
NOTHING WILL EVER SEPARATE US FROM LOVE!



In congratulating all those who helped make of the Nineteenth Foire Brayonne days of fellowship and solidarity, I want to bless the Lord for all those moments of life that were granted to us during the course of the summer. « Blessed are you, O Lord, God of life, God of joy, God of peace, God of the dance. Blessed are you, O Lord, for your creation; the beauties of nature, here, are so wonderful, and its people are so warm. Blessed are you who have created us in your own image and likeness. We know that each one of us has infinite value in your eyes. You came among us, became man and shared in humankind's activities. Make us instruments of your peace so that all may recognise that *your love is from age to age*. » I am pleased here to share with you the words I spoke at the Mass celebrated during the Foire Brayonne, they are deep-founded convictions of mine.

ARE WE, THE POOR, LOVED?

Oftentimes poverty may lead us to doubt in the goodness of God. When the most basic, most essential needs cannot be met, we could easily doubt the God's love for us. When week in week out we must look for a decent job, when month after month we wonder whether we shall be able to come up with the rent money and the wherewithal to pay off other debts, when year after year the buying power of money keeps on falling downward, we could easily doubt this love of God. Yet God has given us all the goods and all the riches of the earth. It is to us that they were given, given out of love. Poverty is an insult to God who wants us to have life in abundance. « Nothing will ever separate us from Love. Nothing. Neither death nor life, fire or cold, night or day, hunger or thirst, chains or threats will ever succeed? » These words of priest-poet Robert Lebel are borrowed from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, and it is a beautiful hymn.

ARE WE, THE SICK, LOVED?

When we are assailed by trials, when illness knocks at our door, we could be tempted to doubt the Love of God. When a child is struck with cystic fibrosis, when a young adult is paralysed for life following an automobile accident, we could doubt the love of God. When a young mother discovers that she has leukemia, when a grandfather develops Alzheimer's Disease, we could easily doubt this Love of God that is from age to age. Yet, Jesus took upon himself the suffering of the world; he experienced it in his own flesh. He was the Suffering Servant who bore the pain of the world and revealed to the world the redemptive value of pain. « Nothing will ever separate us from Love. Nothing will ever separate us from Love. Neither hell, nor fear, nor peril nor danger, nor evil, nor tears, nor the present nor the past, nor angels nor powers. »

ARE WE, THE BEREAVED, LOVED?

And when in our families, our parishes, our diocese, a loved one dies, we too could doubt Love. Why should this priest die who was yet capable of serving the Church, of proclaiming the Gospel? Why the death of a brother, a sister whose one desire was for a long life? Why the death of a father, a grandfather, a mother, a grandmother who brought so much happiness to our lives and our family get-togethers? Why all these victims of violence and nameless cruelty brought on by raving maniacs who stalk peaceful neighbourhoods? We could well be tempted

to doubt the Love of God. And Jesus himself experienced a horrible death, out of love for us. And this Good Friday death led him to the Easter joy of Resurrection. « Nothing will ever separate us from Love. Nothing will ever separate us from Love. If God is for us, who can be against. Who could condemn those whom God has saved in his mercy? »

A CONVICTION AND FIRM FAITH

In the midst of poverty, suffering and even death, it is important to hold strong convictions and have a firm faith: The Love of God is truly from age to age. It is important that we share this very faith, this very hope, this very love with our brothers and sisters. We need to discover and rediscover together the signs of Love in our own personal lives and communities. In this way, by looking around at God-given nature, by seeing all the fruits and vegetables, products of the soil, we shall be reminded that all of creation shows us what Love is. By looking at a bunch of grapes or a home-baked loaf of bread, we are reminded that each one of our families is a sign of love. Each one of our days, each hour of leisure, each hour of work is a sign of Love. The Church is a sign of Love, and each sacrament is a sign of love.

HAVE NICE CELEBRATIONS, ACADIA!

In extending my best wishes to the Acadians I want to emphasize the rich heritage of faith, hope, and love that our forebears handed down to us. Without these deep convictions we could not grasp how these men and women became such a solid, courageous, and creative people. In the midst of their own poverty and hardship, in the midst of death which was so familiar to them, these men and women maintained their faith in God. An immovable faith. May Our Lady of the Assumption tell us once more today that the Almighty still does great things, and that *His Love is from age to age!*

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