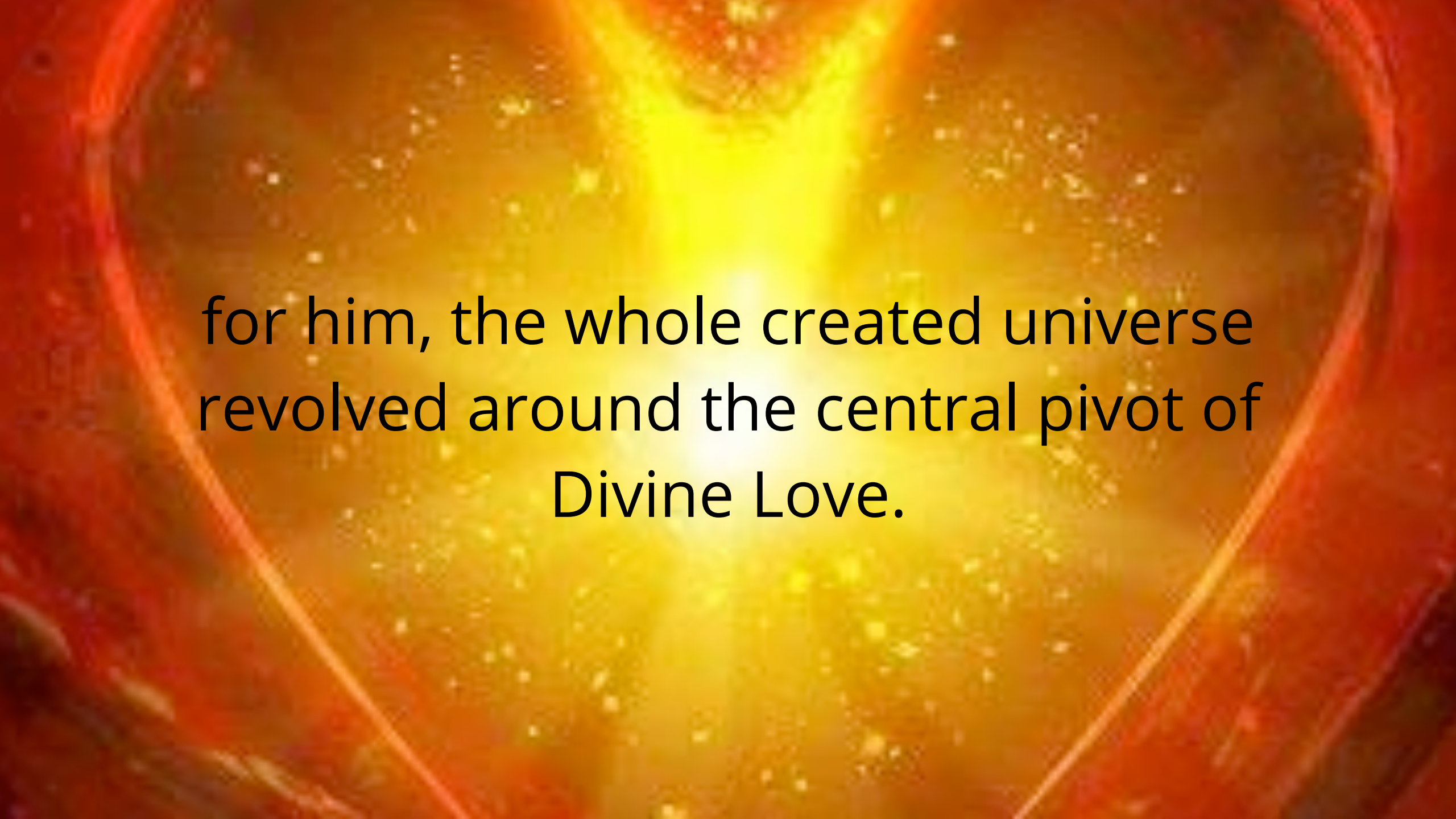
A close-up portrait of Frederic Ozanam, a man with a full, dark beard and mustache, looking slightly to the right. The background is a warm, textured orange-brown. A dark blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid at the bottom.

