

DIVINE KISS

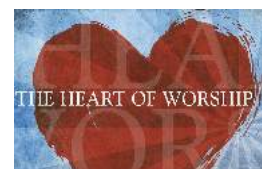
To Kiss God is to Worship Him



We praise and worship God in many ways. Some prefer to join their prayer groups in singing, clapping and raising up hands. This is just one form of praising God, where worship leaders lead the congregation. For some us, we might sing along, clap or raise our hands and feel good about the praise and worship sessions. Conversely many others could just be mouthing the songs, clapping hands and wondering when will the talk begin? This is the outward form of worship as it manifests itself in many varied ways.

What exactly is at the heart of true worship? How do we do it? Singing repeatedly and getting distracted online or in church. It could be difficult to focus on God and to enter into that sacred space "of Divine kiss of God". This is what true worship is - total, undivided and complete focus on God with all our hearts, minds, souls and bodies.

What exactly is the Heart of True Worship?



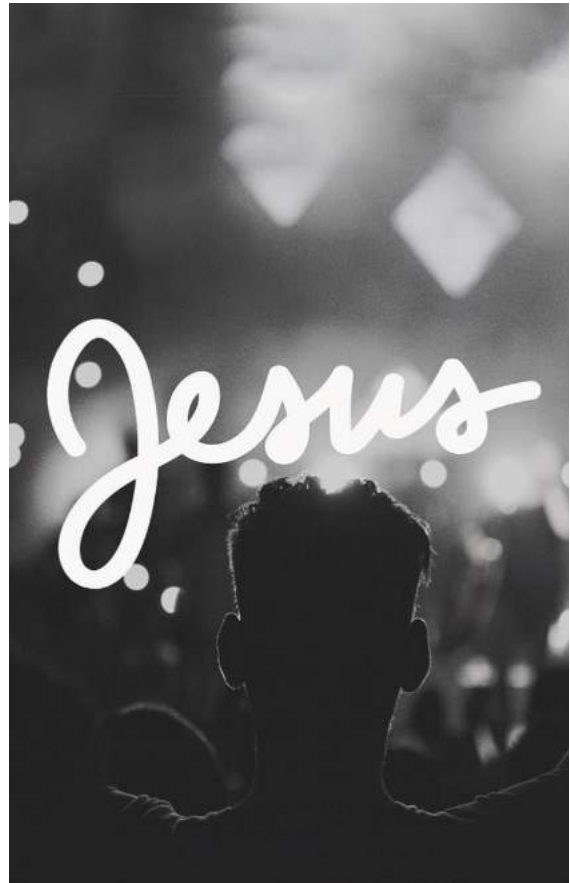
Proskuneo: The Heart of Worship!

(According to Strong's Concordance "*proskuneo*" means "to kiss" as in to kiss the hand of a superior).

Many are familiar with the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4. But not everyone can explain what Jesus meant when He said the Father is seeking men and women who will worship Him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). To say that we must worship God "in spirit" means, among other things, that it must originate from within, from the heart; it must be sincere, motivated by our love for God and gratitude for all He is and has done. Worship cannot be mechanical or formalistic. That does not necessarily rule out certain rituals or liturgy. But it does demand that all physical postures or symbolic actions must be infused with heartfelt commitment and faith and love, reverence, respect and zeal.

First, it is important to understand what worship is. Many equate worship with singing and music. This is one aspect of worship (Psalm 100:2), but worship is in no way limited to songs. It is a **full life response to the object of our worship**. When we truly worship something, it affects the way we live. One way to look at worship is to think of it as "*worship*." When we worship something, we declare that it is worthy (Psalm 145:3). The Greek word used for "worship" implies an attitude of reverence. It also includes such physical gestures as kissing the hand or kneeling (Psalm 95:6). We worship something when we act as if it has value. By nature, human beings are worshippers. Sometimes our worship is focused on that which is actually worthy of reverence (like God). Other times it is misdirected (for instance, we worship our work or our bank accounts or fashion or a political icon, leading to idol worshipping).

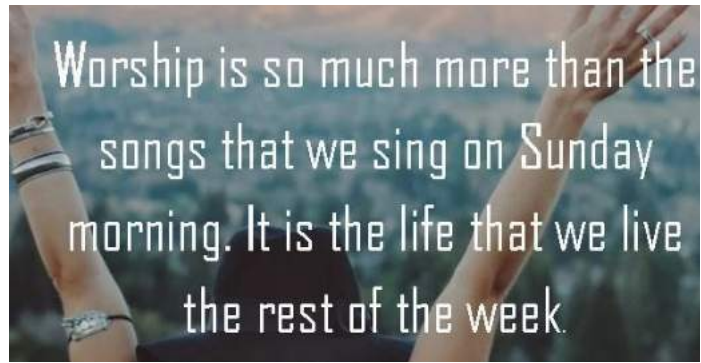
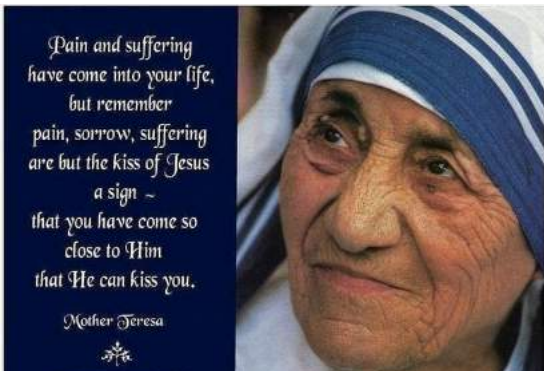
The heart of worship is found in Holy Scriptures. It only appears in the Greek. It's the word *proskuneo*, pronounced like pros-koo-neh-o. The word comes from *props*, which means towards, and *kyneo*, which means to kiss. In a nutshell, (translated "worship") means "towards to kiss" or "to adore." We see this word reported in Matthew 2:2, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." Literally, the wise men were coming to see baby Jesus and "kiss Him." Not recorded in the Bible but we truly believe that like a young mother cradling her newborn and kissing the baby tenderly on his cheeks, on his forehead, on the tip of his tiny nose. But this is no ordinary baby. Neither are these run-of-the-mill mummy kisses. They are sweet, private expressions of gratitude to Almighty God Incarnate, the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and nursed to sleep. Mary of Nazareth worshipped Jesus for leaving heaven's glory to dwell among us.



