

Love, joy, fulfilment, having a purpose, being at peace with the world and with ourselves, what is there not to like about being a Catholic Christian?

Do we sometimes lose sight of these great gifts? Do we sometimes forget that we are loved and chosen? Do we allow the stresses and strains of everyday living get in the way of this great sense of being loved? That is what our Christian faith is about – being loved and knowing that we are being loved and allowing that love to warm our hearts and to set us on fire.

There is of course another side to all this. Maybe that's what puts us off – laying down our lives for others, obedience to God's commands, remaining constant in the vocation God has given us.

But to be immersed in God's love, to have entered into his joy, to know his deep peace **is** to have given ourselves away. This is what love does for us. We cannot be anything else but obedient. We cannot be anything else but faithful, loyal and constant.

Later this morning we will be crowning the May Queen with the flowers of springtime. When the people knelt before St Peter and tried to worship him, he said, "*Stand up. I am only a man.*" Our Blessed Lady may well say the same, "*Stand up, I am only a woman....* But the point is that she is the one human being who has really and totally loved, the one who had given herself away, allowed the sword to pierce her own heart. She is the one who is totally obedient, totally faithful, totally joyful. She is the one who is immersed in love, in God, that she is now said to be Queen of Peace, Queen of heaven and Queen of the Angels. She is our model and example. She is really *begotten by God and knows God*. And because she is begotten by God and knows God, **we** can be begotten by God and know God.

Life can be tough and very often is tough, more like a vale of tears than joyful garden, woodland, hillside or dale. But Mary is the sign for us, not only that we can make it through and endure our suffering, but also that we can know God here and now, that we can enjoy his love in the here and now of ordinary things. "*Let what you have said be done to me*", says Mary. Bethlehem and Nazareth were not just incidents from the past. Mary says "Yes" to God. We can say "Yes" to God too.

"Remain in my love", let nothing disturb you. And "love one another".