

If I speak in human or angelic tones, but do not have love...

In my own lifetime on the radio, I heard Hitler speak and captivate the masses.

And I have seen adoring throngs saluting Benito Mussolini on news reels.

Their words were well received by the masses of people.

Yet Hitler was a hate monger.

Benito was a thug.

Their hateful words were hollow, shrill and empty.

Saint Paul in today's Second Reading reminds us that without love any of us can be a resounding drum or clashing cymbal"

Hollow, shrill, and empty, if we speak without love.

We recently watched an exceptional five star movie on Net Flick:

THE LITTLE BOY

In this captivating film a little boy learns to love by being schooled in the art of loving by a kind and wise pastor and a devoted mother.

It illustrates the fact that we all have much to learn of loving before we can emulate the words we find today in Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, just as the Corinthians did who first received this letter.

The film: *The Little Boy* is a primer on the three Cardinal Virtues:

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.

In the Gospel today the pleasing opening words of Jesus are well received, but his listeners in the synagogue began to squirm when he gets specific and begins to relate how strangers expressed love and gratitude in better ways than their ancestors.

An attribute of preachers is said to be the ability:

"to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable."

Jesus does that.

Interestingly one example he cites is the stranger: Naaman from SYRIA.

This is pertinent today because so many would deny entrance to Syrian refugees fleeing from the carnage there.

Such deniers can take their seats with the synagoue crowd who would didsain the words of Jesus about strangers.

"So faith, hope and love remains:

these three,

but the greatest of these is"

LOVE."

And so we pray:

Deliver us from shrillness, from empty words,

and bombast.

In this year of Mercy,

may our tongues

echo our heartbeats.

Hearts filled with compassion,

and welcome for the straangers.

We need faith.

We need hope,

but most of all we ask for the grace to truly love.

Amen