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Wholly Spirit

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Wholly Spirit

Red is the color of power and action. It is associated with the energy of anger, but especially love, including the Pentecostal love of God and neighbor. Red is also the color of fire, as in the "tongues of fire" that symbolize the Holy Spirit. The love of God is all-powerful, but this love is a Person rather than a verb, and so the Holy Spirit is also depicted as a pure and gentle white dove. We cannot, no matter how many images and metaphors we might try, come close to describing the reality of divine love.

Love is powerful among us, literally stronger than death. Valentines and red hearts represent the passion of romantic love, which can lead to life-long bonds. Love as more-than-emotion is universally recognized in all relationships of families, friends, business associates, and organizations. When people accept challenges and even endure suffering for the sake of others, we see love. All love for others as well as for ourselves is of God, and therefore also of spirit. Love transcends death, because God, who is Love, is God of the living, not of the dead.

We do not always think about or recognize the spiritual component of our love, especially when emotions are involved. Neither those who are deeply in love nor those who have discovered their deepest desire to engage in some life-path are necessarily aware of their immediate connection with God. To imagine that anything originating in us could have eternal consequences might seem presumptuous. But we did not invent the reality of love. When we love, we participate in an activity of God's that is expressed in our human words and deeds.

We can readily observe the spiritual power of love in some visible actions, as when someone donates a part of his or her body for someone in need. Such a deed goes beyond anything that can be required, and is not subject to any rule other than that of love. But, with the use of reflection we can recognize this same spiritual movement in, for example, the ministrations of care-givers of all kinds. Money cannot "buy" respectful care of little children or of aged adults, or of any of those who cannot meet their own needs. When we act out of love, in small matters as well as great, we are the recipients of inspiration; we act "in the Spirit."

The Spirit of the Living God moves in us in such ordinary, everyday ways that our attention is most often directed to the present moments of life as we experience them, and only rarely to the larger Love that moves in us and through us with no end point, not even our death.

Our thoughts, our words, all our actions come to an end. But the love with which we live is too much of eternal God, too much of Spirit, to ever be completed. Love not only "rolls on like a river," but keeps expanding. There is not enough room in our bodies or on this earth as we now know it, to contain the breadth of interactions for which we are created. Our love, in all our specific manifestations, is of eternity.

Though "love is shown in deeds" as Ignatius of Loyola stated, love itself is invisible, though exceedingly powerful. Love is, ultimately, wholly Spirit.