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President's Page: Faith, Hope and Charity

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President's Page



Faith, Hope and Charity

Since I first wrote about Mexico as the land of faith in North America, and the United States as the land of hope, it might be safe to presume that by elimination, Canada is the land of charity. As a matter of fact, Canada was my first thought in associating these virtues with North America. Why?

Christ said, "No greater love has any man than that he lay down his life for his friend." These are two ways to lay down one's life — the heroic lifesaving act in an emergency, or the lifetime of service, and Canada expressed her love for the United States in both of these ways during the Iranian diplomatic hostage crisis. Canada's sons and daughters in the diplomatic corps, in harboring U.S. diplomats, exposed their security and their very lives. Canada herself risked political and economic repercussions. In addition, the Canadian diplomats day by day tolerated these hidden guests within their households.

I, for one, cannot forget this living act of love.

Some time ago, I was raising some wild turkey poults (chicks) to release in the wild. The mortality rate is high, and I had one in the "infirmary" — on the dining room table. At the same time, I was reading a book on Our Lady of Guadalupe. One urge in me said, "Ask Mary to watch out for the turkey. Another said, "It's sacrilegious to bother her." As I read her admonishments to Juan Diego, that she would care for him, wrapped in her mantle, the tiny turkey convulsed and died.

The coincidence of circumstances made me think and question. Was Our Lady saying to all of us, through Juan Diego, "I am your mother.

I love you. I hold you in my arms. I want to know and share your little problems, not just your big ones. I have time to comfort you. I have time to mend your broken toy. All I have for you is love and care."

Do any of us realize how much love God has for us? Do we permit His love to envelop us, through Our Lady's mantle spread around us?

I like the homilies that Archbishop Elko gives us each year at the annual meeting. Most people tell us about the faults of medicine. Somehow, the Archbishop manages to send us away proud of ourselves. And sometimes it is deserved.

Take charity, for example. Our profession is truly dedicated to charity. Its end is the caring for and service to the well-being of our fellow men, not as a class, but as individuals. When young people enter the medical profession, they do so with high ideals. Sometimes these ideals tarnish and become dulled with greed and pride, but most physicians lay down their lives, day by day, in the service of others. Aristotle defines love as the will to do good for another. Charity is only another word for love. Whether you admit it to yourself or not, each of you is a lover in the finest sense of the word.

— William V. Fitzsimmons, M.D.