The two most outstanding traits
in Frederic Ozanam's character

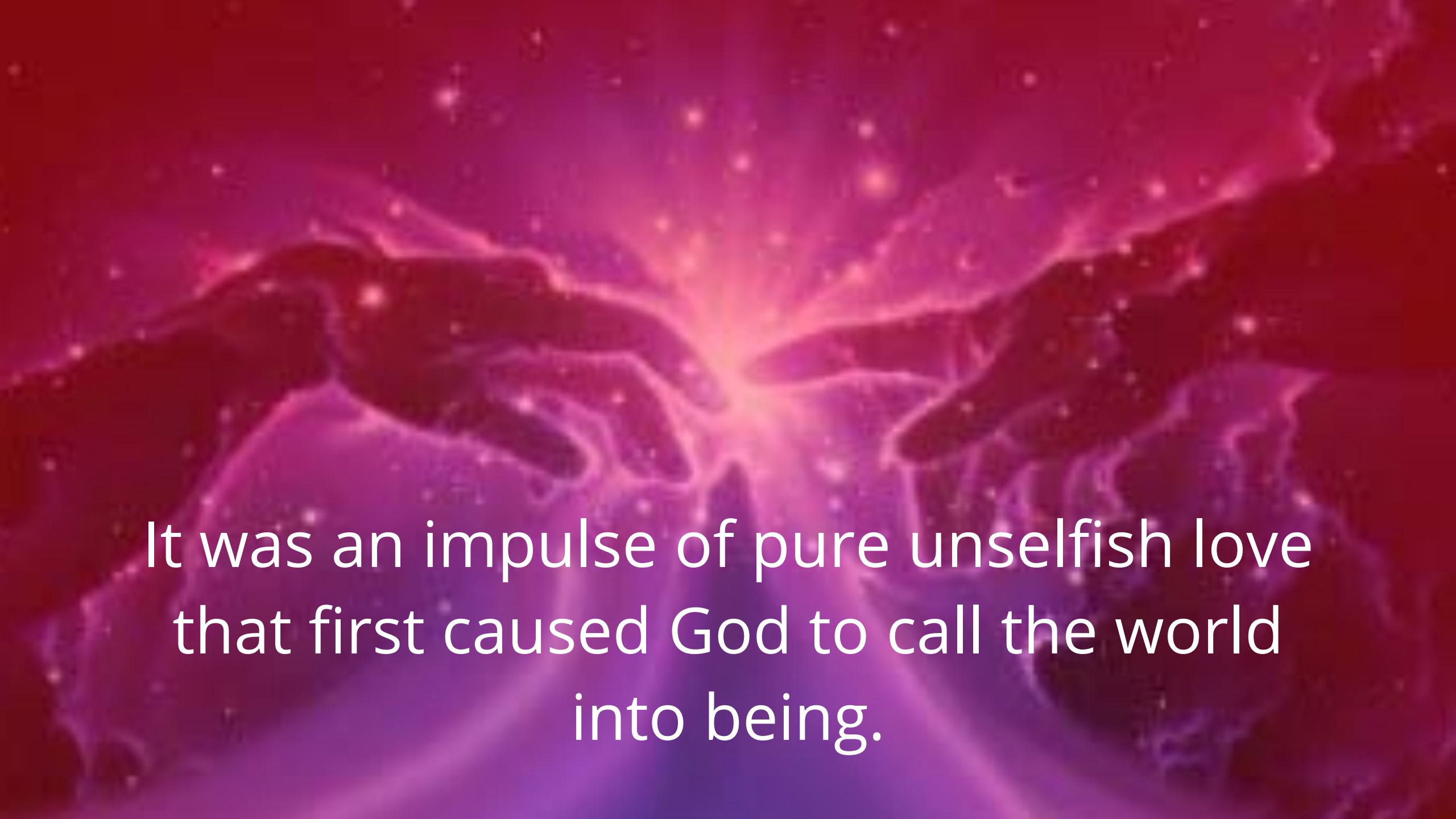
1

The genuine **sympathy**
