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DEAR FRIENDS

IN THE LORD

The Way of the Heart is the spiritual itinerary proposed by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It is the compass for our mission, a mission of compassion for the world. The Way of the Heart is part of the process initiated by Pope Francis with Evangelii Guadium, "The Joy of the Gospel".

The Way of the Heart was the result of several years of international work led by Father Claudio Barriga, S.J. Like any international document, it is a group effort, which has taken into account diverse cultures, languages, ecclesial and spiritual experiences. It has its richness and its limits. We presented this itinerary to Pope Francis in a document entitled: "A pathway with Jesus, in apostolic readiness" (December 2014). It presented a new way of understanding the mission of the Apostleship of Prayer, in a dynamic of apostolic availability. The Holy Father approved it in August 2014.

The Way of the Heart is essential for the recreation of this ecclesial service as the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It is a deepening of the spiritual tradition of the Apostleship of Prayer for today, and articulates in an original way essential elements of this spiritual treasure with the dynamics of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is the key to the interpretation of our mission, our compass. That is why in 2017 I proposed a commentary. The idea was to help the national teams of the Pope's Prayer Network to deepen each step and enter into its inner dynamics, so that they could propose, with their own creativity, materials that would help to enter into The Way of the Heart. We call this text the "Internal dynamics of the path".

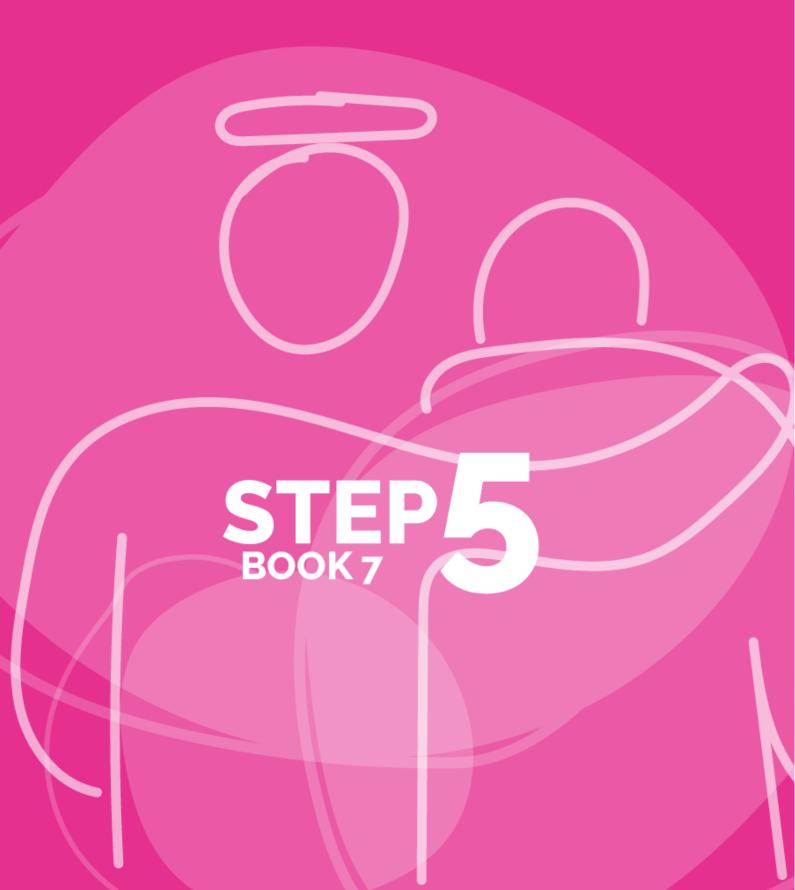


However, few teams began to create new materials and proposals with The Way of the Heart, and we quickly realized that without them, progress in the recreation process of this pontifical work would be very slow. We started in 2018, with an international team, to write 11 books. This team was led by Bettina Raed, regional director of the Pope's Prayer Network in Argentina-Uruguay. It is from the land of Pope Francis, with the support of several Jesuit companions, that this work was coordinated. I am particularly grateful to Bettina for all her availability, her writing and coordination work.

I hope that these materials will help us to propose this mission of compassion to the world with creativity (spiritual retreats, formation sessions, meetings on the first Friday of the month, etc.). This is the basis of our mission. The Way of the Heart helps to enter into the spiritual dynamic of recreation, the dynamic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

P. Frederic Fornos, S.J.
International Director
Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network Original Spanish
December 3, 2019 - St. Francis Xavier

JESUS CALLS US HIS FRIENDS





Outline to guide the step

Keyword: DECIDE.

Objective: To determine to follow Jesus.

Attitudinal keys: : Determination. Enthusiasm and decision to follow Jesus' project.

What you want to obtain – Fruit: openness and listening. Availability to Jesus' call.

Inner dynamics for the step: from "my own project" to "personal friendship and projects with Jesus."

Referential Framework

Jesus Christ calls us his friends and invites us to a covenant of personal, intimate, and affective love with him. He is always alive to intercede for us, actively bent on attracting us to him, for we are precious before his eyes. Our friendship with him leads us to look at the world with his eyes, to suffer with his sufferings and to rejoice in his joys, to offer our humanity to work with him in favor of our brothers and sisters. He is with us every day, to the end of the world.

Internal dynamics of the Step

God does not want to do anything without us, He is always with us. Therefore, the first thing Jesus does is call others to be with him in the service of his mission: "As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net in the sea, because they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And instantly leaving the nets, they followed him." (Mark 1:16-17)

Those who follow him, his disciples, walk with him from town to town, share His food, listen to his words and ponder his actions, work with him during the day, and watch with him at night. Every day they want to know him more intimately, with their hearts, and every day the desire to love and follow him grows more and more.

