

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class, Father forgive.

The covetous desires of men and nations to possess what is not their own, Father forgive.

The greed which exploits the labors of men, and lays waste the earth, Father forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, Father forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the homeless, Father forgive.

The lust which uses for ignoble ends the bodies of men and women, Father forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves, and not in God, Father forgive.

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Father forgive. All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.

Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:27

Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Mark 9:37

SELF-SACRIFICE Once upon a time there was a loyal servant of a great lord. The lord's castle overlooked a stormy channel, separating his domain from the homeland of a lovely lady. The servant, in charge of the lord's archives, had come across an ancient parchment proving that the servant, not the lord, was the true and lawful heir to the domain.

The servant secretly loved the beautiful lady. He had come to know her when he accompanied the lord on visits to her. When he found the wonderful parchment, he decided that at an opportune time he would not only claim his lawful heritage, but would also ask the lady's hand in marriage. For now he would be of her rank, and she would not disdain him.

One evening he heard that the lady was on her way across the channel to visit the lord. This would be his chance. On her arrival he would bring forth the document from the folds of his garments, and claim both his heritage and his lady.

As the day drew near its close, the servant accompanied the lord down to the shores of the channel, and together they paced the sea wall, waiting for the arrival of the lady's boat. But a great storm came up, and the boat was caught in rain and adverse winds. A pitch-black darkness fell over the sea and shore. Fearing that the boat would not find its way in the darkness, the lord ordered a fire to be lighted to serve as a beacon. But nothing would burn. The heavy rains had drenched every bit of combustible material. There was no dry tinder to catch a spark no dry moss or shavings of wood to use in starting a blaze.

Fearing that the lady would drown in the storm, the servant pulled out the precious parchment, the only hope and proof of his future, and set it ablaze. The boatman saw the flame, steered a right course in the darkness, and brought the boat safely to dock.

The lady disembarked, and flew to the arms of the lord in loving surrender. The servant listened to the lord's voice, welcoming the lady in tender words of ardent love. His heart, victorious over his own disappointment, rejoiced in the happiness of the lady he loved, and the happiness of the lord whom he loyally served and loved as a friend. The words of John the Baptist came to his mind: "The bridegroom's friend, who stands by and listens to him, is overjoyed at hearing the bridegroom's voice. This joy, this perfect joy, is now mine." (John 3:29).

In the depths of his heart the servant set up the coat of arms of his true nobility, inscribed with John's words: "He must increase, but I must decrease."