which Ozanam felt for
other humans

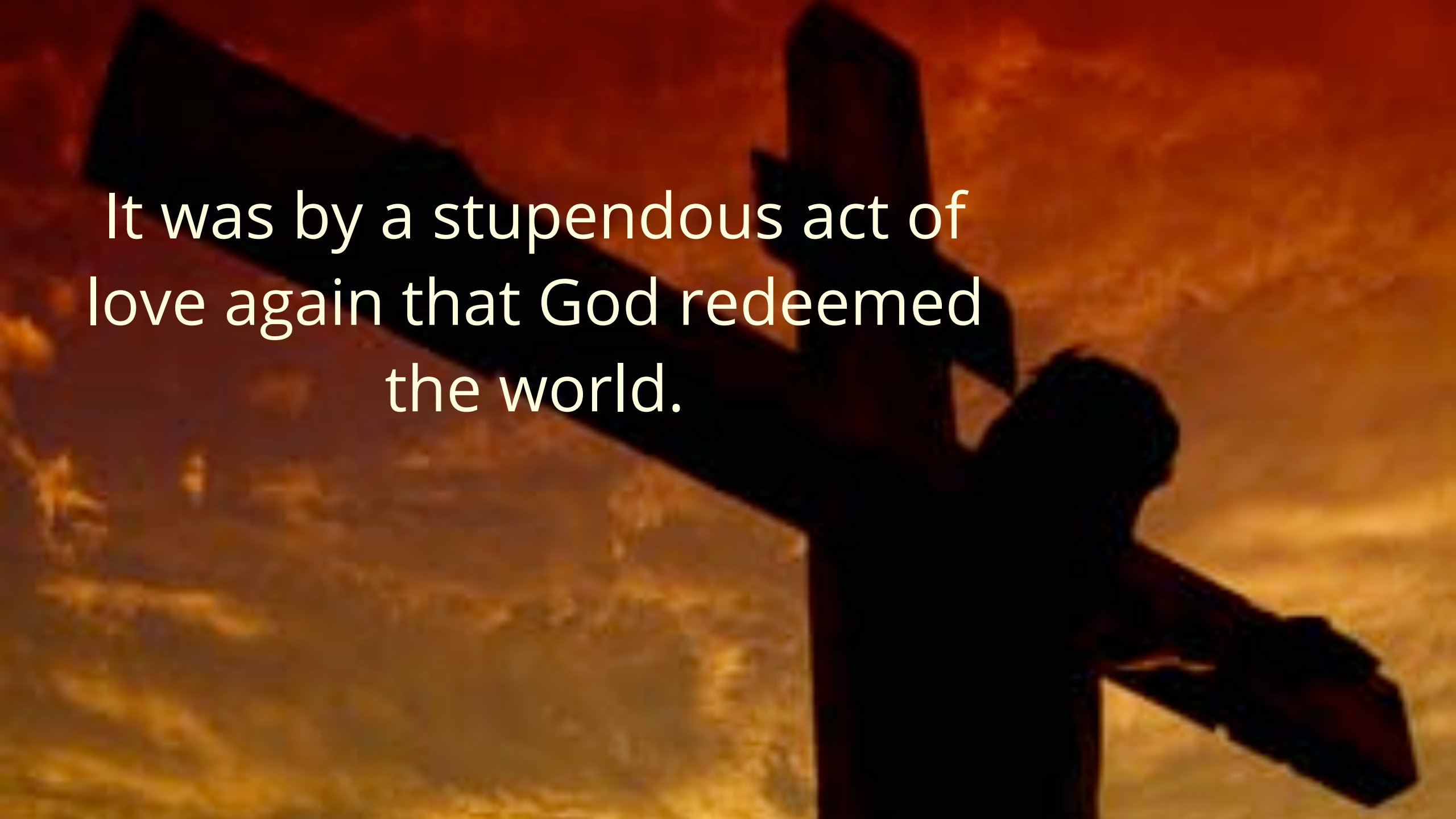
something much more
than mere
humanitarianism...



