



Boston Catholic Journal

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FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST!

"Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love,
as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us"
Ephesians 5.1-2



*"They have pierced my hands and my feet;
They have numbered all my bones"*

Yes ... for the love of Christ ... "As Christ loved us ..."

Today, Saint Paul exhorts us as Jesus Christ Himself exhorted us:

"I give you a *new* commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (Saint John 13.34)

Notice that Jesus, and his faithful preacher, Saint Paul, do not simply say:

"Love one another."

No. This was no new commandment. All knew it very well from the Law. This was the old commandment.

He gives us a new one; one that the Law could never have anticipated, indited; one that did not exist – *could not have existed* – before Him.

He adds, "**as I have loved you.**"

He has set the example ("*Exemplum dedit vobis*" – "I have given you an example", as He had upon washing the feet of his Apostles)

And how has Christ loved us?

Saint Paul answers this, too: By handing Himself over for us. By giving Himself up for us. By a total giving unto the giving of Life itself.

BUT ... REALLY ... HOW MUCH?

We all want to ask the question ... admit it. It is very reminiscent of Saint Peter's question to Christ: "Lord, how many times should we forgive our neighbor? Seven times?", to which Jesus answered, "No, I tell you, but 70 times 7 times". (Saint Matthew 18:21)

And this is *our* question:

"Lord. to what extent should we love our neighbor? Where do we draw the line? Beyond what point is it acceptable not to love?"

We are such incessant quantifiers before what are ultimately absolute numbers.

Do you really want to count? Do you really want to put a limit, a number on love?

Let us make it 5.

One for His right hand, one for His left hand, one for His right foot, one for his left foot, and one for his side.

Do you want to hammer those numbers in? We thought they already had been.

How much plainer can Christ, can Saint Paul, be? *Love others as He has loved you!*

Do you wish to refresh your memory?

Blow the dust off your Crucifix and take a good long look at it. Count the wounds, if you can.

Children ... *He loves you SO!*

Let us, likewise, love others ... *SO!* He has no less than commanded us.



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