

“You are a sacrament. The better you get to know yourself (and with knowledge comes love), the better you get to know and love your Creator.”

Saint Theresa

“Venerate the Lord, that is Christ, in your hearts.”

Saint Paul

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Surprised by Love

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been surprised by love? Just walking along, minding your own business when suddenly, "Bam!", there it is, right in front of you.

You didn't expect it. You weren't out looking for it. Didn't even think you really deserved it. But there it was anyway.

A moment to be treasured indeed!

All of us want to be appreciated: to be valued, esteemed, loved. Yet we often measure our worth by what others think of us. And living as we do in an age of appearances, where physical beauty is more of a factor in determining attractiveness than character, it is amazing that any of us measures up. The young woman who is not athletic, the young man who doesn't know how talented he is, the college graduate who is rejected at one job interview after another, the older person who doesn't have as much energy (or hair) as he used to. All of us struggle with how we are perceived by others.

Add to this the moral standards which have been ingrained into our sensibilities since we were youngsters, and against which we have all transgressed, and the marvel is that any of us feels as good about ourselves as we do.

Imagine that yesterday, in your horoscope or in a fortune cookie, you found the message, "You will receive Good News." You might immediately begin to plan what you would do with the winnings from the lottery. You might dream that your daughter will elope and that you would not have to pay for the wedding. You might hope that there will be a reconciliation at home between spouses or among family members.

You might dream that peace would come to some troubled part of the world where you have friends or relatives. Or you might imagine that the good news would involve a recovery of a loved one from some illness.

Now while all of these may indeed be "good news", I know something better.

When I was a child, I was afraid of God. Because, you see, if God could give me everything I had, God could also take away whatever God wanted. Like most children of my generation, I often imagined God to be a great record keeper, taking particular delight in my offenses and failings. When I was a kid, God was definitely not "Good News."

But Jesus reveals a completely different kind of God. In John's Gospel Jesus proclaims, "God did not send the Son into the world to be its judge. God sent the Son to be its Savior."

So then I reason, "Well, maybe God sent Jesus to save only those who are worthy." Now aside from the baffling logic that could come to the conclusion that Jesus came to save the saved, Saint Paul totally contradicts this premise when he says, "There is no condemnation now for those who believe in Jesus." This same Paul who often finds himself "doing the evil I should avoid and not doing the good I ought," tells us of a God who allows us all to be imprisoned in disobedience (in other words, to be human) so that God can have mercy on us all. For all the good we do, we do not save ourselves. We simply admit our need so God can surprise us with Love. This God, who sent the Son to save, not the self-righteous, but sinners, is waiting for us with open arms.

And *that's* good news!

If you would like to read the entire article please send an email to Tony@TonyErcolano.com