



March 2025

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

**T**he night before he was crucified, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. He lived a life of sacrificial service. He came to serve us, rather than to receive our service. Like the water he used to wash his disciples' feet (and yours and mine) he poured himself out, both throughout his earthly ministry, but most remarkably and ultimately, on his Cross.

During what some call his "final discourse" (John 13-17)—the long discussion Jesus had with his disciples the evening before he gave his all on his Cross—when he emptied himself so that we could be filled, when he ingested all human hatred and breathed out his love, when he returned good for evil, love for hatred, Jesus said:

*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends* (John 15:13).

*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends...* (John 15:15).

**The highest form and degree of love is self-sacrificial love. There is no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend.**

I will always be grateful to author Brennan Manning (1934-2013) for his writing—his insights helped me to more fully comprehend and believe the grace, love and mercy of God, in ways I had never understood or experienced before. His given name was Richard Francis Xavier Manning, but later in life he changed his given first name because of his good friend Ray.

Richard Manning and Ray were the best of friends as they grew up in Brooklyn. They did everything together. They attended the same school, and when they were old enough they pooled their money and became co-owners of their first car. They double-dated, they enlisted in the Army at the same time, went to boot camp together and then wound up being sent to the frontlines together during the Korean War.

One night in Korea they were sitting in the same foxhole, talking about life in Brooklyn. Richard was doing most of the talking, while Ray sat listening, enjoying a bar of chocolate. Suddenly a live grenade was thrown into their foxhole. Ray Brennan looked at his good friend Richard Manning and threw his body on the grenade. The explosion killed Ray, but he saved the life of his best friend Richard.

Returning home, Richard resolved to become a priest, and in doing so he decided to change his first name from Richard to Brennan, in honor of his good friend Ray Brennan who had self-sacrificially given his life for him. Richard officially became Brennan Manning. He bore the name of his friend just as Christ-followers call themselves after Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for us, his friends.

Some years later Brennan Manning went to visit his deceased friend Ray's mother in Brooklyn. They sat together, talking about Brennan's good friend and her son, when Brennan asked her, "Do you think Ray loved me?"

Mrs. Brennan jumped off the couch, yelling, waving her finger in Brennan's face saying, "*Jesus Christ—he died for you, what more could he have done?*"

Brennan later wrote of this moment, and said he imagined himself standing before the Cross of Jesus Christ, wondering, "Does God really love me?" And, as he questioned God's love, visualizing standing before the cross of Jesus, he also imagined Mary, Jesus' mother, pointing at her son on the cross, the Son of God, asking Brennan, "*Jesus Christ—what more could he have done?*"

**Self-sacrifice is doing something one does not have to do, letting go of something, laying something down, giving and providing something for the benefit of another.** The Cross of Christ is the once and for all, greatest and most magnificent singular expression of the self-sacrificing love of God.

Jesus came to serve us, but there is much more to his service than we often consider. When he washed his disciples' feet, Peter was offended because he felt he should wash Jesus' feet, not the other way around (John 13:8).

Like Peter, we too can miss the boat when we speak of how we can serve Jesus, if we get the "cart before the horse." *We cannot serve Jesus unless and until we allow him to first serve us.*

Yes, we are called to be servants of Jesus, and we pick up our cross and follow him. Yes, we serve others in the name of Jesus. But most important of all, we must be willing for Jesus to serve us. We must journey to the foot of his Cross and yield to his love, grace and mercy, embracing him for all that he is and forever will be to us. *We cannot serve Jesus unless and until he first serves us!*

Jesus lives in us, only as and when we surrender to him and lay down our trophies at his Cross. He never forces himself on us. We lay down our self-importance, our cherished notions of how much we have served and given to others and to God, and allow him to wash our feet.

A rough-and-ready oil-mining veteran named Harry Stamper, played by Bruce Willis in the movie *Armageddon*, is called on to take part in a mission to save humanity from a massive asteroid on a collision course with planet earth. The space shuttle carrying Harry and his team lands on the asteroid, the team drills a hole (hence the importance of Harry's expertise professional skills as an oil miner on this mission) into its core and insert a nuclear bomb that once detonated, according to their plan, will split the asteroid into two parts and change its course, causing it not to have a fatal collision with earth.

The bomb is in place, and they prepare to lift off on their space shuttle, Once they are far enough away from the asteroid they plan to detonate the bomb. But something goes terribly wrong, and it becomes evident that someone will have to remain on the asteroid and detonate the bomb manually once all the others are safely on their way back to the earth.

Harry Stamper chooses to remain—insists in fact. Just before blowing himself up, along with the asteroid, sacrificing himself, Harry speaks to his daughter Grace on a video phone. Then he watches the shuttle safely on its way, escaping the carnage that will come, and while staring at the beautiful blue planet earth rotating in space, thinking of his daughter and all he loves, Harry gently smiles, presses the detonator, and says, "We win, Gracie."

