

## LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOR

Let there be no mistake about it – God is a good God – a holy God – an omnipotent God – a God Who is love itself. He, as God, literally demands (with full justice) our love – all our love. Even though He demands our love, it remains for us to desire to love Him with all our mind – we must think to love Him with all our strength and intention and with all our will, which is to **desire** to love Him with an abiding and unfaltering **desire**. Our love for Him must be pure, and, being pure, our love for Him becomes the summit of all the gifts we can give Him. In return, we can be certain of His love for us. God loves us so much that He sent His Son – His only Son – to us with the single purpose of being our redemption and salvation. The single purpose of the coming to earth of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was to save our souls. Christ did not leave His place in Heaven and come to earth with the purpose of crushing souls – poor sinning souls. He did not come to destroy any soul in danger. He did not bring about danger in order to trap souls in their misfortune. He came to remove stumbling blocks, not to place weights on weak souls – weights too heavy to carry. He does not have it in His Sacred Heart to crush or humiliate any soul who has fallen, but it is His certain effort to re-establish such a soul in His grace and His love. It is understood that any fallen soul must cooperate with the graces given him and direct the strength of his desire to return and to retrace his steps toward the merciful love of God. A soul who loves God as he ought cannot but keep his eyes fixed on Him. The very **desire** of the soul to love God is itself an act of love.

It is not sufficient for a soul to perform actions of love and to gather and offer up with love bouquets of small sacrifices and small acts of virtue. The soul must make a positive effort to animate every instant of life with love. It is one thing to be a virtuous person; it is quite another thing to be a person of virtue. It is one thing to speak of love; it is quite another thing to know love. The act of love must spring from the heart, for it is the heart that loves, with the greatest possible intensity. Such love cannot be, indeed it must not be, motivated by fear – fear of a God who imposes difficulties. Love that is motivated by fear is not love at all – it is slavery!

Man was created to love God. Man was created to serve God. Man was created to be with God for all eternity. When such ones love God and serve God and live out their lives according to the precepts laid down by His Commandments, such ones are entitled to the glory and joy of heaven. Heaven will be given to them, not only out of love, but out of justice as well.