



St. Matthew's Cathedral eNews

Christ ✦ Compassion ✦ Community



From the Dean

Really Fulfilling the Law

Owe no one anything except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. – Romans 13:8

Three random but related conversations:

- Varita and I have been reading a book together, *Waking the Dead* by John Eldrege. The author has been making the point that we were created to love and be loved and that what people need is to experience the unconditional love of God.
- The parenting class that Varita is teaching has as its foundational truth that good parenting comes when children receive unconditional love from their parents.
- In a men's group I am a part of, one of the topics of conversation was that many people have been wounded by the church. The book *Blue Like Jazz* tells about a college in Oregon several years ago that held a "Bacchanal Week" to celebrate drinking, pot smoking, and sexual promiscuity. This (very small) campus Christian organization decided to put up a "Confessional Booth" as a part of the festivities. Finally, one brave soul ventured in. To his surprise, the Christian booth was not *hearing* confessions but was *making* confessions: they were confessing to those who came into the booth the sins of the church. When other students heard what was going on this "Confessional Booth" got a lot of students coming in to the booth. Wow.

Isn't it amazing that the Church, founded on "Love the Lord your God with all your hear, soul, and strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself" has such a bad track record and has inflicted so much pain in people's lives?

People don't come to church to feel guilty. Or to get embroiled in conflict. Or fuss. They don't come to feel worse than when they arrived.

They come to be loved. And to experience God's love.

In our reading from Romans St. Paul says that "the one who loves another has fulfilled the law." Let's aim to fulfill the law this week.