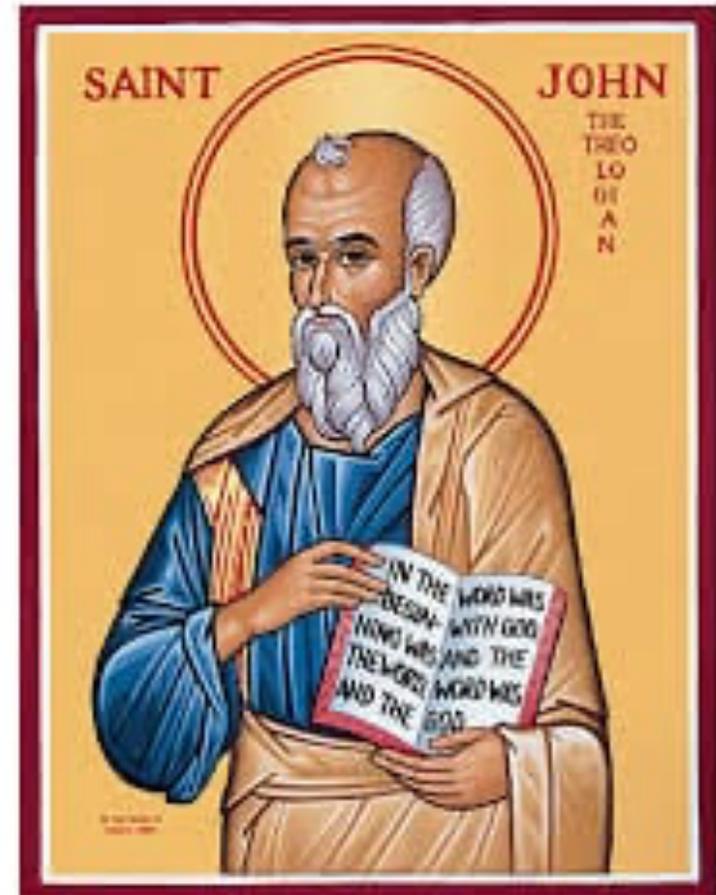


The Catholic Letters Session 4

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Summer 2021

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So, What do you Think?

- Read 1, 2 & 3 John
 - What are you doing to show fellowship with the Lord as John advocates in 1 John?
 - What does it mean to be a child of God?
 - Where is there darkness in the world? Where is there light?
 - What examples of faith do you celebrate in your parish, family, community?
 - Do we sometimes think too small? Does John help?
 - What distracts us from the commandment to Love?

1, 2 & 3 John

- Reading the three letters in sequence helps us see a progression from a focus on Jesus to a focus on his followers
- Jesus was the embodiment of love coming into the world and John tells us that the love of Jesus is embodied in all of his followers – if we obey the command to love one another
- The first letter is a picture of Jesus the third is a picture of a follower

The Overall Theme of 1 John is:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, by that very fact possesses eternal life within themselves. Consequently, they must avoid all sin and errors spread by Antichrists. If they do that, they will live in the light of God's love and not in the darkness of the evil one.

1 John

- John's first letter is an invitation to us
- He begins by telling us that he actually saw and heard Jesus – 1 John 1:1-5
- John tries to draw a clear picture of Jesus for us
- He wants us to know Jesus was real
- Others who were not disciples also tell us Jesus was real

1 John

- Relationships are part of life, and they are all different
- John calls a good relationship or a right relationship with God “fellowship”
- That relationship must grow
- He wants to tell us what we must do to be in lasting fellowship with God

1 John

- The things that perpetuate this fellowship are:
 - Recognizing that we need Jesus to save us from our own sinfulness (1 John 1:6-10)
 - Walking in the light by keeping the commandments (1 John 2:3-6)
 - Loving God and one another (1 John 2:7-11), no matter who we are (1 John 2:12-14)
 - Not allowing ourselves to become attached to the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17)

1 John

- John goes on to issue a warning to us that some people in our time will deny that God became one of us
- They cannot accept that God loves the world so much or their minds are limited to God's abilities
- John calls these people "Antichrists"
- Depriving ourselves of knowing Christ deprives us of living to the fullest

