

THE POWER OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

by Fr. Augustine Ezedeniru, Fort Alexander Parish

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I have been working in the First Nations communities in Northern Manitoba as a religious missionary; it has been an enriching experience. In the midst of these experiences there are difficult challenges, such as witnessing families deal with the effects of Indian residential schools. Last year as I was having my evening meditation, I began having mixed feelings and these questions came to mind: Do you feel rejected? Are you hurt? Forgiveness heals hurt. I could not understand the reason for those questions, and for whom those questions were meant. After some personal introspection, I finally offered it to God, asking him for more insight and for his help in dealing with it. In time, I received a divine revelation and interpretation of this message.



The Lord gave these words to me as I was preparing for a Sunday homily, and I believe he wants me to share it with the people I am serving. He said: “So many are imprisoned because they won’t accept themselves. So many are gifted and talented, but they won’t express themselves because they fear rejection. They fear man. They fear what people will think. I want to love my people, but they hold me at arms’ length and won’t let me really love them because they have been hurt by others. They fear I will reject them because of their weaknesses like people have, but I will never reject them. Tell them I love them. Ask them to stop trying so hard to be acceptable to me and to realize I accept them where and how they are. Tell them I don’t want perfect performance from them. I want them to love me and to let me love them.”

And so I was led to design a T-Shirt with this saying on the front: “Love Lifts Up & Forgiveness Heals Hurts”. It is geared towards creating an awareness of the power of love and forgiveness. Included in the design are two symbols: open hands (which has a double meaning: a sign of an open heart, and of letting go), and a bird (the eagle, which in aboriginal culture, signifies love; since it flies higher than any other bird, it is closer to God).

The funds raised from the sale of these T-shirts will be used to create a garden, by the church in Fort Alexander, which will have at its center a Marian grotto. This will be for the community an outdoor meditative space, designed especially for people seeking a quiet time with their Creator or searching for meaning in life.

The T-Shirts come in 4 colors: black, grey, white and red and in various sizes. Cost: \$20 each. Bulk orders will be accepted. Any donations of labor towards this project will be welcome. For more information or to purchase: Agata, Pastoral Centre, Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, 204-594-0271.

