

**Daily Meditations on the Love of God**  
**from Father Laurence Kriegshauser, O.S.B.**

*A Scripture text is given for each day of the year as an opportunity for you to hear the Lord speaking to your heart through that particular text on that particular day. Following the text is a short meditation that you can use to supplement or complement your own experience of the sacred text.*

**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)

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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 until we 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)

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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 in his eternal presence.

**January 3**

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

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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)

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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 Body of the risen 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)

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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)

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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).

**January 8**

For I will pour out water on the thirsty soil, streams on the dry ground. I will pour my spirit on your descendants, my blessing on your children. They shall grow like grass where there is plenty of water, like poplars by running streams. (Isaiah 44:3-4)

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This is a text where the Spirit of God is compared to life-giving water. As water makes plants spring forth from the ground, the Holy Spirit, poured out from the side of Jesus on the cross, gives eternal life to our souls. The water of baptism removes sin and quenches our thirst for authentic life.

**January 9**

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. (1 Samuel 3:10)

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The first word of Saint Benedict's Rule for Monks is "listen." Jesus praised Mary for sitting at his feet, listening to his words. Mary was doing "the one thing necessary" (Luke 10:41). When we listen to the Good News our hearts are quickened into life and inspired to live in obedience to the words we hear.

**January 10**

In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart. (Psalm 40:8-9)

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Can we really delight in law? Does law not constrain us? God's law is his love, the love by which he lives and in which he invites us, as his image, to participate. It is in fact this love that frees us from self-concern and enables us to grow to the maturity of self-gift which is our happiness.

### January 11

The word of God is something alive and active; it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves. (Heb 4:12-13)

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The author of the Letter to the Hebrews is at pains to show that God's word is at once his piercing gaze that penetrates all the spiritual and all the physical parts of us. It is a cleansing word that annihilates sin and establishes right order. Let us not be afraid to expose our whole selves to the divine word that can heal us.

### January 12

It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners. (Mark 2:17)

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We need to exert all our efforts to be virtuous, to keep God's commands. But in the end we come up short, because without Jesus we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). The discovery of our failure can be liberating, because it forces us to turn to the physician who came to forgive us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). It is only by acknowledging our place in the rank of sinners that we qualify for God's mercy. In this sense a Christian can boast of his weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

### January 13

Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

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If the first sentence is truly taken in, chastity becomes a possibility. Dwell with that first sentence. The three persons of God are involved in our sanctification: God gives us the Spirit through the Son whose blood was the payment for our redemption.

**January 14**

During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:7-10)

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Prayer, humble submission, obedience—if they were practiced by God made man, how can they not be the model for us. Obedience with Christ in his humble suffering is the key to reigning with him in glory.

**January 15**

Looking round at those sitting in a circle about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:34-35)

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How are they doing the will of God? By “sitting in a circle about him,” hanging on his words. Delighting in the message he preaches, we become members of the family of him whose nourishment was to do his Father’s will (John 4:34).

**January 16**

Jesus has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. (Hebrews 10:12-14)

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Our salvation has been accomplished once for all by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The rest of human history is a matter of human beings accepting that saving act and allowing it to transform their lives. It is in this way that Christ is gradually putting his enemies under his feet. We live in the between-time between salvation accomplished and salvation finally perfected. Come, Lord Jesus, perfect your sanctification in us.

**January 17**

Through the blood of Jesus, we have the right to enter the sanctuary, by a new way which he has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, his body. And we have the supreme high priest over all the house of God. So as we go in, let us be sincere in heart and filled with faith, our minds sprinkled and free from any trace of bad conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

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No one could enter the Holy of Holies, housing the ark of the covenant with the two tablets of the Law, except the high priest once a year on the Feast of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The God of Israel was understood to be seated on the golden cherubs above the ark. For Christians, the body of Christ, sacrificed and risen, opens the curtain for all to enter the place where God dwells in the heavens. This is what it means to say that the Hebrew scriptures give us a “type” of Christ, a way of understanding what he has done for us.

**January 18**

The Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling: “This is my resting place forever, here have I chosen to live.” (Psalm 132:13-14)

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God first chose a family, that of Abraham, to be his own people. He then chose to dwell among them in a temple in Jerusalem, built on Mount Zion. Jesus identifies himself as the true temple where God dwells (John 2:20-21). In rising from the dead after three days he rebuilt this temple as an eternal place of encounter where those who believe in him are joined to him.

