



FAITH FOCUS - The Lamb of God

[Click Link for John 1:29-42](#)

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi...
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of

the world. In Latin or in English, the words are exquisite. And the concept they capture is far beyond that. It is the very essence of Christianity.

Take a moment to let the words sink in. As human beings, we are wired from head to toe with self-preservation instincts. Yet here is someone willing to throw all that away. Now consider who that someone is. He is all-powerful. He is flawless. He is without sin, without guilt. Yet he is willing to lay down his life for our sins, for our guilt.

Why? In the bloom of health, in the prime of life, why would anyone embrace an agonizing death? There's a one-word answer. But it is powerful enough to explain the entire life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The one-word is: LOVE. Jesus is human, but more than human. He is the love of God made flesh. He was, is and always will be God... God before Creation... God in the manger... God on the cross. From the moment of our

Baptism, he is with us... in us and around us.

Dominus vobiscum... The Lord be with you. It is the blessing that Christians have exchanged down the ages. It invokes the ultimate state of serenity... unity with God in Christ... the realization of our purpose since Creation... the fruits of our redemption.

Dominus et Agnus... Lord and Lamb. That is the sacred mystery of our salvation. Jesus is both Savior and Sacrifice. In this gospel, John captures Christ the Messiah; not as a long-awaited warrior king, but as a pure sacrificial victim. And to drive home the point, John repeatedly calls Jesus the *Lamb of God*.

This is no throw-away line. It is the essential message that the ministry of John proclaims. Significantly, the disciples in reply then call Jesus: *Rabbi*... teacher. The concepts are deliberately linked

together. The sacrifice of Jesus does not exist in a vacuum. It is the ultimate teachable moment. Jesus is teaching us a completely new way of life; forsaking a life based on self-preservation, embracing a life based on self-sacrifice.

In his miracles, his parables, his outreach... Christ is a teacher, not an exhibitionist. And the sacrifice of Calvary is his ultimate lesson. In fact our re-education is integral to our redemption. In faith we must learn to reject the conventional sense of self. As Paul writes to the Galatians: *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me.* Jesus tells us to take up our cross, to follow him, to love like him. We are more than the ace predators at the top of the food chain. We are God's beloved, made in his image and likeness. Our driving force is not enrichment or aggrandizement. It is the love of God embodied in Christ and showered upon us. We call it grace. It shapes how we see the world and how we make our way in it.

We have so much to learn from the *Rabbi*, from the *Lamb*. First we must learn to forgive. Without forgiving ourselves, without forgiving others, we make a mockery of the sacrifice of the Lamb. Then we must learn to give. The heart of sacrifice is that we choose to give things, to do without things and to suffer things that, apart from love, we would never choose to give, never do without, never suffer.

Ultimately, the Lamb teaches us how to live. John does not say that Jesus is *sort of like* the Lamb of God. He is the Lamb of God. His mission defines his essence. We cannot be *sort of like* Christians. We must be Christians. The mission defines our essence... our lives, full-time, all the time. Until God gathers us home, we live in the sacrifice of the Lamb. And in it we are saved... we are forgiven... we are loved. Thank you, Jesus... our Lord and our Lamb.