Determined to follow Jesus Christ

Remember, it was in northern Galilee, in the region of Caesarea Philippi, in a place that could be uncomfortable for them. Jesus asks them, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:1-13) Jesus asks himself about those who hear about him, all who come to listen to him, all who seek healing or bread and fish, all those from Judea and Samaria, Jews and Greeks or people of other origins. Do they have eyes to see and ears to listen? Do they understand who he really is, or do they project their desires, their fears, their dreams? And those he called to be with him on his mission, do they really know him, do they recognize who he is? Are they ready to follow him to the end? Jesus asks them to decide, to be his followers and imitate Him.



To live imitating Jesus' lifestyle

To follow Jesus Christ is to participate today, in His mission and His plan of love for humanity through our choices, words, and actions. To do this, his disciple is called to enter the human journey of Jesus, in his way of life. A lifestyle where there is coherence between one's words and one's actions. Jesus says what He does and does what He says. His word acts and his actions speak. Talking about coherence between our words and our actions is another way of talking about holiness. Jesus calls us to enter his way of life, a dedicated existence that perseveres to the end in love, in openness to the world, and especially to those who suffer, are excluded, and rejected. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For in truth I say to you, that many prophets and righteous desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and hear what you hear, and you did not hear it." (Matthew 13:16) We must see and listen to Jesus. More than one has gotten lost while seeking God. Only Jesus can reveal God. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

To Decide

The Love of Jesus Christ opens us to life and makes us grow in freedom. But the enemy always wants to make us doubt God's love. He wants us to believe that we must be perfect, impeccable, in order to be loved by Him, to the point of separating us from the sacraments, from prayer, and from God himself. The Enemy wants us to believe that we are not worthy to stand before the Lord, that his love depends on our own merits. It is not true; the Lord loves us freely – This is the Good News! – without expecting anything in return, without any merit on our part; we are loved as we are. Grace demands nothing, it does not depend on what we do. The word *freely* must be interpreted in a literal sense. If God's love were up to us, it would not be totally free.

How far does He have to go so that we genuinely believe he loves us without expecting anything from us except an open heart? Has not God given us everything already with his son? Let us not be "deceived" by the enemy, who does not want us to follow Jesus, to the end, on the path of love.

I know from experience that the Lord has been faithful throughout my history, and so he will be tomorrow. What is up to me is to decide to follow him, no matter what, to live according to his lifestyle, and be his friend. Any decision is always subject to some uncertainty. However, there is no life that grows without the risk of a decision.

My decision must be a response to a call, itself a gift, and not a decision merely out of duty or obligation. For St. Ignatius, love is a reciprocal communication (Spiritual

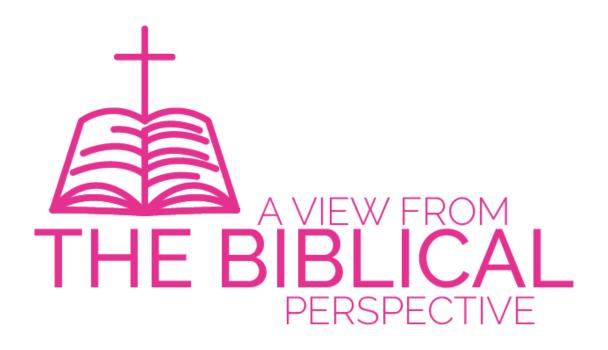


Exercises No. 231) and it is by this means that a decision is made. There can be a lot of love and generosity, but if these are not inscribed and embodied in a decision, no matter how small, then there is only emptiness. However, when this love and generosity are embodied in a decision, though fragile, it can move the whole world. It is the very action of the incarnation.

To decide to relate to Christ is to decide to live the Gospel: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34)

Only then, when we decide to follow him to the end, wishing to be like him, Jesus tells us: "I no longer call you servants, for the servant does not know what his Master does; But I have called you friends, for I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father." (John 15:15)

Thus, the true "servant of Christ," as Scripture says, is a "friend." That is, someone to whom Jesus made known "what he heard from the Father." This means familiarity, closeness, intimacy, being as close to his heart as possible. To grow in this intimacy with Christ we are invited to believe his Word and find him in the sacraments.







A view from the Biblical perspective

Friendship is one of the most wonderful gifts God has given us. We all enjoy having friends in our lives who walk with us, those whom we love and who love us.

Our life of faith gives an incredibly special flavor to the gift of friendship, because Jesus Christ, the Father's envoy to the world, who reconciles us and loves us infinitely has made friendship sacred. He, the same son of God, wanted to share his life on earth with others he chose and called his friends. Friendship with Jesus is a gift that He gives us and so we are invited through it to be with Him, to share in his lifestyle, his life and his mission.

Jesus chose his friends and continues to choose them today, in his infinite love. He makes us his inner circle, entrusts us with the secrets of his Father, invites us to be with him and to collaborate in the construction of his Father's Kingdom.

Already in the Old Testament God lets us know his choice of love, his friendship, and his predilection when he says in the words of Isaiah: "I called you by name, you are mine. You are precious in my eyes, you are valuable, and I love you." (Isaiah 43:1:4)

We are told by Mark the Evangelist that, "He went up the mountain and summoned those whom he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach." (Mark 3:13-14)

Jesus invites us to a friendship for the mission of his Father's Kingdom, so that by our adopting his own style we may be part of his project of salvation of the world, "I no longer call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master does. I call you my friends, for I have made known to you all that my Father has told me." (John 15:15)

Jesus offers us his friendship; it is therefore his initiative. In it, we are invited to give a response by listening and being available to his call, a concrete response in our life situation and in the historical time we are living: "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon." (John 1:37-39).





