

## ***Three Loves* by Graceann K. Deters**

### **Excerpt: Andre's Baptism**

“Have I ever told you about Andre?” Padre asked. “He was the first baby I ever baptize when I moved here twenty-four years ago. Can you imagine that---the feeling that washes over you when you baptize a child in front of the congregation, when you give that infant to God? Andre’s mother was a seamstress in Florianopolis. Still is, in fact. If you have need of sewing work, her skill is above all others. But I digress. The point is that she just about burst with pride when little Andre completed catechism and had his first communion. She was on her own by then because Andre’s father, a fisherman, was killed in a storm when Andre was only three years old. I think often about Andre, who followed in his father’s footsteps and became a fisherman. After a good day on the water, he would come by the parish with a big smile and his biggest catch for us to eat. And he showed up for Mass almost every Sunday with his mother. He was a light in her life---and to be honest, in mine, too.”

“And now he has AIDS,” I interrupted, sure that my guess about where this story was leading was exactly right.

“No. Now he is dead.”