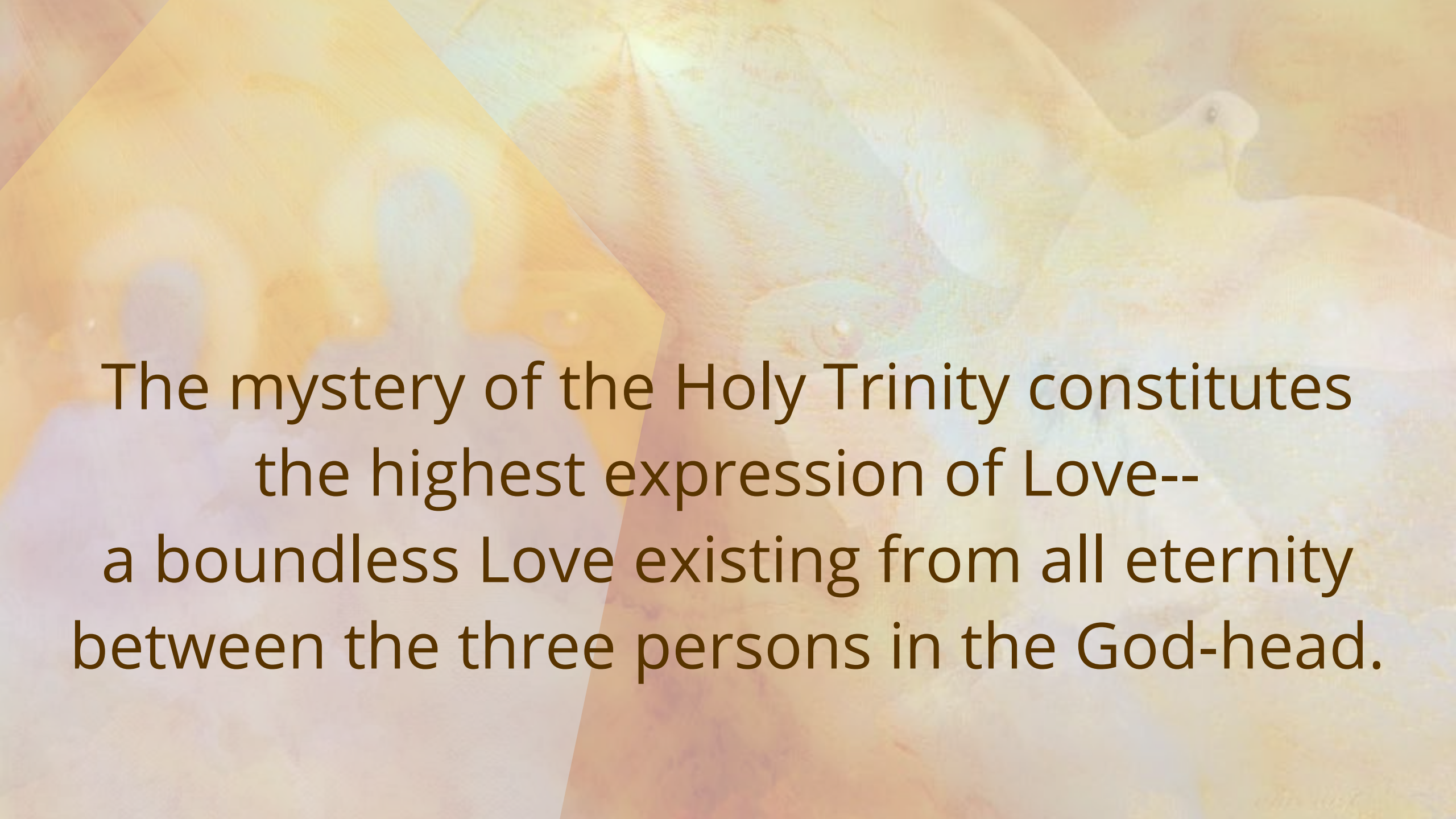
for him, the whole created universe
revolved around the central pivot of
Divine Love.

The background of the image is a deep purple and magenta space scene. Two hands, rendered in a dark, almost black, translucent style, reach out from the left and right sides towards a bright, glowing yellow and orange light source in the center. The light source has a soft, ethereal glow and is surrounded by numerous small, bright white stars and larger, fainter celestial bodies. The overall atmosphere is one of divine spark or creation.

It was an impulse of pure unselfish love
that first caused God to call the world
into being.

A large, dark silhouette of a cross is positioned diagonally across the frame. The background is a vibrant, textured sky in shades of orange, red, and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the left side of the cross.

It was by a stupendous act of
love again that God redeemed
the world.



The mystery of the Holy Trinity constitutes
the highest expression of Love--
a boundless Love existing from all eternity
between the three persons in the God-head.

Ozanam had long meditated
on these fundamental truths
until they had penetrated into
the very marrow of his bones.



He radiated a glow of love
and sympathy
on all around him.



As a champion of faith he extended this spirit of love, even towards his opponents.

Many whose minds were closed
to the force of his reasoning
were touched
by his ready gift of sympathy.



Others in their turn have caught from Ozanam
a reflected ray
of the Light of the Love of God.

A photograph showing a woman with long, wavy blonde hair from the back, looking towards a woman with dark hair and glasses who is holding a young child in a pink shirt. They are in a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a white countertop. A large white bag is visible on the counter to the right.

For Ozanam lit a lamp of charity:
the St. Vincent de Paul Society
in this world...



the flame of which has shone with
brilliancy ever since.



