

The Law of Love and the Truth of Love

In the context of the Gospel Teaching of Christ concerning the Greatest of the Commandments, where, in answer to the lawyer's question, Jesus draws from two places in the *Torah* to articulate the unity of Love of God and neighbour and the Summary of the Law and the Prophets, I would like to present a new project: This is called the *Truth of Love* Project.



The Veritas Amoris (*Truth of Love*) Project focuses on the *truth of love* as a key to understanding the mystery of God, the human person and the world, convinced that this perspective provides an integral and fruitful pastoral approach. The Project's intellectual patrimony has three pillars:

=> St. John Paul II's theology of the body,

=> Pope Benedict XVI's theology of love, and

=> Pope Francis' pedagogy of love with its attention to human frailty.

The expression "truth of love" is inspired by the work of Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II, who dwells repeatedly on it, especially in his *Love and Responsibility* and in his *Catecheses on Human Love in the Divine Plan*: "What does true love mean? It means a love in which the true essence of love is realized, the love that turns to the true (and not merely apparent) good in a true way, that is, the way that corresponds to the nature of the good" (*Love and Responsibility*, Pauline, 66).

Paradigmatic for the Project's content and method is Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well, in which Jesus "addressed her desire for true love" (Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 294). In this way, he has made her capable of a new kind of action; he regenerated her as a moral subject in the synergy of grace and virtue, leading her to convert and to announce the Gospel to her fellow villagers (cf. Jn 4:28-29).

The perspective of the truth of love helps us to overcome the subjectivism of a love without truth, by which the only criterion for one's action is the authenticity of one's emotions. It also allows us to overcome the objectivism of a truth without love, which simply imposes external rules on human freedom. The old paradigm pits up

- => emotivism against intellectualism,
- => the subjective against the objective,
- => the internal conscience against the external law.

Instead, this new paradigm, in consonance with the foundational principles of the Catholic Tradition, proposes a logic of love that, in its very manifestation, carries within itself the criteria of its truth.

This Project sees the light of day at a time when a pandemic has called into question the secure cultural framework on which we have relied in recent decades. But in this way, precisely this experience can remind us of the fact that at the basis of the life of each person and of society as a whole there is an original gift. The pandemic makes the question about the truth of love urgent, inasmuch as it is a question about the relationships that sustain life and allow us to reach the fullness of the common good. The Veritas Amoris Project takes into account this concrete historical situation in order to highlight the primacy of God, who is the ultimate foundation of our social bonds, and to ask about the word that the Church is called to give to illuminate this situation.

To articulate an adequate vision of the “truth of love,” the Veritas Amoris Project focuses on the following twelve theses:

1. To speak of the truth of love, one needs to establish the primacy of *God as Creator*.
2. *Christ the Redeemer* reveals the fullness of true love, stirring up within us a new question that he alone can answer.
3. The perspective of the truth of love is the key to understanding who human beings are as the *image of God* in Christ.
4. Human beings discover and express the truth of love beginning from the *language of their body*.
5. *Sexual difference* makes possible the union between man and woman and the transmission of life, and as such, it is the paradigmatic place in creation where love realizes its truth.

6. The possibility of a truth of love seems to be contradicted by the *evil* present in the world, but it is this very fact that also speaks to us of how love is capable of redeeming human beings from sin and death.
7. The *sacraments* are the place that Christ left us to be able to live the truth of love.
8. To see *human action* starting from the truth of love means to understand it as a response to an original call that invites us to reach the fullness of human life.
9. To speak of the truth of love in today's emotivist climate requires a reflection on the *affections*.
10. The perspective of the truth of love allows us to discover the height of the *human vocation* in Christ (cf. Vatican II, *Optatam Totius*, n. 16).
11. Considering the truth of love helps to propose an evangelizing *pastoral ministry* that aims at the formation of the Christian subject.
12. The perspective of the truth of love has great social potential. In fact, it enables us to understand how the good brings with it a dynamism of communion that goes beyond the individual person, which is why one must speak of the *common good*.