

## A Word from the Monastery

January 1

My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away. (1 John 4:7-10)

\* \* \*

Saint John gives us the fundamental truth of our existence that we must learn always to remember: God is love. God's purpose in creating us was love, his attachment to our happiness is so great that he gave his Son to die for us, to take away the sin that was the rejection of love. The whole task of our lives on earth is to allow the Lord to love us and transform us into his likeness so that we can love as he loves.

January 2

God is love, and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him. Love will come to its perfection in us when we can face the day of Judgment without fear; because even in this world we have become as he is. In love there can be no fear, but fear is driven out by perfect love. (1 John 4:14-16)

\* \* \*

We fear the day of Judgment because our accounts are not in order, we have not heeded the command to love one another as Jesus has loved us. But in repenting and inviting the Lord continually to establish his love in us, we can trust that the love he has produced in us will render us fit to dwell forever in his presence.

January 3

This is the victory over the world—our faith. (1 John 5:4)

\* \* \*

Faith is simply the acceptance of the divine offer of love in Jesus Christ. It is this acceptance that allows the Lord to cast out evil from our hearts and make us into adopted children who confidently call God "Father."

January 4

He must grow greater, I must grow smaller. (John 3:30)

\* \* \*

When we have beheld the beauty of the incarnate Son of God, we want him to govern our lives and bring us to our full maturity of loving. The accomplishment of his will becomes progressively more important than having our own way. The "growing small" becomes in fact finding our true place in the glorious Body of Christ.

January 5

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. (Psalm 72:10, 12-13)

\* \* \*

The Messianic king of Psalm 72 will bring justice to the poor, receive tribute from all nations, and cause the earth to abound in fertility. This is the work accomplished by Jesus in his birth, life, death, and resurrection. It is the work of the Church to extend this activity until the whole earth becomes the dwelling place of God and an offering to his glory.

January 6

Arise, shine out, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

\* \* \*

The prophet addresses Jerusalem, over whom and through whom light is to come to the whole world. The light is Christ who reveals to the world the glory of its calling to union with God. Christ, "the light of the world" (John 8:12), says to us, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), because his Church is united to him, bringing the light of the knowledge of God's love to the darkness of people's lives.

January 7

I the Lord have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon. (Isaiah 42:6-7)

\* \* \*

Jesus is the envoy of the Father's love into the world. In total obedience to the Father he brought healing to mankind, thus establishing the bond with God which we call covenant. Nothing now can ever separate us from the Father's love (Romans 8:38-39).