**January 19**

Love is patient, love is kind; it is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not irritable, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

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Charity is the perfection of Christian life. St Paul’s fifteen qualities of love constitute an excellent examination of conscience. At different times one or another of the qualities will touch our conscience. We can ask the Lord during Holy Communion to overcome our lack by increasing in us a share in his own perfect love.

**January 20**

You have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a firstborn son and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a blood for purification which pleads more insistently than Abel's. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

\* \* \*

In St Thomas Aquinas's words, the heavenly city is "the society of the blessed who see God." We are born for relationship, for communion with God the Father, his Son Jesus, and all our brothers and sisters who have been "sprinkled with the blood" of Christ (1 Peter 1:2). Our membership in this society is now invisible but must be kept always in mind until it becomes fully revealed at the end of time.

**January 21**

O God, we ponder your love within your temple. (Psalm 48:10)

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The temple is the Body of Christ of which we are members. In this Body we contemplate the love that has created us, the love that suffered for us, the love that redeemed us, the love that raises us to new life, the love that we share with our brothers and sisters. In the Church we ponder the immeasurable love which unites us with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity.

**January 22**

I pray that the God of peace, who brought our Lord Jesus back from the dead to become the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood that sealed an eternal covenant, may make you ready to do his will in any kind of good action; and turn us all into whatever is acceptable to himself through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

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It could not be more clear that the work of our salvation is God's work not ours. It is he who through the grace of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit produces virtue in us if we rely on him and persistently ask him. Christ is our priest, our shepherd, our mediator who will bring us to perfection insofar as we permit him to act in us.

**January 23**

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. (Psalm 23:1-3)

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The Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80:2) wants nothing more than to be the shepherd of the individual Israelite, the individual believer. We can put our trust in the one who brought his people out of Egypt and the human race out of sin. He refreshes us with lasting food and drink for the soul.

**January 24**

I treasure your word in my heart lest I sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

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The Christian treasures God's self-revelation in Jesus. Keeping the risen Jesus in mind is the surest brake against sinful thoughts or behavior.

**January 25**

Wherever he went, to village, or town, or farm, they laid down the sick in the open spaces begging him to let them touch even the fringe of his cloak. And all those who touched him were cured. (Mark 6:56)

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God became incarnate so that we could touch him. His touch continues in the sacraments of his Church, particularly in the Eucharist, where he touches our bodies to bring healing of body and spirit. In touching he sanctifies.

**January 26**

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, God of hosts. My soul is longing and yearning, is yearning for the courts of the Lord. (Psalm 84:2-3)

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God's yearning for us is matched by our yearning for him. The two yearnings meet in God's dwelling place on earth, the Body of Jesus. In him we encounter God and yearn for the fullness of that encounter, to which all are invited.



**January 27**

One day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. The threshold of the house of God I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked. (Psalm 84:11)

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Again we meet the psalmist's yearning to be where God dwells. Even the lowest place in the Church is a position of indescribable joy, since we are in the presence of the one for whom we were made.

**January 28**

The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory. (Romans 8:15-17)

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The three persons of God cooperate in our sanctification. The Spirit of God makes us adopted children of the Father in Christ, the incarnate Son. Built into Christ we have the privilege of calling God Father, with all the love and trust and hope that sonship implies.

**January 29**

The just man's mouth utters wisdom, and his lips speak what is right; the law of his God is in his heart, his steps shall be saved from stumbling. (Psalm 37:30-31)

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Adherence to the plan of God anchors the soul in God, so that one's utterances emerge from wisdom and one's actions lead to God. The plan of God is Jesus; let us try to keep him in mind today.

**January 30**

Happy the man whom you teach, O Lord, whom you train by means of your law: to him you give peace in evil days (Psalm 94:12-13)

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In a word used only once in the Bible, Saint Paul tells the Thessalonians that they are "God-taught" (*theodidaktoi*; 1 Thess 4:9), and Saint John says, "the anointing he gave teaches you everything" (1 John 2:27). Through baptism we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us who will guide us on the right path if we listen to him, if we invite him to teach.

**January 31**

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. As scripture promised: For your sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. (Romans 8:35-37)

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We began the month with a meditation on God's love for us in sending his Son to take away our sins and give us life. Now we hear that the Son himself loves us with the same love the Father has. An ever-deepening awareness of this love can fortify us in any trial and even bring joy.