Thus, as happened to the apostles, there will be various ways in which God calls us to his friendship. Whatever form the call takes, we will not be alone in giving our answer to this call, we will meet brothers with whom to share. They will take us to Jesus or we can take them so that they can also answer His call: "Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). Then he brought him to Jesus..." (John 1: 40- 42)

Jesus invites you today to come into friendship with Him, to accept His invitation to be one of his own, of those who join in the project of the Beatitudes, of those who work for the Kingdom of His Father in His style, that we may be with Him and as He is, become part of the blessed of the Kingdom of God: "When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you Ifalselyl because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus, they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:1-12).

Jesus continues to tell his friends that living in friendship with Him, following these calls of the Kingdom makes them "light and salt of the earth". Jesus' friends will not be the doctors of the law who merely teach, but will be the ones who live in the style of Jesus, according to his actions and his decisions. Jesus expects his friends to be the ones who season and enlighten the earth with the taste and light that radiates from our own friend Jesus: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house." (Matthew 5:13-15).





He invites you; it is your decision to answer.

- I called you by name, you are mine. Because you are precious in my eyes; honored, and I love you. (Isaiah 43:1-4)
- Then Jesus went up to a mountain and called those he wanted. Once assembled, he chose from among them twelve, to accompany him and to send them to announce his message. He gave them the name of apostles. (Mark 3:13-14)
- I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. (John 15:15)
- Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following him, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, "Master, who is the one who will betray you?" (John 21:20)
- I am with you always, until the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20)
- Therefore, he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)
- Whoever wants to come with me must be happy to eat like me, and so drink and dress, etc.; you must also work with me in the day and watch at night. (Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, No. 93)..."

To dig deeper. Resources. Appendix Three. "He calls us his friends".

To dig deeper. Resources. Appendix Four. "Not just holy on the altars".

A VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH.





A view from the perspective of Faith

To Follow Christ

"As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." (Mark 10:17-21)

As we listen to this account of the Gospel, we might think that this is a call to consecrated life as religious, priests. As if this way of life were only supported by the expression "giving everything to the poor and then following Jesus". However, this is the account of Jesus' call to be His disciples. A story that concerns us all.

Jesus met many people on the roads of Galilee, but not everyone became his disciples. The crowd that came from Judea, Jerusalem, and beyond the Jordan was overwhelmed and, to some men and women, His words and gestures did them much good. The attitude of the disciple is to walk behind, to follow the Master.

On the other hand, some people he encounters along the way, in towns, will follow Jesus, they will listen to Him and respond to His call: "Follow me!"

The Christian vocation

To speak of vocation is to speak of a "call." It is Jesus Christ who calls. We hear "vocation" and often think of religious life, consecrated persons. However, to speak of vocation is to speak of our Christian vocation. By our baptism, by being anointed as priests, prophets, and kings, at our baptism, we are all called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the Christ.

The Christian vocation is a response to the call to be followers of Christ. The disciple wants to know the Master: "Where do you live?" (John 21:1,38). He wants to know Him, meet Him, to love Him and follow Him more faithfully. The disciple wants to walk along the way of Jesus. Evangelical accounts tell the life of Jesus and what he becomes for those who cross his path. To those who respond to his call and become his disciples, he gradually communicates his identity, his lifestyle, his way of being, which becomes, as we will see, the very form of the disciple's existence.





Becoming disciples of Jesus Christ, in intimacy with Him, requires us to listen and be receptive, docile to the life of the Spirit. This is what we see in the call to the "rich young man" who, driven by a deep desire for life, of "eternal life," tells Jesus that he observes all the commandments from his youth. Jesus replies: "Only one thing are you lacking; go, take what you have, sell it and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." This call from Jesus is a call to my inner freedom, to go beyond mere fulfillment of the law. "Come, Follow Me" is a call to freedom indeed, which overcomes mere fulfillment of the law and invites me to enter into a story, the story of Christ. His story will become my own story, a story I venture with him today, which in turn will be brought to life with my "Yes" and in the freedom of his Spirit. Therefore, becoming disciples of Jesus is a call to enter into life in the Spirit. This is the only Christian vocation.

To enter into life in the Spirit

Let's go back to the Gospel and imagine. A man walks at night in the dark alleys of Jerusalem. Listen to the sound of his footsteps. He has an important appointment. This man is a remarkable Jew, educated, a learned teacher of Israel, recognized as the one who teaches the wisdom of the Law, the Torah. His name is Nicodemus. He comes to meet Jesus. "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:1-8).

We hear in this story how Jesus helps Nicodemus discover life in the Spirit. Nicodemus is a man of the Torah. He knows the wisdom of the Law, but even being a scholar and knowing many things, he comes at night. Coming into the "Kingdom of God" is not a matter of the law or knowledge, but of birth. It's about "being born again," "being born from above." It's always about being born to life in the Spirit. In fact, practicing such or such a virtue, obeying the law, or keeping commandments does not allow you to fully access life in the Spirit.

One comes to life in the Spirit, to a spiritual life, when one is open to the "inner stirrings," when one is aware of one's "motions," that is, the "movements" of our





affectivity, inspired by the Spirit. Then whoever enters this life grows in familiarity with his inner life that gradually one manages to decipher, learns to come forward to receive the movements of the Spirit and to recognize the voice of Another who tries to speak with him. This is the characteristic of spiritual discernment.

Jesus himself was a man of discernment, a man docile to the Spirit. As we see in many Gospel episodes, he was constantly trying to recognize his way as he prayed to his Father. His life wasn't planned beforehand. To take this discernment seriously is to take your humanity seriously.

