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Enough

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Enough

Part of life is making sure we have enough of food, clothing, and shelter, time, understanding, and love. For a party, we want to have enough food and drink, enough space for everyone, enough time to enjoy one another's company. Many of our physical needs or wants can be quantified, as when we count the number of seats we can arrange in a limited space. But we cannot use numbers to measure how much love anyone has for us, though we know which of our friends will most likely answer a request for help and who of our acquaintances will never be asked.

We know that some persons with immense fortunes appear to have no concept of sufficiency, while a growing number of people have not enough to support themselves or their families. Opinions vary on whether or not there is enough love in the world. From one perspective, there is not enough love in the world as long as one person lacks daily bread, and from another point of view, love is the one human quality that is not limited by either time or space.

We have learned from our experiences that God does not take away the effects of our human limitations, including those that are imposed on some of us by the selfishness and injustice of others or that befall people through illness or other natural causes. Is there really enough love in the world if not even God's infinite love fails to prevent pain and suffering?

Ignatius of Loyola, in proposing that we could profit greatly from imagining ourselves at the birth of Christ, suggests that God's love for us is manifested more by sharing with us our human constraints, inconveniences, and suffering, than by taking control over persons and the environment. The choice that God made, not to become present among us with even the prerogatives of a middle-level manager, much less those of a C.E.O., is the most direct and efficacious means of communicating love to us. God has infinite knowledge and power, but exercises love in the manner that we ourselves do: we "rise to the occasion" when someone is in need. We take care of the weakest among us where there is no possibility of an equal response of love.

Most of us know what it is like to grow weary and worn out in acting with care and compassion not only for others, but also for ourselves, when we encounter pain and suffering. We might not have considered that we do not even have enough energy to fully encompass all of the joy and pleasure that enter our lives because of our physical and emotional constraints. We can only do so much, either in extreme emergencies or in profound experiences of enlightenment.

But love, even when we acknowledge that it is shown better in love than in deeds, is not itself a physical or emotional quality with accompanying limitations, but is essentially spiritual and unlimited. No one has a greater or lesser "supply" of love, though we know of ourselves that we grow in both our capacity to love, and in our awareness of who we love and how to better manifest the one aspect of ourselves that gives meaning and purpose to all that we think, say, and do.

We might not be able to answer to everyone's satisfaction whether or not there is enough love in the world, but we can live as those who believe that we receive and give from the one and same source of God's infinite love.