

Our Great God is great love! He created us out of His infinite love, for infinite love is realised through the loved ones. That is why God created us, so that we enjoy His infinite love and so that He can rejoice that His love has made others happy. Love can only be made perfect through redemption: that is, there can be no love without suffering, a price, and our effort. That is why the Lord of Glory redeemed us, for the proof of love is to bear sin on the half of the beloved. That is why he was incarnate and was born in a manger of a poor virgin. He lived in poverty, suffering and rejection by many and then perfected His love on the cross in extension of the love of the cradle. He arose in order to raise us with Him and ascended to heaven to make us ascend us with Him. He was glorified and sat in heaven to seat us with Him on His throne – “Good will toward men.”

This means that the Lord is pleased with man! After the fall of Adam, his loss of his original position and his separation from God, from life and from happiness, it was not possible that God should neglect him or abandon him to death, destruction or suffering. On the contrary He was incarnate to redeem man and save him from his sin and the sentence of death, from the corruption of his nature, and to make him a son of God and a partaker in the future glory. Thus, God was pleased with man, redeemed him and purchased him who gone back to his original state where there is God, glory, sanctity, or immorality!

When is God pleased with us?

Doubtless, when God created man, His aim was to make him a beloved son who rejoices in His love and who becomes immortal with Him in eternity. This can only come about through almost well defined and clear stages. Among the most important are:

1. REPENTENCE

It is the door of heaven and the only what to God. It is simply the return of the estranged heart that is laden with worries and sins to the embrace of the Heavenly Father through the blood of the Beloved Son and the work of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is an awakening. It means a return to ones senses and an awakening from sleep. When a man repents, this is the result of a comparison between life outside of God's grace and love and life within God in His house. There is certainly a

vast difference between “a distant world” and “the riches prepared for the sons,” between “spiritual hunger and the pods the swine ate” and the Bread of life who gives life to the world.” Man simply chooses to return to the arms of Christ in order to be filled with love, to be secure from the danger of the enemy, and to be sanctified through the work of the Spirit of God. He becomes a child of God and wears the ring of son-ship, the robe of righteousness, is filled with the Holy Body and Blood, and enjoys the company of saints.

Repentance does not mean the lack of sin as much as the hatred of sin and the victory over it by the grace of God and through faithful spiritual struggles. The teaching of Saint John is clear: “ My children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin.” (This is our daily struggle and our constant purpose). “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1Jn. 2:1,2). Therefore, our main struggle is to avoid sinning, but if we do, the door of repentance is open. The believer hates sin even if he should commit it out of slackness or negligence, or even of his own will, because as soon as he does, he realizes that the happiness he lost far outweighs the pleasure of sin and its poisonous and deceptive sweetness!

2. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

The repentant individual does not enter the house of the Heavenly Father, the Church, but first fasts and is silent. He makes sure he sits with God in uninterrupted love day and night and starts a continual life giving dialogue with Christ through the various kinds of prayer.

a) The Hours:

through which he unites daily with the events of the Lord's life, from the Resurrection, to the coming of the Holy Spirit, to His crucifixion, His life-giving death, the lowering of His glorious Second Coming. In them, every believer is filled with the essence of the heartfelt prayer of many like David and other authors of the Psalms that arose out of their yearning hearts.

b) Spontaneous prayers:

In these, the soul describes its condition day by day and maybe hour by hour. For the soul moves from joy to sadness to confusion, to love, and to

humility and in each of these states it expresses itself through a sincere conversation from the heart with the Lord Jesus.

Fellowship with God means I listen to the voice of the Beloved through the words of grace that come from His mouth, that is the Holy Bible through which I hear His voice and learn about His promises. I study the experiences of His children and His daily dealings with Biblical men. This adds to my store in basic experience in the life of the spirit. But the summit of fellowship with God is reached through the Eucharist in which man unites with the Lord, is rooted in Him through partaking of His Holy Body and Blood. In the Eucharist, man experiences a fourfold unification: union with God, with the saints, with believers, and with people in general, as he prays for all the conditions and needs of life.

3. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

It is not enough just to unite with God because our beloved Lord Jesus is the head of the body which is the Church. It is illogical for a member to unite only with the Head without uniting the other members so that the body is complete and carries out its church and public functions. This means that each member has his own special function but the whole body has a general function, which is witnessing to the Lord in the world in order to add more members and heirs to the kingdom. That is why the Church embraces the world in love and ministers to it faithfully, aware of its responsibility to man and humanity in general.

Thus, the believer is united with all the members of the Holy Body, including the members in heaven such as the saints. We read their lives and imitate their faith; we study their sayings and adopt their spiritual experiences in the way of the kingdom. We sympathize with the striving members on earth; we serve each other and are concerned for our brothers in Christ, avoiding the intolerance that distances us from our human role and we develop empathy with suffering humanity that needs the tenderness of Christ and the light of the Gospel.

4. SANCTIFICATION

This means consecrating and giving the heart to God. The word “sanctity” in Hebrew or “Agios” in Greek means “consecrated to God” or “set apart for God.” In

ancient times, the Shepard used to have the sheep pass under his staff and each tenth sheep was “set apart for God.” Also the priest used to wear a golden script on his headdress saying “ sanctified to God” meaning that this person has been consecrated to God and His service.

That is why the believer is that person who consecrates his heart to God in love, sanctity and striving because he knows that sanctity is a basic condition for seeing God. St. Paul says: “Holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). The words of the Lord ring in our ears: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your father in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). The reason is that God is holy and he who loves or lives with God in His kingdom must be holy on order to be compatible with this pure world of which St. Peter says: “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written ‘Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15,16). Thus we may be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10) because “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thes. 4:3).

4. THE GLORIES OF THE KING-

Without a doubt when an individual continually repents on earth, this gladdens the heart of God and the hearts of those in heaven for “there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance” (Lk. 15:7). When he has lived in holy fellowship with God through prayer, the Bible, the Eucharist, and has been united with the saints in heaven and the believers on earth through church membership, has consecrated his heart, emotions and love to God, he will certainly attain the many glories of the kingdom such as:

- a) **Transformation of the body:**
for the earthly body is cast off and he puts on the body of light which is not affected by disease, sin. Or physical and spiritual death but consists of light and is heavenly just like the body of the Lord at the resurrection for God “will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil. 2:21).
- b) **Sharing the Divine Nature:**
for the Lord who united with our humanity only without sin has granted us to “be partakers of the divine nature” (1Pet. 1:2), which means that we unite with God and become His children by adop-

tion, and share in His kingdom. He lives in us and we live in Him and we become “temples of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you” (1Cor. 3:16).

- c) **Sitting on the throne of God**
The Lord has promised “ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21). Imagine our position in heaven and our status in the heavenly Jerusalem!
- d) **Eternal life**
We will derive life from the living immortal Lord forever, for He promised us “believe I live, you will live also” (Jn.14:19). We get a foretaste of eternity on earth as we get to know the Lord Jesus; “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn. 17:3). That is why the Lord said: “the kingdom of God is within you” (Lk.17:21).

Therefore, this is the way so that “goodwill towards men” may be fulfilled in us. God rejoices in us when He sees us enjoying His salvation, happy in His love and waiting for His eternity!

*Beloved brother,
The lord was born for you,
He went about teaching and doing good for you,
He was nailed to the cross for you,
He arose for you,
And He is now in heaven for you,
You are the object of His love,
The subject of His preoccupation,
All He longs for is for you to return to Him,
To renew your commitment to Him,
To be filled with Him,
To rejoice in Him,
To be saved by Him,
And to live forever with Him,
Thus and only thus,
Will His birthday, be yours also!*

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Christ's Love For Us

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