A significant episode is that of the Greek woman, of Syro-Phoenician origin, whose daughter has an "unclean/evil spirit." After the tensions with the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus has retreated to a pagan country in the Tyre region, and he does not want to be known. However, this Greek woman recognizes him and asks him to "cast out the devil from his daughter." Jesus at first refuses such a request: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the woman comes and does him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said in reply, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." His words sound harsh. Jesus seems to understand his mission only in the context of Israel, with whom God has made a covenant (Matthew 15:24). However, Jesus hears the woman's full reaction. He hears her word. He does not lock himself in his position, does not try to argue anymore, rather lets himself be touched by her word and moves in his convictions. By this "Word," he frees the child. Jesus is a man who can welcome the other to the point of being transformed by the other. He lets himself be moved from his certainties. From now on, after this meeting, Jesus will open himself to the Gentiles and to travel through their country. This encounter, in fact, allows him to discern his mission.

The disciple is in turn called to enter into the life of the Spirit; he is called to discern how to follow Jesus in today's world, how to be flexible and docile to his Spirit. This call is also for you.







A view from the Spiritual perspective

Jesus at the center of our lives

The great challenge that we human beings have, believers or not, is to find new ways to make life more human, dignified, and healthy. But in addition, the followers of Jesus, need to nourish *ourselves from his way of life*. This way of being and acting of Jesus, re-ignited in the people who were with Him the hope of a more fraternal and supportive world. By imitating him, we will continue to be today, collaborators of the project of the Kingdom of God. The question is: How?

Modern man experiences a loss of meaning and horizon in his life; this causes him insecurity and mistrust because of excessive progress, to the detriment of himself. Science, technology, medicine, computer science, and numerous advances in various fields of science and technology have failed to satisfy the deep desire that exists in him, that is, to love and feel loved.

There is an increasing number of people who openly manifest the dissatisfaction in their lives. They have everything, or at least they believe so, to be happy, but they are not; this is perhaps the biggest frustration and poverty of this century.

The people of today, despite often living in a world that offers them numerous alternatives, lack the fundamentals to live. They suffer hunger, but not like those who have nothing to eat and roam the streets feeding on what they find in the trash cans, but it is a ferocious and brutal hunger that kills them with affective and spiritual starvation, because they fail to feel loved by God and their fellow human beings.

Even without full awareness of this, we are in search of Jesus and his project of the Kingdom becomes the center of our lives again. Therefore, we need to place ourselves at the heart of the world, with a spirituality centered on the Heart of Jesus: a compassionate and merciful heart that is involved in people's lives to make their lives more dignified.

But this new way of facing ourselves will be possible if we regain our personal and affective relationship with Jesus. From this personal and irreplaceable encounter that we have with Him in prayer, the feelings and attitudes that mobilized the Heart of Jesus when He saw the suffering of so many people will flow from within us. He desired that the existence of people be more dignified, and proposed with his life a particular style to make the world more just. Approaching heart of Jesus, we also approach his sufferings and his feelings for all. He leads us on a mission of compassion for the world.





We need to let God's Love reach us. But before we get excited about his cause or his concrete mission, we need to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Enter a deep friendship with Him. Only then can we be passionate about his project for a more humane, healthy, and blissful life for all. It is His love that will forge in us the lifestyle that will make us followers and collaborators in his project of the Kingdom. The heart of the Apostle, who is still a disciple, must always be listening to the voice of the Master.

In the sacred space of prayer we tune in to the feelings of Jesus in such a way that little by little, and in an invisible way, a "true heart transplant" will take place until we assume his way of being and proceeding. The Spirit teaches us to look at things with his eyes, to feel like Him, and to desire the world to become the Kingdom of God.

The love of the Father manifested in Jesus is not theoretical. He did not express it only in words, but made it concrete with gestures of compassion and mercy. That is why our way of following Jesus must be modeled by his way of proceeding. Only in this way can the apostles of Jesus project a face more like his.

To contemplate the life of Jesus

To get to know Jesus in depth, we need to know his life, his style, his way of deciding and acting. In the Gospels and books of the New Testament we find stories about his life in this world that are light and guidance for ours. Only by taking time to "feed" on and be nurtured by this word, a source of life in abundance, can we enter into deep friendship with Jesus, the Son of God.

Reading the Gospels and contemplating the life of Jesus is a way of praying, of entering into intimacy with the Lord and letting his life challenge ours and lead us to a path of inner transformation. To contemplate the Gospelsis to dwell on the images, to observe, to see, to hear what the accounts of Jesus' life tell us. To allow the details of the characters, of the scene, to become "impregnated in the heart", even the "tics" of Jesus, his gestures, his ways of thinking, of feeling, of looking, of acting are reflected in ours.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola in his book of The Spiritual Exercises, tests the exercitant before proposing to him the following of Jesus. As a person trained in the arts of chivalry, he was well schooled in what it meant to "follow the king." He thus recreates a call that makes his subjects like a dear and respected king, to add them to his cause. And he tells them "whoever would like to come with me, must be happy to eat like me, and so to drink and dress, etc.; he must also work with me in the day and watch at night, etc.; so that then he will have a part with me in victory, as he has had in





the labors. This saint sensed that whoever decided to follow Christ had to be available enough to get excited about human projects, with causes of courage driven by people of good will. For if this were not "checked", the following Jesus could be just a fantasy or utopia of the person. Thus St. Ignatius introduces the person on a self-test and in a concrete and palpable learning experience. And this exercise helps the exercitant "measure" the reality of determining his follow-up to the "Eternal King," Jesus Christ. That is, it is a help that then makes it easier for you to measure the degree of "authenticity" of your decision. Have you thought about how excited you are in working on good human projects? Or in following up on other people's projects that help build values such as good, truth, justice or helping the most fragile? What things excite you or compromise your delivery, your time, your assets, your inner disposition?