Year by year it has gathered fresh strength
and continued to light up
the dark places of the world.



Shortly after Ozanam's death,
Pope Pius IX addressed a
delegation of four hundred
members of the Society
who had been sent to Rome:



"My children, you are crusaders of Christ in a world which will listen no longer to sermons, nor heed the words of the priests. But it will still hearken to the voice of charity..."



...Go forth and conquer the world
by means of your love for the poor."

Reflect:

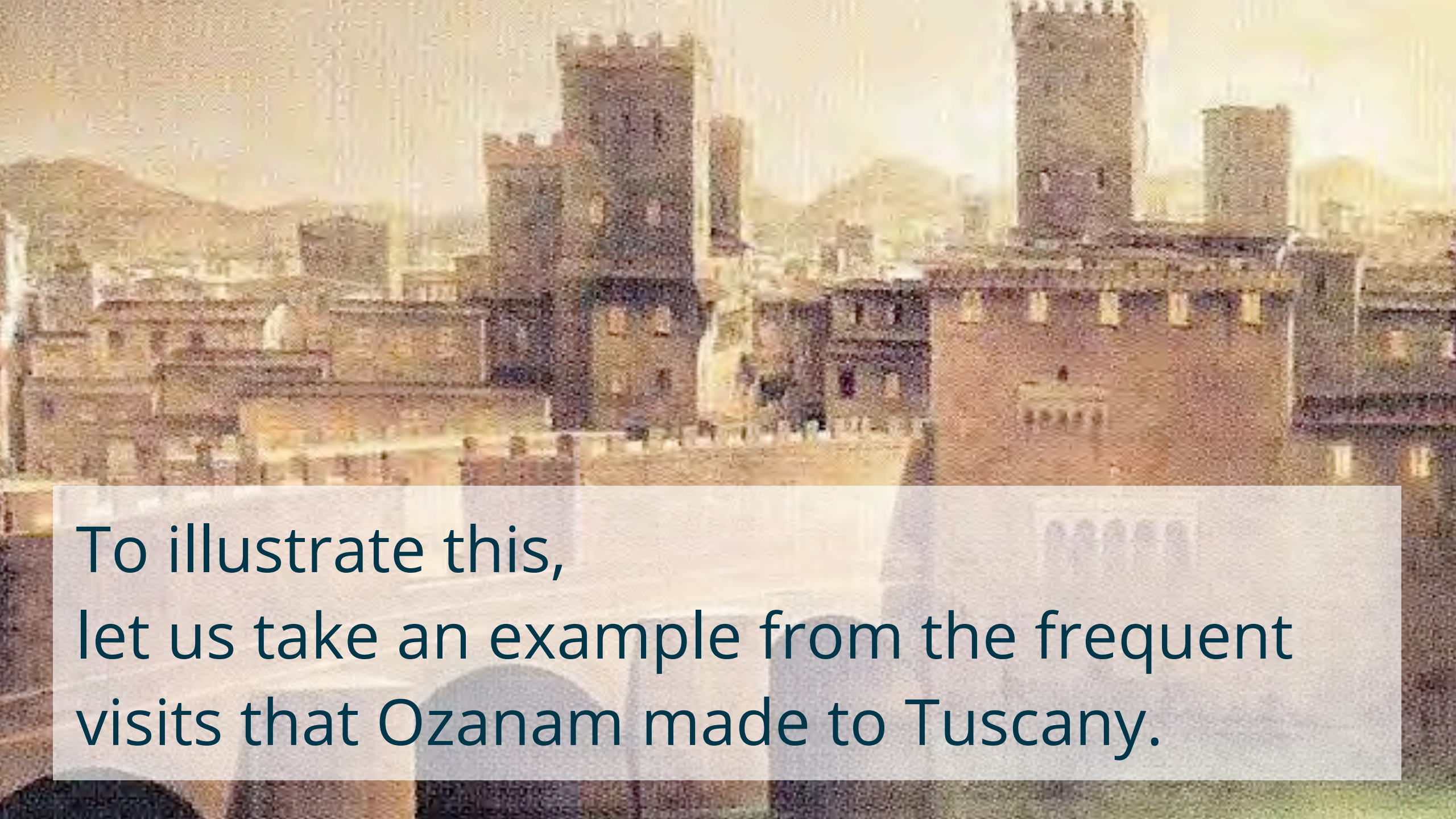
When you have gone to see a sick person who is tired and lonely, or to visit a family in financial trouble, did they actually console and strengthen *you*? How?