Proskuneo:

The Heart of Worship!

Worship means to kiss towards. As we worship the Lord, we kiss His face and we let Him kiss ours, thus we experience the love of God. God is love, yet He has many ways to express His love for us. **Kiss means figuratively, to touch.** The way He cares for us and touches us, helps us, heal us, holds us, provides for us- it is all an expression of Who He is - LOVE.



Mary worshipped Him as the promised Messiah. Mary worshipped Him for coming to bring hope to hurting humanity. Mary worship the Lord without fanfare or before public eyes. She did it quietly alone, and with a simple but deeply meaningful act of affection in her worship. Knowing that *worship* is associated with physical action gives us a good foundation for understanding Biblical worship.

Kissing

In the English Language, we use the expressions, 'kiss and tell,' 'kiss and make up' or 'the sweet kiss of success.' We have St John Paul kissing the ground on arriving to a country from an airplane, the kiss of life (resuscitating mouth-to-mouth), kiss of greeting a friend, the first kiss of puppy love, the kiss of death, to the kiss bestowed on a newborn – there are lot of kissing going on! Even a chocolate company calls itself "Hershey's kisses".

The kiss is a powerful passage and medium of communication in sharing emotions and feelings. It is the threshold to invisible possibilities, etc. In the kiss, two worlds come together to transform each other. Many saints live their whole life in ecstatic celebration for one kiss with the Divine, the Beloved! A kiss can change your life forever. It can inspire and wake you, or it can make you wish you were never alive. Is there magic in a kiss? We have Prince Charming coming along and kissing the Sleeping Princess into a 'happier-ever-after' wakefulness! On the opposite scale, we have all-too-good at turning the princess or prince into a frog, or a monster of love.

A worshipping heart at all times and for all seasons

Pastor Aiden Wilson Tozer once said, "If you cannot worship the Lord in the midst of your responsibilities on Monday, it is not very likely you were worshipping on Sunday!"

We have the classical example of *Brother Lawrence*, a 17th century French lay brother who lived in a Carmelite monastery in Paris. He is the personification of a worshipping heart that surrendered to the Lord at all times. He is well known and loved in his writings, entitled *The Practice of the Presence of God*, in which he explains how he learned to live a life of constant worship. Brother Lawrence says, "We can do little things for God; I turn the pancake that is frying on the pan for the love of Him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before Him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king." Brother Lawrence invoke the Lord in all aspects of his life. Daily chores became the equivalent of *proskuneo* (the heart of worship). In truth, when he flipped that pancake as bowing down before the Lord or kissing Jesus, it is no wonder that he saw it as worship.

"Pain and suffering have come into your life, but remember pain, sorrow, suffering are but the kiss of Jesus - a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you."
- St Teresa of Calcutta

He also added that he found God in among his pots and pans. He rightly points out that we have to know a person in order to love them and the same is true of God. The more we know God the more we will love Him. God is always with us. It would be rude if we deserted a friend who was visiting us so why would we be disrespectful to God by leaving His presence? He writes, "Do not forget Him! Think of Him often. Adore him ceaselessly. Live and die with Him. That is the real business of Christians; in a word, it is our profession." Such advice is just as true today as it was 300 years ago.

Algorithms of daily routine

We, too, can worship the Beloved with a silent kiss, figuratively speaking. In those quiet, private moments when no one's watching, we can whisper words of praise and adoration to the One whose faithfulness is new every morning. In our daily algorithms of daily routine, we can breathe words of prayer to thank Him for keeping His promises. We can lavish our love of Him by expressing gratitude for all He has done and will do in us and through us as He reveals more of Himself to us. Because God is the subject of our worship, the root of all worship is what we think about, God. It is not just singing our praises on Sunday Masses or during Friday Growth or even 4th Saturday Mass and Healing, etc.

It comes from the wellsprings of a heart deeply in love with the Lord – and the effects of this heart can be felt everywhere, anytime, in all seasons of life. Today, draw near to God in worship, in love, in joy, in the deepest of intimacy. Learn the secret of kissing God.

Reflect - What does worshipping Jesus with a kiss mean to us? (Judas kissed the Lord with a kiss of betrayal). How can we give Him our true authentic kiss of praise, worship and honour.



God is always with us



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Fr. Andrew Wong, Spiritual Director & Veronica Nathan, Programme Manager/Counsellor