St. Ignatius of Loyola elsewhere in his book of The Spiritual Exercises invites us to ask for "internal knowledge of the Lord who for me has become man", that is to know him intimately, what his heart is like, what things move him, what he desires, what he expects. For what? To love him more ardently and follow him more faithfully. St Ignatius "discovered" that, to follow Jesus Christ, one must love Him deeply and freely, and to love Him in this way one must know Him. You do not love the one you do not know. And the great mystery of love is that the more we know Jesus, and the more we delve into the traits of his life on earth, the more we realize that following Him implies our letting him love usfirst and be led by him as well. For He takes the initiative, He makes the invitation and the proposal, and we must just welcome the invitation and decide to follow Him. But this experience is not a theory, nor a declaration but an experience of life that we can only choose, by making our way with Jesus, contemplating Him in the Gospels, letting ourselves be reflective in his life, letting our contact with his word transform us. Again St. Ignatius gives us a guide to "make the exercise of contemplating", by seeing the people in the story, by hearing what they say and by looking at what they do and then consider, and so let the image tell us something, let it reflect something to us and so echo it in our heart. And from that, we learn what is most beneficial to live our lives.

Following Jesus is therefore uniting ourselves to His project, working on His mission, but with His style, living His Life, his gestures, his ways, making ours his way of proceeding so that our lives reflect his own. And this will only touch us if we allow ourselves to be transformed by contemplation of his life so that it may become life in us.

To dig deeper. Resources. Appendix Two. "Living in a Different Mode of Time."





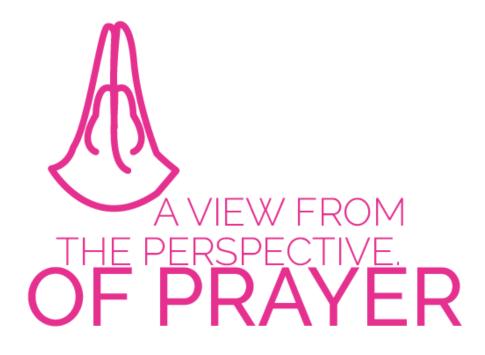


A view from the Pope's Words

Taking the first step, being involved and supportive, bearing fruit and rejoicing

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 John 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: "You will be blessed if you do this" (John 13:17). An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance. Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time. Faithful to the Lord's gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. When the sower sees weeds sprouting among the grain, he does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed. Finally, an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving.

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium No. 24)







A View from the Perspective of Prayer

He calls us to be his friends

Forgiveness resurfaces love in us. A love that is free and generous. A love that leads us to identify with Christ, to imitate the traits of the Son. It is a love that leads us to have the same feelings of the One who calls us friends. Jesus invites us to be with Him, to be collaborators in His mission. In this step of the Way of the Heart it is necessary to reorder life towards the person of Jesus, to order the affections that move our lives.

We know what the Father is able to do in us when we let him in, we know God's gift, and for the same reason we prepare to let ourselves be led and guided by Jesus. We let ourselves fall in love with him, in such a way that he will take all in us away, he will affect everything. We want to allow ourselves to be transformed by his invitation and promise, to let ourselves be inhabited by Him, to place in Him all our trust and hope. We let ourselves be called because we recognize in the invitation, he extends to us a new radical and profound path of life.

The next stage is marked by the need to learn to be with others, with the people we love and love us, but we realize that it is not an easy step to take. It is a total change of perspective and requires putting ourselves in each other's place. We can only be placed in this new paradigm, if we have traveled well through the first stage and are willing to cross the sea of selfishness to enter the lives of others: we all enter a new world. This second stage opens in childhood when friends appear. In The Spiritual Exercises No.95 Saint Ignatius of Loyola puts on the lips of the Eternal King a call to the disciples to enter into this new way of living saying, "Whoever wants to come with me must work with me, because following me in sorrow you also follow me in glory"

Jesus invites us to cross the very frontiers of the "I" to start perceiving life with the eyes of the "you" and it is a step that requires courage and fearlessness, because it means abandoning one's own security and comforts to live according to His lifestyle. You must work hard, sweat a lot and be willing, even, at times, to mourn the loss of Egypt's "garlic and onions". To go through the first stage of our life means to take a qualitative leap, to perform an inner exodus that many dare rather not take. Jesus calls us friends and invites us to **pronounce and translate, with one's life, the word sharing**. If the first thing we learn is to value who we are, that is, the "I", the next step is to empathize with the "You."

Although it may seem strange to us, the transformation to the style of Jesus occurs as we acquire the attitude of sharing. Simply put, maturity in following Jesus is measured





by our ability to surrender. Developing the attitude of sharing means breaking and gradually coming out of the "shell" of selfishness to discover the beauty of life through the eyes of Jesus. When we contemplate the world through the eyes of Jesus, we are placed in a new vision of reality that makes us discover all things new.

Sharing is a fundamental attitude to be with Jesus. It may be easy to give something, a part of something that is our property, but giving ourselves, is a reality that makes us tremble. Giving who we are is a difficult task because it touches the most intimate fibers of selfishness that refers everything to itself. We are not always willing or prepared to break the inertia of spinning over our own navel. Sharing is an inner battle that will accompany us all our lives. It aims to free up love and its potential: generosity. We must learn to live "everything" what we are and what we have, by becoming "part" of the other. Sharing is an attitude that forces us to face the detachment and the let go of all to live in the style of Jesus.

As such, if we go through this second stage well, will we be prepared to value the "we."? Without this process of human consciousness and affective development we will not fully *understand* what it means to give-ourselves, *to offer*-ourselves, to share-ourselves with others.

To dig deeper. Resources. Appendix One. "The Joy of the Gospel."

Some practical exercises

EXERCISE:

Offering in everyday life.

