

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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Redeeming Love

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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No, the title is not mine, but comes from a film that I saw recently on a friend's recommendation. It is a eucharistic story- a story of the redeeming love Jesus has for His people. It is a story of hope for the hopeless and the lost and broken. A young child, illegitimate, but from a wealthy home, witnesses the denial by her natural father of herself, and rejection of her mother. He is married already with another family. He disowns her mother and makes them homeless and penniless... The mother, sick with worry and rejection becomes ill in her destitution, dies, and the little girl is taken, by her father to a 'place of safety' which is a brothel and so her life changes from innocence to abuse, violence and denial of any real form of care and love. She shuts down emotionally and acts almost like a robot to her circumstance.

But God has a plan for her life and He does not abandon her. One day a man, a farmer, merely passing by, sees her and finding her beautiful, wants to get to know her. He himself had been praying for a wife. He himself had recently discovered God's fidelity in times of hardship and entrusts his search to God's guidance. The rest of the story (based on a real episode) is an almost unbelievable account of their journey and his amazing love for this girl. It is not without trials and tribulations and much suffering. His attempts to help her change her life and find peace, succeeds and fails a few times, but he never gives up on her. Finally, through a belief that she could not have children she leaves the safety of his farm but does not return to her former life. She chooses to set up a school for abandoned children. He is heartbroken and cannot find her and only through another twist of fate, and providence, his brother comes across her.

His constancy of love and faith finally reunites them, and they have a little boy. She learns slowly to trust and pray, lost from childhood. There is much to think about in this story and the many other acts of others

that bring them to prayer and reconciliation.

Have we not got a similar story in scripture of Hosea the Prophet who God tells to marry a 'prostitute' as a symbol of the love he has for His people that redeems. *"And the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."* Hosea (Ch.1 and 3)

The Second story is about a mother and daughter and is more explicitly Eucharistic. Mother and daughter have a turbulent relationship, the father is nowhere to be seen and teenage years bring further troubles. One day the daughter leaves home leaving no contact details. She eventually ends up homeless when the money that she took from her mother runs out. She then leads a life of crime and prostitution in order to survive. All the time the mother desperately tries to find her and prays incessantly but starts to lose hope having tried every means of trying to bring her home. One day a note arrives to say that she is alive, but nothing else. Meanwhile in more grief and a residue of faith, she discovers that a local church is open, and mostly unfamiliar with what is going on she discovers that there is Exposition... She is drawn to sit and pour out her heart without any real understanding of what is happening to her and what it all means.

But she pleads...many times.

Meanwhile her daughter finds herself moving from one place to another in an ever-worsening situation. One day she stops and notices that in one 'house' there is a light and what she defines as a 'golden vase with a white circle within it'. She finds herself drawn to it like a magnet. So strong is the pull that she stops at the place and looks up daily but always from outside. She finds herself thinking of her mother and decides that she wants to see her. She saves enough to travel back home only to find that the place is nearly empty and there is no sign of her mother.

A stranger passing by tells her that her mother is in the church. Shocked, she decided to go and find her.

The Redeemer is present to both.

She sees her mother who is crying and kneeling and so she kneels next to her. In one embrace they are reconciled in front of the **One** who having redeemed, is faithful always faithful. Lives are changed.

Finally, a third story related by a priest. His young friend, a new 'ordinand' was being sent to Latin America on mission. Excited, he thought that he had it all worked out and was full of zeal. Arriving at his destination he was keen to establish daily Mass, setting up, getting everything just right. But as he prepares, he notices that local women were bringing babies and young children and putting them at the foot of the altar. He noticed that some were very ill, some were crippled, some even looked as if they were dying. Agitated, he did not want to stop them, thinking it may be a local custom. The women then went further back leaving their babies.

So, he started to celebrate Mass but did not know what to make of it and what was expected of him. After Mass the women joyfully picked up their charges- but to his total amazement they looked well, restored, and happy. Asking what was going on they simply said 'thank you Father, for the Mass!' 'But, but, what is happening?' One woman looked very surprised 'Father, she said what do you mean? You have just celebrated Mass!' 'Yes, but..' he said. 'But Father, don't you know that Jesus is present, loving and healing!' What an introduction to service and priesthood he received. Acting as 'Alter Christus' suddenly became very real to him.

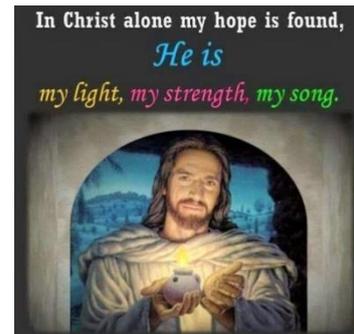


So, what of these stories? All speak of love conquering all and that love is redeeming. Jesus died on the cross out of love and bought us back by His Blood. His overwhelming sacrificial love enabled us to be saved and restored. In all situations love will conquer in the end.

Love, God's love for us and our love through Him to others will bring us to Him and Eternal love. In our daily lives maybe, it is 'Love' that is missing to enable us to change. In Him we are more than Conquerors. 'So, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. (Romans 8:37) Halina Holman

Pope Francis

The story of man and the story of God are interwoven on the Cross and essentially weave a love story. From the Letter to the Philippians and from John's Gospel we can grasp "something" of the mystery of the Cross on our knees in prayer, and in tears as well. Indeed, tears actually bring us close to this mystery. Without shedding tears, and especially without heartfelt tears, we shall never understand this mystery. It is the weeping of the penitent, the weeping of our brother and sister who see so many human miseries and likewise see them in Jesus, on his knees weeping". Rome 2013



'No matter whatever befalls us... Whether happiness or much sorrow. Plenty or want, Lord fill us with Your Love and we will endure to the end.' #H

Feast Days in September

3rd St. Gregory the Great

4th **Twenty-third Sunday in Ord. Time**

5th St. (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta

8th **Birthday of Our Lady**

11th **Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ord. Time**

12th **The Holy Name of Mary,**

13th St. John Chrysostum

14th **The Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

15th **Our Lady of Sorrows**

16th Ss. Cornelius & Cyprian

17th St. Hildegard of Bingen

18th **Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ord. Time**

20th **The Martyrs of Korea**

21st **St. Matthew, Apostle**

23rd St. Padre Pio 24th **Our Lady of Walsingham**

25th **Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ord. Time**

27th St. Vincent de Paul

29th **Ss. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels**

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