "three loves" in the Greek Language. Greek is the language of the New Testament, and the Septuagint - the translation of the Old Testament used in the Early Church.

The three loves can be summarized as: "fraternal," "romantic," and "unconditional" love.

Taking this back another level, into the Hebrew original, we confront the word: "hesed."

Often translated as "loving-kindness," our understanding of this word is betrayed by western ideas such as individualism and class.

Hesed implies a moral obligation, reciprocity, a social imperative, and community involvement. It is not a feeling or a one-time decision, but rather a way of life, lived in community, with mutual loyalty and moral obligations.

Hesed is a word used to define a covenant, a relationship, a lifestyle of support and family.

We see this played out in the story of Ruth and Naomi, which we heard the first part of in today's First Reading. It might be an interesting "homework" assignment to look this up and read the entire story in its entirety sometime in the coming days.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for a better understanding of the Love of God in our lives as well as our own living out of God's Love in the way we live our lives. May the graces of this Eucharist deepen our love ... in heart, mind, and soul ... our love for God, and our love for our neighbor.