The screen immediately fills with racing images of love through a father's eyes. Harry is pushing his laughing little girl on a backyard swing. A future image, yet to take place, depicts Gracie's wedding day, when of course Harry, her father, will not be in attendance.

Grace is aptly named in *Armageddon*, for her father graces her—expressing his self-sacrificial love as indeed Jesus, on his Cross, embraced and accepted all the hatred, evil, corruption, murder, mayhem, greed, abuse and bloodshed of humanity, and ended it all—once and for all—giving himself, burning himself out along with all the evil—so that we all might be cleansed, washed, saved, accepted, embraced and given the matchless love of God.

*The Cross of Christ is the once and for all, forever, eternal moment of the glorious self-sacrificial love of God.*

God, in Christ, traveled across and through space, landing on a once beautiful, pristine planet now besmirched by human mud and filth, and laid down his life for its inhabitants—whom he had created—calling them his friends. On his Cross he ingested and absorbed all the hatred and evil of humanity, all of it! He burned up all evil and wickedness, past, present and future—he cleansed, restored, and saved his own creation from itself and themselves, and he did it all out of his matchless and supreme self-sacrificing love.

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! (1 John 3:1)*

The Cross of Christ has lavished his love on us, we have been graced, cleansed and forgiven. The Cross of Christ triumphs over evil and hatred. **There is no greater love!**

Out of the ashes of the explosion on the Cross, out of the ashes left over after evil has been defeated, Jesus rises from his tomb, creating new creations (you and me) in whom he lives.

Good has been returned for evil. **There is no greater love!** Everyone and all has been forgiven, if only God's forgiveness, love and grace will be accepted and embraced. The Cross of Christ stands, over all, above all. Life in Christ, the new life we live as his new creations, is the Jesus Way.

The Cross of Christ is the *crux*—the *center*—the *fulcrum*—the *core*—the *hinge*—of all that is beautiful, worthy, good and just. Let us collectively, together, praise, worship and thank him. **There is no greater love!**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I am, by the grace of God, your brother in Christ—



Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from a Partner in New York, and **THANK YOU** for your continued support of the ongoing work of CWR/PTM:

*Thank you for your helpful articles and letters. Your letters are always inspirational, encouraging and serve to lift up people's spirits. The messages and articles in your magazines are needed in these desperate times. May God continue to inspire and bless everyone involved with CWR/PTM.*

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—March 2025

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

*Thank you all for your prayers. I'm doing much better after my surgery a few months ago.—Georgia*

*Please pray for me and my family. My husband died recently and we are grieving.—Missouri*

*Please pray for my husband. He has lung cancer, gallbladder problems, and possibly dementia.—Washington*

*Please pray for my sister who has several health issues and pray about my lung troubles.—Maryland*

*I'm still suffering a lot of pain. Please continue to keep me in your prayers. Thanks so much!—Georgia*

*We continue to pray for everyone at CWR/PTM that you can continue this inspiring work.—Puerto Rico*

*Please pray for my niece, she tried to kill herself and she needs healing physically and mentally.—Kansas*

*Please pray for our son, as he struggles with depression following a brain injury.—North Carolina*

*Please pray for me and my family. My husband died recently and it is a hard adjustment.—Kentucky*

*Please pray for my sister to receive a new set of kidneys. She's been on dialysis for several years.—Ohio*

*Please pray for my niece who has breast cancer. She has a two-year old son.—Washington*

*Please pray for my father's recovery from an operation. He is 90 years old.—New York*

*Thank you so much for your prayers. I have been greatly blessed amid trials and grieving.—Texas*

*Please pray for me as I am suffering with pain from arthritis and degenerative discs. I also have high blood pressure, anxiety and depression.—Virginia*

*I pray that CWR/PTM will continue to spread the message and love of Jesus all around the world.—Colorado*

*Please pray for all those in congregations that are closing—all those feeling left behind.—Wisconsin*

*Please pray for all those affected by the destruction of recent hurricanes.—Pennsylvania*

*Please pray for my heart problems, and my vision troubles. Thank you for all your prayers.—Louisiana*

*Please pray for our oldest daughter who is suffering with various health issues.—Utah*

*Please pray for relief from the arthritis in my hands. Thanks for all the encouragement.—California*

*Please pray for my brother who is out of work and having a hard time finding a job.—New York*

*I pray for everyone at PTM and I appreciate your prayers for me, as I will turn 94 soon.—Louisiana*

*Please pray for this world which needs Jesus like never before. I pray for everyone at CWR/PTM.—Texas*

*I am having trouble with swelling of my left foot. Please pray it will heal quickly and return to normal so that I can do all I need to do.—Washington*

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.