



Father Kolbe and the Greatest Love

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...." (Jn 3:16)

God's plan of salvation reveals his love for the weak, for our weakness. His love for us is not an earned love, but rather a completely free love. God – says Saint Paul – proves his love for us in that he died for us while we were still sinners.¹ God broke into humanity, and took our limitations upon himself.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." These words explain the secret of life: to love is to give. There is no love without giving. It is not truly a gift without loving. God does not ask. God gives. God requests nothing and gives everything. "To give" is such a simple verb held in the heart of God: to give unconditionally. Give and that's it. God has written these words "love" and "give" in the depths of the human heart.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." Love is the point of meeting between God and the world. In front of this sublime reality, Father Kolbe exclaimed:

Who would dare to imagine that you, oh infinite, eternal God, have loved me for centuries, or to be more precise, from before the centuries? In fact, your love for me was already there, even when I had no existence, and because you loved me, oh good God, you called me from nothingness into existence!

For me you have created the skies scattered with stars, for me the earth, the seas, the mountains, the rivers, and all the beautiful things on earth...

Still, this did not satisfy you: to show me close up that you loved me so tenderly, you came down from the purest delights of heaven to this tarnished and tear-ridden world, you lived amidst poverty, hard work, and suffering; and finally, despised and mocked, you let yourself be suspended in torment on a vile scaffold between two criminals. O God of love, you have redeemed me in this terrible and generous way!

Who would venture to imagine it?

You have remained on this forlorn planet in the holiest and most admirable Sacrament of the altar, and now you come to me and you closely unite yourself to me under the appearance of food...

What else could you have given me, oh God, after offering your life?

You gave me a Mother.

Father Kolbe welcomed the gift of Jesus and his Mother. He placed himself totally in her hands. With the Immaculata at his side and in his heart, he let himself be led to the pinnacle of the greatest love, while God continued his descent of love, into the darkness of men's hearts without God – into the darkness and insanity of Auschwitz.

God descends into the heart of whoever welcomes him. Father Kolbe, open to the gift of God, was made capable of being a presence of light in the valley of darkness, tears, and terror.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." May we welcome the Lord Jesus with the amazement, song, and praise of the shepherds. God grant that we welcome Christ in the awe of silence and listening of Maria, and in the wonderful charity of Fr. Kolbe.

May his peace dwell in our hearts.

Angela Esposito

For the community of Harmeze, Poland

¹ Rom 5,8.