1 John

- John's first letter is full of repetition
- For example, the command to love one another is found in 2:10, 3:10-11, 3:14, 4:20-21
- He works the message in a little at a time rather than just demand we accept it
- He tries to slowly win us over as we read the letter

1 John

- 1 John has 5 chapters
 - 1 – 2 Walk in the light by following the commandments
 - 3 Love one another
 - 4 – 5 Love God

The Overall Theme of 2 John is:

The people receiving the letter should remain faithful to the teaching they have received from the apostles. They should avoid those who deny the coming of Christ in the flesh; these false teachers are Antichrists. They should practice love for each other and keep the commandments.

2 John

- This letter helps to persuade us that in the knowledge of and faith in Jesus we find joy
- John is “overjoyed” in the faith of the followers (2 John 1:4)
- The letter is addressed to a “Lady who is elect and her children”
- Clearly it is meant for others too; including us

2 John

- The community is dedicated to the truth about Jesus
- They put their faith into visible practice by loving each other the way that Jesus loved the disciples (2 John 1:4)
- He warns them against deceivers “antichrists”
- He concludes with the theme of joy, hoping to see them soon

2 John

- 2 John has 13 verses
 - 1 - 6 Love the truth
 - 7 - 13 Avoid deceit and those who deceive

The Overall Theme of 3 John is:

All Christians should live the truth of the Christian faith, do good to all, and especially offer hospitality to each other.

3 John

- John is overjoyed in this letter too
- His joy is all about a follower of Jesus named Gaius
- Gaius has welcomed missionaries into his home
- John sees this as an example of loving one another
- He also mentions the opposite of loving one another – Diotrephes

3 John

- He seems convinced that he can straighten out Diotrephes
- He cautions Gaius not to be disheartened by small minded and selfish men like Diotrephes
- He looks forward to visiting them face to face

3 John

- 3 John has 15 verses
 - 1 – 6 Be generous to all
 - 7 – 15 Imitate the good and not the bad

1, 2 & 3 John

- Who wrote it and when
 - Traditionally attributed to John, the disciple that Jesus loved – scholars generally agree the author is also the author of the fourth Gospel
 - The emphasis is on the writer being an eyewitness of the life of Jesus
 - The title “elder” matches the tradition that St. John lived a very long life
 - Yet the timing of the writing and style suggest it was written by a disciple of John sometime after his death around 100 AD

1, 2 & 3 John

- When does it take place
 - Death of the Apostle John ~ 95AD to 100AD
 - Completion of the Gospel of John ~ 100AD

1, 2 & 3 John

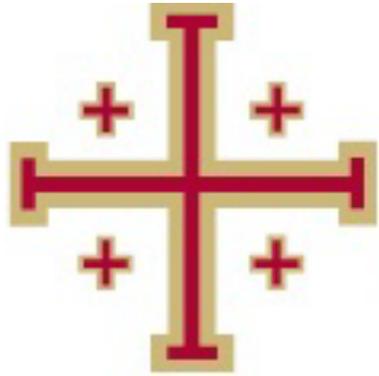
- Interesting points
 - **Witnesses** – There are three witnesses to God's saving grace in the world (1 John 5:8) and they are: the Spirit, the water and the blood. All are associated with Jesus. Jesus spoke of himself as living water (John 5:14) and that anyone who drinks his blood will have eternal life (John 6:54) and finally the Holy Spirit is his gift to his followers at Pentecost.
 - **Antichrist** – The only places in the Bible where the term is used are these letters of John. The term doesn't designate a single person, entity or being but it broadly applies to all who deny Christ and lack belief.

Lessons from 1, 2 & 3 John

- We are to live in the light of the gospel
- We should love one another in the same way that God loves us
- Our actions in the world can lead us to God

For Next Week

- Read Jude
 - Which of the images in verses 12 & 13 are the most powerful to you?
 - Jude uses the literature of his time to teach spiritual lessons; what literature of our time could be used that way?
 - Jude laments that words can be used to slander those in the community. How can we use words to build up our own community?



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