

The Love of God Pierces My Heart

The love story of God with man: how did He come down into the womb of a woman, before which an angel lay prostrate? Was it like a sheet of flame, or a fiery arrow? Was it quietly like the cool light of the star? Or was it fast like a falling star?

But the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Beautiful, the All-Perfect Lord of Creation did descend into a woman's womb and lay there for nine months, even as every mortal child has to.

In a stable in Bethlehem the world and humanity heard the first declaration of love of God to man, heard it on earth, not through the mouths of prophets but through God Himself!

I hear the cry of the child and the love of God pierces my heart. I watch as He grows amongst us and hear Him hammering, planing, in St. Joseph's workshop. A child, a youth, a man, amongst us for love of us. The sound of His footsteps, even though He walked barefoot on the soft dust of Nazareth, is music in my ears, for each step speaks of love—for us—for me. God so loved us that He blended with us. He identified Himself with us in the humble ways of a workman. He was just a plain carpenter, a child of manual labour, as His foster father was.

How much He loved us: to be obedient to creatures—to an ordinary man and woman, you might say! This love that hides itself in Nazareth and identifies itself so perfectly with ordinary folks like you and me.

Suddenly, across Palestine a voice was heard and the wind picked it up and threw it against the whole world unto the cosmos, the Word of the Man who was a carpenter and at the same time was God! I hear His voice

now thundering in my ears, enlarged by the megaphone of centuries. And yet it seems brought to me on some old and gentle spring breezes from Palestine.

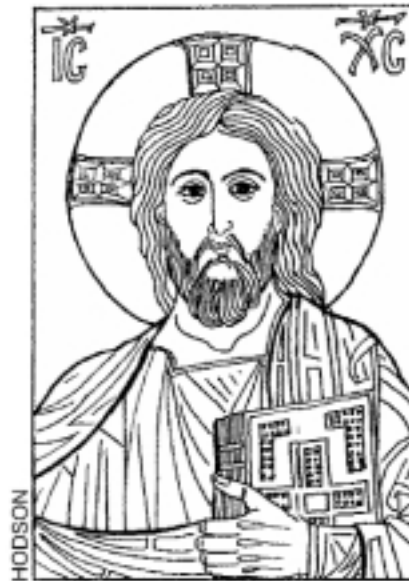
The world and man again heard the voice of God, speaking in accents of love, teaching love, revealing love, living love, performing miracles, curing, consoling and warning. This overwhelms me: that the earth on which I walk has a little spot which the footprints of Christ—the footprints of God—are still etched upon. They might not be seen with human eyes, but they are there. They are there because He loved me!

So signs and wonders multiplied and the sick were brought. Always we have to remember that He was a physician, so He said. He healed people. Yes, He performed miracles of resuscitating the dead and cleansing the lepers and all that, but today He enters much deeper into hearts than He did then. The inside of

men's hearts is unknown territory except to God.

At this point I re-read the words of Christ at the Last Supper and I weep for those who haven't met and known Christ up to now! I "meet Him" as the tremendous Lover that He is! How many times Christ repeated the word love! How many times He asked us to love one another as He and the Father love one another! How many times did He repeat, oh so gently, yet so strongly: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another..."

He told us that He was the Way to the Father, the Father who created us, who so loved us, too, that He sent His Beloved Son to redeem us. Christ spoke of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Love, who would make clear to us what may still be lacking in



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us of the knowledge of Love. He addressed the words of the Last Supper to us, asking us to love one another in the loveless market place so that people in the heat of the day and the cold of the night could see His love for us and ours for Him and for one another, and warm themselves at it.

I watch in Gethsemane. I am all eyes and all ears. It seems to me that I can hear the sound of His bloody sweat and His tears falling, drop by drop, on a stone. It is such a slight sound, and it sings of love again.

Then I walk with Him from Pilate's palace to prison, back to his palace and return to prison. I hear a few words spoken in majesty and power and I tremble before His love, for it is the love of God for me. I listen to the sound of whips, with lead endings that tore His muscles apart and made His Precious Blood flow for me.

But I arise again and hear the splash of water that Pilate's hands make as he washes them of the fate of Love. I hear the hysterical cries of a lynching mob: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" and again, His silence is my undoing. Love pours out of it with such strength that I am as if I were no more.

The long walk to the Hill of the Skulls—Golgotha. The stripping, the Crucifixion. It's not sheer poetry. It's not something that I kind of dimly remember when I make the Way of the Cross. He didn't think of it that way. He saw me when He was crucified, and He would

have died for "just me" if I had been the only one in the world. It was a highly personalized love affair (and still is), between Him and me!

I am there again to hear the horrible sound of nails penetrating human flesh—the sound of hammers that sing of Love that accepts nails. I listen to His last words. And I am crucified by Love because I want to be, for love flows from me back to Him in the fulness of my human capacity to love.

He was born in a borrowed cave and laid to rest in somebody else's tomb. For that moment He lay wrapped in somebody else's shroud! Just as He came into the world with nothing of His own, He went out of it possessing nothing.

He arose from the dead. He was with us human beings in His human body for forty days until just before Pentecost. Then He seemed to vanish someplace. He went someplace to His Father, but He stayed and He is with us in the Blessed Sacrament and He is with us in our priests and He is in our midst. That is why we greet one another with, "Christ is risen! Verily He is Risen! Alleluia!" And why we answer, "Yes, He is Risen! He is in our midst!"

Compiled from the writings of Catherine Doherty. (Original title:
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