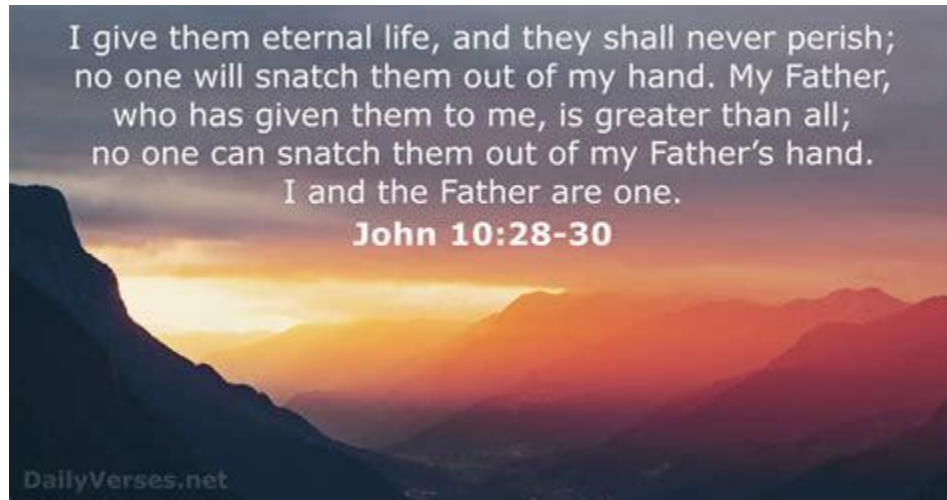


FROM FATHER JOHN: "I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help? My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; or your guardian to sleep. Behold, the guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night. The LORD will guard you from all evil; he will guard your soul. The LORD will guard your coming and going both now and forever." (Psalm 121)



Saint Maximus the Confessor wrote that "God's will is to save us, and nothing pleases him more than our coming back to him with true repentance. The heralds of truth and the ministers of divine grace have told us this from the beginning, repeating it in every age. **Indeed, God's desire for our salvation is the primary and pre-eminent sign of his infinite goodness.** Precisely in order to show that there is nothing closer to God's heart than this, the divine Word of God, with untold condescension, lived among us in the flesh, and did, suffered, and said all that was necessary to reconcile us to God the Father, when we were at enmity with him, and to restore us to the life of blessedness from which we had been exiled. He healed our physical infirmities by miracles; he freed us from our sins, many and grievous as they were, by suffering and dying, taking them upon himself as if he were answerable for them, sinless though he was."

I love this line "**God's desire for our salvation is the primary and pre-eminent sign of his infinite goodness**" because it expresses the theological proposition that the love of God the Father's so great that that He desires our salvation as part and parcel of His infinite goodness.

God is Love Itself, Goodness Itself, Truth Itself. God's desire for our salvation illustrates generous and abundant God's love for us is. God has, down through the ages, continually sought after us, His Holy people. We see God's great love for us as we pay attention to all the things that God has done for us throughout salvation history. He sent us Noah, Abraham, Moses, the judges, the prophets, the kings to save us and to share His love with us. As we read the Old Testament, we see that He struck down countless enemies and evil people in order that we might live. And finally, he sent us His only begotten Son.

God only wants what's best for us and has poured out His grace and mercy on us. He has done all this for the simple reason that He wants to give us the gift of spending all eternity with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

Fr. Jacob Bearer of the Diocese of Cleveland wrote, "Truth matters. This is why Christianity loudly, even painfully, professes belief in Jesus Christ who gratuitously loves us without conditions. And, believing that should radically determine the rest of what one believes and how one lives. ... So, if you want a religion that places a knife to your neck to make you believe in Jesus and the Eucharist, then, Catholicism isn't for you. Catholics still believe that anyone getting into Heaven will pass through Jesus. But, they'll get in through a relationship with Jesus Christ, not by sneaking past St. Peter at the gate."

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.