

# There's more to true love than romance

Valentine's Day is all about love. There are two radically different ways of looking at it. If your romance reduces to a one-night stand, it is nothing more than a lie dressed up to look like love. If a man commits himself to be faithful to one woman for his whole life and the woman commits herself in the same way, then their love is true love.

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Is falling in love just a silly thing? On the contrary, to be happy, I would say every man and every woman must fall in love—though, at the same time, I would also say that the ultimate goal is to fall in love with God. So, we have these two goals. One for this world and one for the next world. Marriage is God's plan, in this world, for a man and woman who want to give themselves to each other.

One of the saints expressed it this way: "The human heart has been created to love. Never doubt this. Let us therefore bring our Lord Jesus Christ into the love that we feel. Otherwise, the empty heart takes revenge and fills itself with evil."

In addition to falling in love, a person needs to be in love and stay there. Falling expresses a sense of weightlessness and sinking into oblivion. It would be childish to

expect a life of never ending intoxication. And I doubt anyone seriously wants that anyway. But many may assume that it constitutes the very essence of love. So they are ready to sacrifice anything to get it.

It is an understandable mistake. They need only turn that willingness to sacrifice to a better purpose, and they will find what they long for. You can say you're really in love with someone when you're ready to sacrifice your pleasure, your comfort —indeed, your whole life—to make that person happy.

Your sacrifice has less to do with saving someone from a burning building and more to do with the little details of everyday life.

If you have a husband, guard your heart against the desire to get back at him for all the times he let you down. Be ready to forgive and forget.

If you have a wife, take the trouble to go home early, not just for Valentine's Day but every day. Centre your life around her and what she needs. Forget about yourself. Think about her.

As St Paul said, "Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church ... Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy."

*This article by Fr. Joe Babendreier first appeared in the Sunday Nation on 13th Feb 2011.*

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