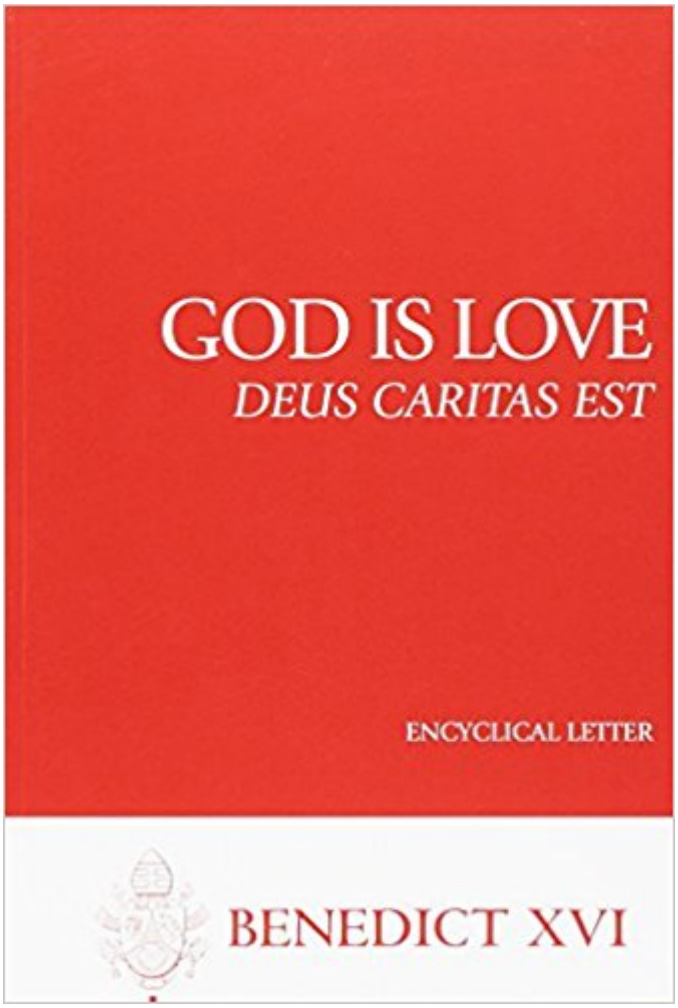
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God Is Love (Deus Caritas Est) (Benedict XVI)



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Synopsis

With his first encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI hopes to overturn that perception and describe the essential place of love in the life of the Church.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Most Catholics who read 'God Is Love' will find the text challenging, provocative and insightful, offering reflections on topics they might not expect to find in an encyclical, the highest form of papal teaching." (John Thavis CNS 20060127) --John Thavis Catholic News Services

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, was born at Marktl am Inn, Diocese of Passau (Germany) on 16 April 1927 (Holy Saturday) and was baptised on the same day. He received his priestly ordination on 29 June 1951 and from 1962 to 1965 he made a notable contribution to Vatican II as an "expert

The first part is perhaps the best discussion on love I have read in a long time. The second part I did not find as enlightening. But I recommend it if you really want a good understanding of what love is all about.

In this encyclical, Pope Benedict alludes to the prevalence in our world of the abuse, even hatred

shown to the body which results from the dichotomy established between the body and spirit by modern culture and philosophical systems. He also mentions the hatred expressed by certain religious groups as being a result of a failure to realize the relationship established between God and man in Jesus and the expression of this relationship in physical terms. He shows that as embodied spirits we cannot have a mere spiritual love of God and neighbor, but it must become enfleshed through our physical care for Christ present in our neighbor. On the other hand, any concept of love that reduces it to physical sexual expression devoids the human person of its image of God in which it was created - the image of God manifested perfectly in Jesus and that gave its life completely in the flesh. Pope Benedict relates well the relationship between manifestation of Christian love and the Eucharist. Since we are all united in the one bread in Christ, then each individual is in a sense owed the same love as we owe to Christ. In effect, we cannot love God without a true kinosis or outpouring of ourselves for our neighbor manifested in a concrete form. In this way the dichotomy between eros and agape that is an effect of the worlds worship of the flesh is eliminated and true incarnational salvation is brought about.

We hope the Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI is enjoying a peaceful retirement, with time for spiritual nourishment. He gave the world so much, and continues to set a standard for scholarship and dedication. What he did, in leaving, was quite courageous. The first book of his we read was "What It Means to Be a Christian" where he wrote: "Everything we believe about God, and everything we know about man, prevents us from accepting that beyond the limits of the Church there is no more salvation, that up to the time of Christ all men were subject to eternal damnation" (pg 45). He reflected on the reality of the Church, "all the various ranks and gradations that have been thought up, all the courtly ceremony!" (p 30). Real faith examines difficult issues.Here, in this concise and deep work, Pope Benedict XVI elaborates that truly, cosmically, God is love. He states that Christian charitable activity, "contribute to a better world only by personally doing good now, with full commitment and wherever we have the opportunity, independently of partisan strategies and programs" (pg 81). Enjoy!

It is very good

Good read, a bit deep like all encyclicals

Beautiful exposition of our responsibility to one another also the role of government and Church.

This helps all to keep their jobs clear.

Excellent book....

This is an Encyclical worth reading. Over the years I attempted to read several encyclicals and found them rather technical and often difficult to read. I concluded that Popes are not usually good writers and that I would read encyclicals only as reference books. Benedict XVI, for me, breaks the mold. He is an excellent writer and offers fresh insights into Christianity.Deus Caritas Est is broken into two parts: The unity of Love in Creation and Salvation History; and Caritas, the practice of Love by the Church as a "Community of Love." This letter includes detailed explanations of Benedict's teaching points and would require a long summary. I will focus on several main points that are important to me.In the Introduction Benedict refers to Scripture and teaches that we "come to believe" in the love of God and indicates that love is an encounter that animates and guides our lives. He proclaims the words of Jesus that the commandments are "united" into a single concept - love. God loves us and we respond by loving Him and our neighbors.The Pope discusses Eros, the love between a man and a woman. He notes that some Christians want to avoid discussing Eros. He also notes that some Christian leaders forget that we were created as human beings. Christian Eros can be very positive and bring us closer to God. This occurs when Eros, worldly love, joins with agape, love "grounded and shaped by faith". By accepting our humanity we accept God's creation. That love, however, must not be self-centered, as Eros often is at the beginning of sexual attraction. With agape, love seeks the "good of the beloved" and is ready to sacrifice self for other. When fully formed love receives as well as gives, Eros-agape leads to a loving relationship.The letter also addresses forgiveness. God's agape love is "completely gratuitous" and as such God's love forgives. Benedict refers to Hosea 11 and claims that God's love overcomes God's justice. " I will not give vent to my blazing anger, I will not destroy Ephraim again; For I am God and not man, the Holy One present among you; I will not let the flames consume you."The Pope suggests that there is an "unbreakable" bond between love of God and love of neighbor. If I "close my eyes" to neighbors, I "blind" myself to God. If I concentrate upon my religious duties and ignore others, I become arid and eventually loveless.Benedict reminds us that the Church has three responsibilities: to proclaim the word of God, to celebrate the sacraments, and to exercise the ministry of charity. These three are inseparable. For the Church, charity must be the very essence of its activities. TheChurch of today, with advances in communication and travel, must address the needs of all people everywhere. Our distinctiveness as a Church equals our charitable activities.This encyclical

has some deep insights. I plan to re-read it with much meditation and prayer. I highly recommend this encyclical.

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