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Today's celebration is one of the times when the reading from the letter of Paul will be preached on as much as the Gospel. If the second reading on the nature of love is going to be the focus of preaching this weekend, it is important that the longer form of the reading be used, in order to get the fuller message. The apostle paints an intricate picture on this topic, and he makes it clear that love is not only something we crave, but also it is what will most surely lead us to God.

The other readings today speak more about conflict and even hatred. The role of the prophet Jeremiah was to speak doom to the people, a mission that would certainly bring him pain. The psalmist likewise clings to God even when proclaiming the message of God brings shame and the need for deliverance. In the Gospel, Jesus is not content to speak words that will please the people; he provokes their anger by reminding them of how they had treated prophets in the past.

All the readings, though, speak about the nature of the love of God. Yes, it is all the things that Paul commends to us, but it is also strong as death, and as Jesus knew, the consequence of love is sacrifice, with the ultimate love leading to the ultimate sacrifice of the cross.

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