The daily rhythm of prayer, which we propose in the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, has at least three specific moments, as we saw in the introduction to the Way of the Heart. Here we invite you to implement this first moment with special attention. In the daily offering we give ourselves to the Lord to collaborate with Him by making ourselves available to His mission. It is the time of day when we especially put into practice the desire to grow in apostolic availability, which is an openness of the heart to the Lord's action, to his word, to lead us. This availability is to listen to his voice that may or may not be realized in an action, but which is first made effective in our total inner disposition to Him.

In the morning and at the beginning of the day "With Jesus in the morning," in a moment of silence, you will be present to the Risen Jesus who is with you. You will ask the Father



to make you available to his Son's mission during this new journey, offering yourself with what you are and have. You ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to the needs and challenges of humanity and mission of the Church, and so pray for them according to the Pope's intentions for that month. You can make this offering daily through the application "Click to Pray".

We suggest that every morning when you pray and at the moment of your private prayer use "Click To Pray" and raise this prayer to the Father:

"Good Father, I know you are with me. Here I am on this new day. Place once again my heart next to the Heart of your Son Jesus, who gives himself for me and who comes to me in the Eucharist. May your Holy Spirit make me his friend and his apostle, available to his mission. I put in your hands my joys and hopes, my work and suffering, all that I am and have, in communion with my brothers and sisters of this worldwide prayer network. With Mary, I offer you my journey today for the mission of the Church and for the Pope's prayer intentions for this month."

EXERCISE:

Offerings of greater esteem and moment, of greater love and dedication

We propose you to exercise a particularly demanding exam.

Remember that it is a time of prayer, sWe suggest that you do an exercise following one of the clues that Saint Ignatius gives us again in his book, *The Spiritual Exercises*. This saint knows that not all people will attain the same inner disposition in the decision and commitment to follow the Lord. But each will make his own surrender, give his own answer to the invitation of the "Eternal King". Thus he senses that some "will want to be of greater affection", that is, they will want to go a little further and wish to give themselves not only to work, but will want to give themselves personally to the cause of the Kingdom of God. Even when they feel it is difficult and might generate inner resistance, they will do so out of love and gratitude to the Lord's call.

That is why we invite you to "test yourself as to your own commitment". How far are you willing to go for the cause of Jesus Christ? What are you willing to hand over to the Lord? What commitments are you willing to assume?

Imagine that you stand before the Lord and right there are also all the male saints and female saints of heaven, the whole court of angels, and the Mother of Heaven who are witnesses to this moment when you are ready to offer yourself to the Lord. A moment in which you tell the Lord that you are willing to follow Him, to go wherever He takes you, to work where He needs you, even if you have to go through difficult situations, or harsh or unjust ones. Imagine this moment when you ask the Lord to



accept your offer, to receive you in his service, and to join you in his mission. Write down what you would say, tell the Lord what and how you give yourself, and beg Him to let you join Him in His mission, if He decides that He needs you.

EXERCISE:

Learn to contemplate the life of Jesus

We invite you to practice contemplating some aspects in the life of Jesus

This way of praying is appropriate for biblical scenes where there are characters to see and hear. **Contemplating is more than a way of doing; it is a way "to be with" Jesus Christ**. When you contemplate, for example, a landscape, a stream, with water jumping on the stones, you simply stay there, doing nothing, without thinking anything, just be present. You enjoy that moment and you get what you see and hear.

This same attitude you will have with the accounts of the gospel. You will try to contemplate Jesus himself, his words and his gestures, his life, as if you were present.

Today I invite you to listen to the call of the first disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. Listen to this story as if you were there. Imagine what you see and hear as if you were also present on the shore. Take the time to enjoy and savor the experience, without rushing. Remember: "It is not knowing much that fills and satisfies the soul but feeling and tasting things internally" (Saint Ignatius of Loyola).

"Come with me" (Matthew 4:18-22)

"As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him."

What can help you get into deeper contemplation is moving forward step by step. **What do we mean?**

First, it is about seeing. See the people present in the story.



SEEING

There is a way to look without seeing. Take the time to really see. How are people dressed, what are their faces like? Who are they? (their story, their temperament, their joys and their sorrows, their desires).

You can also get involved in this scene. So, do not contemplate this story as if you were outside, but rather feel you are inside of it, part of the events. You can be in the middle of the crowd, be a disciple, a Pharisee, or a sick man, and see everything as he sees it. How did he experience this scene? What did he see from where he was? How did he see Jesus? and so on.

Then you take the time to "feel and taste things internally," letting what you see resonate in your heart. How does all this become part of your life? There may be an image, a gesture, a look that touched you. You can stay there while you internalize and savor it.

How should we move forward in contemplation? The **first step**, we said, is **to see** the people in the biblical story as if you were there. **The second step is to listen:**

LISTENING

We can hear without listening. Indeed, if you are too full of yourself, of your thoughts, of what you think you know, you will find it difficult to be receptive to what the other really says. One must take the time to listen without filling your prayer with only inner talk; be attentive to what you hear and really listen.

What do the persons in this biblical account say, for example, the disciples or Jesus, how is their voice, their intention, the weight of what they say? Listen to the words and what they reveal from what the speaker says, and from the silence they carry in themselves. It is not so much a a question of reflecting on these words, but of listening to them, receiving them, and letting them resonate in your heart. If you really listen as if you were present, without trying, you will be able to hear the words as if they were addressed to you personally.

After you have taken the time to "feel and taste the words internally" you can go back to this or that word, stop there, and profit from it for your life. You stay there, as long as it gives you some delight. We cannot split up the various moments of any contemplation. It can happen that " to see" and "to listen" become one. If this helps you stay closer to Jesus Christ, no problem. If you feel, on the contrary, that you are making your own "mental movie" and that you move away from what the biblical text says, it is better to return to the beginning, "to see", and then move forward step by step.



