

Father John Catoir

Supreme Gift of Love

What does the crucifixion tell us about God? The words of Jesus give us the answer. "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn. 15:13)

Think about St. Philip's daring curiosity, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? To see me is to see the Father." (Jn. 14:8-9)



Jesus on the cross is the perfect sign of the Father's unconditional love. In laying down his life that we might live, Jesus was expressing God's personal love in terms we can understand. This supreme gift of love makes it possible for us to see God's love in action. We also see that trials and sorrows, when accepted in imitation of Christ, take on a different meaning. Here is a letter from Claire Schultz of Wayne which makes my point more clearly:

"God has always spoiled me ... it's amazing to know that I am the apple of His eye. I have never done anything special except love Him very much. In return He has given me love, protection, support and a life filled with beauty and wonder.

"The world would not accept some of my experiences as evidence of God's love. They would call them crosses. I disagree with the

world. I call them love pats from God to keep me close to Him. My leukemia, two diabetic children, widowhood, seven beautiful children, enough food on the table, a beautiful sunset, a glorious sunrise, a quiet moment, a delicate flower, a friend — all these things tell me that God is my Father and He loves me."

For those with deep faith, love shines forth from the cross.

Jesus gave his final discourse to the Apostles at the Last Supper, "I have told you all this that your joy may be full." (Jn. 15:11) Strangely enough His focus was on joy only a few hours before He was to ascend Calvary. How blessed are they who understand the mystery of the cross.

Life is full of troubles and strife, but love can make it easy and perfect love can make it a joy.

"By this all men will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn. 13:35)

"If you love those who love you, what reward have you?" (Mt. 5:46)

"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful ... forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." (Lk. 6:36, 37-38)

"Therefore I say to you: Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, He has cast out your enemies ... you shall fear evil no more." (Zep. 3:14-15)

Ultimately, Jesus taught us not to be afraid of the cross. He taught us to carry our crosses with courage. "Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine ... You are precious in my eyes and glorious." (Is. 43:1,4)

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