Frederic Ozanam steadfastly refused to ever allow himself to be elected president of the Society. He never used the Society as a means of personal aggrandizement.



2

This brings us to the second distinguishing trait in his character-- his **humility**, modesty, and spirit of self-effacement.

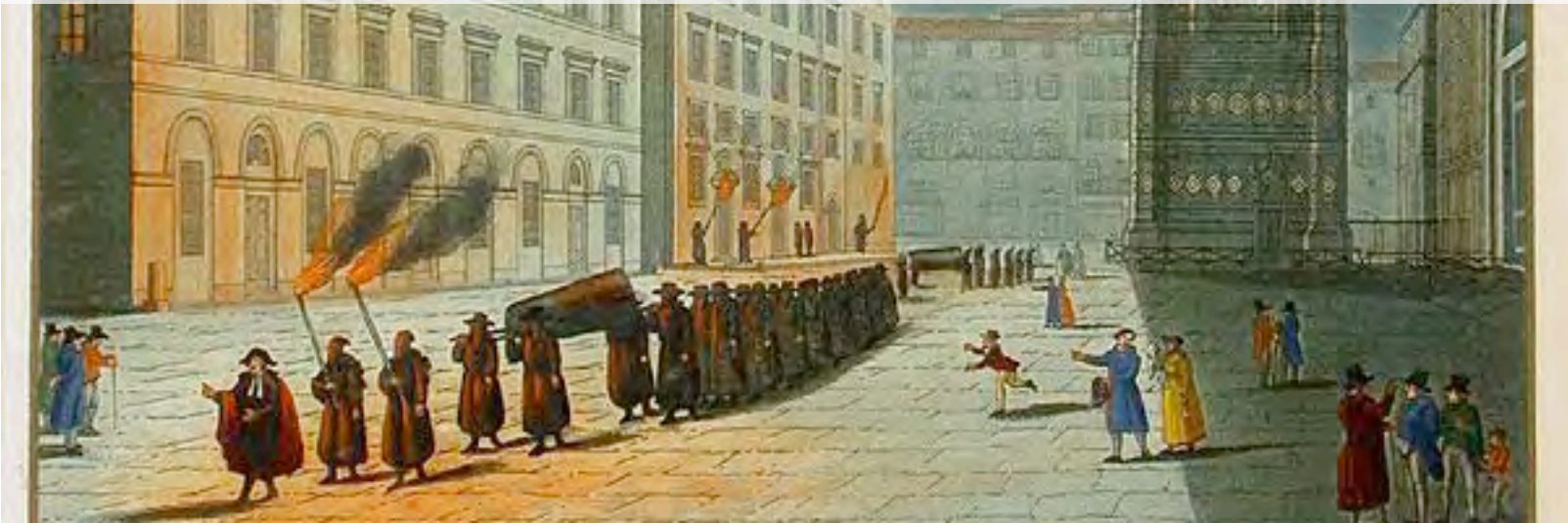


To illustrate this,
let us take an example from the frequent
visits that Ozanam made to Tuscany.

How often must Ozanam have seen the black-hooded figures of the "Misericordie" (the medieval burial confraternities) passing along the streets of Pisa, Florence, or Siena.



A group of men hasten by. They are carrying a coffin of some poor person to the church to receive the last blessing, or perhaps it is some poor sick woman whom they are taking to the nearest hospital.



But who are they?
Who is carrying that coffin?



Passers-by are at a loss to tell, for the bearers are completely hidden from sight by their long black flowing robes.



It may be that they are men of rank and station, small shopkeepers or rough workmen-- that is all that can be known about them.

For their faces are completely concealed from view by their hoods.

The crowd hanging around the pavement in
the street sees no more than that:
the charitable act itself,
not the person who performs it.

The flame of charity and zeal
which burned in Ozanam's heart
was of the same pure quality as that of the
honest burghers of the Tuscan republics,
enabling them to perform their duties
without attracting attention
to their own persons.



Precisely on account of these two traits in Ozanam's character-- his charity and humility-- his name endures in our minds today.

For, whatever far-reaching changes the future may have in store for the world, sympathy for others and singleness of purpose will always be understood and appreciated by all honest-minded people.



Reflect:

What did you learn about yourself as you read this story?

Do you have a sense of being part of Frederic Ozanam's legacy?

Source:

Frederic Ozanam

by Rev. Henry Louis Hughes