There is a third moment in contemplation. It is about considering what is going on in the story.

TO CONSIDER: (To look interiorly pondering with your heart, feeling an affective commitment.)

After you have taken the time to look at the persons present in the story and hear their words, you may consider their gestures, attitudes, reactions, and intentions. **It is not so much a moment of reflection. It remains an inner attitude of contemplation.** It is about tasting everything from the inside out, weighing what they are trying to do, and letting what happens in that story resonate within you. I let the experience resonate within me. What does it mean?

Then try to feel how what you contemplated speaks about your life, reflects your own story, says something about you. There too, without trying, you receive what comes to you.

To contemplate an evangelical account, it is important to take the time to prepare your body and heart, without rushing. If you go too fast to enter into contemplation, you run the risk of staying in the head. You can consider, from what you see and hear, and how what the first disciples experienced in their encounter with Jesus (see Gospel account of Matthew 4:18-22) compares to your personal life.

Summary of Contemplating a biblical text step by step

Contemplation

See the persons

I see the persons present in the Gospel scene. How do they dress, what are their faces like? Who are they? (their story, their temperament, their joys and their sorrows, their hopes).

• Listen to what they say

Listen to what they say, as if you were present. What is the tone of their voice and their intention?

• Consider what they do

What are their gestures, attitudes, reactions, and intentions? Ponder it all and try to feel what they are trying to do. After each of these moments, feel and taste them internally. Let the words and gestures resonate within you, listen interiorly, notice how they touch you personally. How does it all speak to you, how does it become part of your life?



To conclude the spiritual encounter

At the end of the set time, you take a moment **to speak** to the Lord as "a **friend speaks to another friend.**" This means that first, above all, you take the time to contemplate. Now, you tell him frankly what this contemplation put in your heart. You can end it with the same words as Jesus: "The Our Father."

Practice of the Thematic Examination. Review the contemplation.

After this type of prayer, we suggest that you review the exercise: For five minutes, remember the moment of contemplation and identify what you did and what you experienced.

Observe what you did (the form of contemplation). Did the directions above help you? (place, length of contemplation, body position, etc.). Did you take the time to allow yourself to be present to the Lord or have you rushed to the reading of the text? Did you ask for what you "are looking for and want"?

Listen to what you experienced (the content of the contemplation) Did you receive what you asked for? Did your desire change? Was there a word that moved you in particular? What did you discover about yourself, the world, and the Lord? Joy, peace, trust, coldness, feeling of emptiness, sense of confinement... Write down a note to remember and identify, day after day, how the Spirit of the Lord leads you.

JESUS CALLS USHIS FRIENDS





Resources

Appendix One

The joy of the gospel

A characteristic note of those who live the lifestyle of Jesus, is the ability to rejoice in the happiness of the other -- even if we are not direct protagonists of that happiness, because we are going through difficult times.

Or are we only happy for the happiness of others, if we are ourselves the cause or the protagonists of it? It is wonderful to meet people who can smile at the achievements of others, when they themselves may be going through difficult and complicated situations. On the contrary, it is surprising to find persons who have made an alliance with sadness and capriciously brood over their own problems. It is also amazing how many hours we waste repeatedly returning to thoughts that result only in bitterness and resentment. We all know that joy in this world will never be complete, but we cannot forget or set aside those precious little manifestations of joy others experience for us to get it. God also comforts us through the joys of others.

Learning to smile about one another's happiness is an attitude contrary to that of the world that wants to convince us that we can only be happy if we manage to achieve and conquer all our dreams. We can also be happy by sharing the joys of others. Whoever learns and develops that ability to leave behind the wells of bitterness themselves will be closer to being a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We hear many times that true friends are those who accompany and support you in "difficult times", but I think this thought is incomplete. True friends are the ones who also smile with our joys, burst with joy when they see us happy, and get excited about us when we achieve our goals. Showing sorrow and compassion for the one who suffers when I am well is easy, but to rejoice for the other while I find myself in a difficult situation, means to have widened the borders of the heart beyond the fences of selfishness. Perhaps that is why Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is similar to the weddings that a King prepared in honor of his son, because to enter and participate in the joy of others one must first be able to forget about oneself.

Finally, I want to share with you this thought of José Luis Martín Descalzo: "A good smile is more an art than an inheritance. Something that must be built patiently, laboriously, with inner balance, with peace in the soul, with a love without borders.



People who love a lot smile easily, because a smile is, above all, a great act of self-fidelity. A bitter man will never know how to smile. Much less, a proud one".

Appendix Two

Living in a Different Mode of Time

Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl said: "There is a lot of wisdom in Nietzsche when he says: 'He who has a reason to live for can endure almost anything."

The fullness of our lives is not in what we achieve or can achieve, but in the reason that keeps our lives going.

For many their lives end when they reach their goals or achieve their immediate purposes, and then their enthusiasm is deflated like a balloon after a birthday. When you do not have a reason that transcends time and space, or the disposition of the heart to "feel and taste" the way, your life becomes tasteless and your walk heavy and labored.

Why does it happen that we lose interest after we reach that goal that seemed so motivating and challenging?

When our motives for living are set for God's purpose, something different happens, because living anchored in the "Kairos" puts human existence on a different level of time: we understand our lives. It is not quantitative time that counts, as the "Chronos" poses, but the qualitative time of the Kairos that values each step, every advance and every setback, stumble, or loss. The "Chronos" points to goals and conquests that then disappear, like ice when the spring sun rises. We must place ourselves in the "Kairos", that opportune time in which we perceive life as a gift that we must appreciate, enjoy, and share. In the "Kairos," which is God's time, we get a "reason" that makes us support almost any "how".

