



Boston Catholic Journal



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A HOLY K I S S



“Greet one another with a holy kiss”

(Romans 16.16)

What exactly, many wonder, *is* a holy kiss?

A holy kiss is a chaste pressing of one's lips upon the face of another *which communicates the love of God*. It is, essentially, not *your* kiss, but the kiss of *God* ... in which you are instrumental in conveying not your *own* love, but the love of *God*. You lend your lips to God.

That is to say, it is the love of *God* that comes *through* you — and not a gratuitous gesture of your own *personal affection*. That belongs to you ... not God. That is giving something unsolicited to another, with the presumption that *you yourself* are giving something greater to another, of greater value to another, than God is attempting to give through you. It is the "gift" of yourself ... not the gift of God.

One clear characteristic of a “holy kiss” is that it is completely devoid of any sinful desires, any attempt to awaken another to intimacy.

It is a pure gift not so much *from* one person to another, as *through* one person to another; "pure" in that it is possessed of nothing invested with desire in you. It is a communion between persons in the shared love of God, that love of God that binds you in a holy communion, a holy sharing of that same love for the same God..

The closer a person is to God the purer the expression of a holy kiss.

To kiss another, or to hold them in all purity, is a gift of God. The pure heart seeks nothing for itself, but wishes only to express its love for, and communion in, God with the other who loves Him likewise.

HOLY PURITY

It is a tragic reality that in the world we now know, purity of heart is rarely seen as a virtue. It is far more often regarded as the possession of the Consecrated, or more likely still, as a state of sterility ... even a morbid pathology. Not so...!

It is all too often presumed that any form, any expression of affection, is, at least implicitly, sexual in nature, or invariably suggestive of it. But this is not so.

The attaining of a genuinely pure heart is a long, long, struggle — more so for some than others. It is a purgation of sorts. We must be cleansed by God of all that would distort and deform love, all that would pervert it into becoming manipulative, the mere using of another for one's own selfish gratification.

A SAD CONFUSION

It is so very sad that nowadays any demonstration of love — and here we speak of holy love, the love that is the communication of God's own love between His people — is often subject to suspicion, to prurient criticism, a criticism that speaks far more of what festers in the heart of the critic than what obtains between the holy love binding two people together in God. This is so sad. The sinful heart can no longer distinguish between sin and sanctity but views everything through the miasma of sin. It is blind to the possibility, let alone the reality, of a genuine, holy, sincere, deep and authentic love between two women, or two men, between friends, between a man and a woman, even between an adult and a child ... a love that does not implicate sex, that is not rooted in, or expressed through, the flesh. It is cognizant only of love as sensual ... which is to say, it is not cognizant of love at all. There is no mutual love, only mutual gratification. We are not to scold such souls, but to pity them. It is the perception of love as a commodity traded in pounds of flesh. This is not sad. It is deeply tragic.

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A love that seeks fulfillment through chastity and purity is painfully beautiful — and it is already a foretaste of Heaven! And both are unseen by the world, cannot

be comprehended by the world any more than the God Who Is Love is comprehended by the world! It truly is a deep share in the Divine Love, a pure love uncorrupted by license and sensuality.

For those who experience it, chastity is a blinding beauty, a beauty that can consume the soul totally ... for it comes from God and returns to Him.

Many, coming to realize this beauty, look back upon their lives with such deep regret for the choices they had made, for the sins they had committed – and are discouraged or dissuaded from this beautiful path to God! But *purity of heart can be regained, reacquired!* We can become like little children again: not by our own efforts, as long we've since learned, but by God's grace, which even now, upon your reading this very line, He holds out to you!

In a stunning rebuke to the world that equates love with sensuality — Christ revealed more than the true nature of love. He revealed Whom Love Is, and Who loved first — ever before flesh was created — and then assuming that flesh, infused it with love and lived as Love among us ... like unto us all in everything, except sin (Hebrews 4.15).

A Poor Clare Colettine Nun
for the Boston Catholic Journal



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