

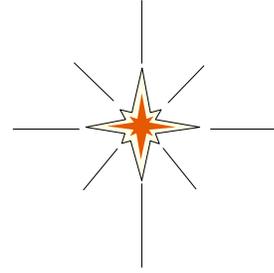
The Price of Love

by Rev. Andrew P. Carrozza

One night a man came home from work
disgusted from his day.
His daughter ran to greet him
and his anger died away.
Her smile was oh, so delicate!
her childlike ways so pure!
His waning joy rekindled
as he raised her from the floor.
"If everyone could be like you
the world would be much kinder!
Why must we have such misery
and pain?" He stopped to wonder.

Then, drink in hand, he settled down
to watch the evening news.
His daughter snuggled with him
as the talk shows aired their views.
One host after another
spoke of pain, of tragedy,
of graft, corruption, vice and greed,
deceit, duplicity.
"Where is this mad world headed?!"
he screamed out in great despair.
"Where is this God they talk about?
How come he does not care?"

Just then, into his living room
walked Jesus, calm and meek.
He sat down on the sofa
and he stroked the young girl's cheek.
He asked her father, "Why such fear?
Why do you feel despair?"
"Because you have abandoned us!"
he said. "You do not care!
You say you love us, but you lie!
We cry out, but in vain.
If you're so good, why do we suffer?
Why not stop the pain?"



"My son," said Christ, "I want to
but you never follow me.
You refuse to do things my way,
thus, you cause your misery!
What causes most of your distress?
Is it not people's sin?
You're hurt by other people's wrong;
from you sorrows begin!
I've shown the way, I plead with you
but you refuse to see.
So maybe I should ask you
why you let these evils be."

"We're weak!" he said. "We'll never change.
You know we cannot win!
Why not force us to follow you?
Make sure we cannot sin!"
"Because," said Christ, "If I did that
I'd be forcing your love.
Love must be given freely,
not coerced with mighty shove!
If I truly love you, then
you must be free to turn from me.
For if I forced your love
it would be meaningless, empty!"

"That sounds so sweet, but let's be real!
Let's call a spade a spade!
How would you know what suffering is?
You're God! You've got it made!
You don't know what it's like to starve,
be hated or ignored!
What did love ever cost you, huh?
what pain have you endured?"
Just then the child, who'd nodded off,
awoke, and as if planned,
look up at Jesus, shrieked, and said:
"Sir, what happened to your hand?"