

Live in love, as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

— Ephesians 5:2



I once thought jalapeños were inedible. But when we started growing them (and their spicy relatives), I had to deal with them. Had I researched hot peppers, I would have known that protective gloves are a good idea. But experience and missteps are the best of all teachers...and I learned.

Besides the wisdom of gloves, I discovered that the source of my pain (capsaicin) became the source of my delight. Exposure adapted my body to the heat of habañero and fish and cayenne; I reveled in the diverse flavor of each pepper, and learned that capsaicin is good medicine for the heart and an effective treatment for arthritis.

Twenty-first-century Western thinkers are challenged to embrace the idea of sacrifice—that something precious may come at high cost. But everything we eat costs something: carrots, potatoes, beets, chickens and fish lose their lives; tomatoes and peppers and kale share their lives until the end of the growing season, when they, too, die.

Something wonderful often comes at a price. Learning to surrender, to share, to give up, to pay the price is part of the human journey. May our own lives be a fragrant offering and sacrifice—the gift of life in the service of Life.

— Sister Catherine Grace