

You Shall Worship One God: The Mystery of Loving Sacrifice in Salvation History

Rev. Fr. Marie Dominique Philippe O.P.

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It is by means of worship that man recognizes his absolute dependence upon God, comes into His presence, and gains practical knowledge of His goodness and sovereign majesty.

Father Marie-Dominique Philippe, founder of the Congregation of St. John and one of the twentieth century s most profound theological and pastoral minds, takes us back to the First Commandment, back to the primacy of worship, in You Shall Worship One God. For only by recognizing the singular importance of worship, of making ourselves an offering of love before God, can we hope to fulfill the other commandments and develop a deep and lasting spiritual life.

Divine revelation, says Father Philippe, presents true worship to us in the form of sacrifice. The Old Testament stories in which goods and lives are offered to God, and the holocausts and oblations of the Jewish Temple, train God's people to express their love and fidelity and penitence through sacrifice. In so doing they also prefigure and prepare us for the Passion of Our Lord on Calvary, the perfect and lasting sacrifice that completes and gives meaning to all the others. Christ's offering of Himself is at root a sacrifice of filial worship, glorifying the Father in the truest way possible and thereby effecting the greatest spiritual fruits.

You Shall Worship One God is a fascinating study of the development of sacrificial worship throughout salvation history, a rich meditation on the mystery of the Cross, and a necessary reminder to our busy world that the heart of Christianity is found not in service to our fellow man, but in recognizing the Lord's supreme majesty before all. Such worship is essential to salvation, says Father Philippe, for it makes us die to ourselves in order to proclaim that God is first.

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