Faith gives us a broader perspective on life than immediate goals and allows us to have a creative visualization of reality; and to create you must believe. The reason for our life is not like the "carrot for a donkey" that moves the beast from place to place. Nor can it be like a high-speed train in haste to come to an end without enjoying and appreciating the beauty of the landscape you are touring. Life is this time, god's gift, that we learn to enjoy the "here and now", without losing sight of where we are going.

Receiving the Gospel



If we asked many of those who receive missionaries in their homes, if they really received the "Gospel" with that visit, that is, good news, what answers would we receive? Remember that Evangelizing comes from the word Gospel which means Good News.

In the missioning of the 72 disciples (Luke 10:1-11), Jesus tells them "the reality" to which they are sent, gives them indications of what to bring and also instructions on how to act. He immediately places them in "the house" where they will arrive. This house can be mine, my neighbor's, or anyone we are going to visit.

In "these houses" we can find many persons in need of comfort, understanding, physical and spiritual health, because they live conflicting, difficult, complex situations. They are expecting a merciful Lord.

No matter what the reality is in "those houses," we are called to bring the good news, the gospel of a God that loves them freely and without conditions. Therefore, the first indication of Jesus, very telling, is to arrive at "the homes" as a "blessing", without prejudices or prepared discourses; with words of kindness, humble, devoid of impositions and laws, but with tender mercy. The goal is to become one with those who live there, respecting them and welcoming them into one's life. The Kingdom of God came to them in the missionaries who visited them.

The unwelcoming, rejection of the Kingdom of God is a loss for those who could encounter and accept the peace and mercy of the Father, and yet refuse to be open to that experience. That is why we should be ready, with passion and creativity, to continue sowing, because "the harvest is abundant, but the workers are few".

Jesus was good news, a blessing, because He was deeply convinced that God is a good Father; for Jesus God was Abba. He walked through Galilee, entering "the houses" and the lives of the people he encountered along the way, eating what they offered him, because they were sinners, poor and sick; he made himself lovable, welcomed them and gave them back confidence in the God who is Love.

For some reason, Jesus' instruction in the Gospel is that when they arrive, it is important to say, "peace to this house", because in reality those who arrive are "messengers of peace and peacemakers". When God comes to a house, his Kingdom is offered to those who inhabit it.

How do we make present the Kingdom of God to those persons, sisters, and brothers of ours, who live in situations of pain, and loneliness, in hostile, violent, aggressive,



and merciless environments? What is the true missionary attitude, the approach that will make God the Father present in their midst?

Appendix Three

He calls us his friends.

"I called you by name: you are mine... Because you are precious in my eyes, you are honored, and I love you." (Isaiah 43:1,4). These words that Isaiah puts in the mouth of a God who loves us dearly, Jesus repeats and affirms them at various times in his life. From the choice of those He calls to be with Him at the service of his mission (Mark 1:16-17) until his "confession" of friendship: "I no longer call you servants. but friends" (John 15:15). What are the hallmarks of Jesus' true "friends"?

Let yourself be seduced. "You have seduced me, Lord, and I let myself be seduced" (Jeremiah 20:7). He is a person who has been charmed by Jesus Christ. We would say that Jesus has stood at the center of his heart and from there fertilizes and waters his whole life.

Unlimited and absolute trust in Jesus, until we can say with Peter: "To whom shall we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

A Life project: Jesus. The project of life of those who have been seduced by Him and placed their trust in Him can be nothing more than that of Jesus himself: great love for the Father God, care for the weak, appreciation of the poor. in short, liberate, heal, give life, offer peace and joy... A true follower of Jesus accepts the person, mission, and destiny of Jesus. He commits to him in fidelity. He joins his person to that of Jesus and his destiny to Jesus' own. He lives for/in Him.

He is a sign of contradiction. He assumes contradiction and persecution with the spirit of the beatitudes. To follow Jesus, to be his friend, is not only to be seduced, but to carry with him his quota of contradiction. (Matthew 5:11-13)

One last characteristic: habitual joy, sometimes intense. That joy that makes one feel at ease in his own skin, to be serene amid contradictions, to be able to communicate hope when around him he finds only disappointment and emptiness. In the following of Jesus not everything is contradiction; there is also consolation. "Always be joyful in the Lord" (Philippians 4:4).



Appendix Four

Not just saints on the altars

There are times when God allows us to understand the love, He has for us, discovering how He can love a man or a woman, like you or me. Maybe you will tell me, those are the saints! Yes, the Saints are such for their ability to love and serve God and others; but I am not talking about canonized saints, but those flesh-and-blood people like the ones we find walking the streets, sitting on a bench in the square, sharing their time with friends, helping and serving those who need support and comfort, and who beautify our world.

What makes them special then? Precisely that they have "nothing" special. Their love is not special, it is simply love. Like God's love, it is both simple and generous. Sometimes even they are not aware of the love they are able to give. They do not feel distinct or different from the rest. They are just themselves. Their ability to love (that is able to extend forgiveness, pity, sacrifice, etc.) goes unnoticed by them, but not by us who know that this quality of love comes from the Source of Love: God.

I recently met a person like that. I do not want to give Her name out of respect, but I would like to say I was captivated by her story. When I heard her talking, I was surprised, I was a little nervous and I could even say that I was embarrassed; I don't know why exactly, but in her voice I was sensing greater serenity as she recounted and delved into her story, not without deep pauses as a result of her tears. It was a story of pain and love. A story of sin and forgiveness. A story of bewilderment and trust. A painful story of broken relationships and renewed encounters. Simply put, someone who learned what it means to love.

People who develop and enhance their ability to love, have in common, that they have gone through exceedingly difficult, sometimes even tragic times in their lives. But instead of sinking into pain, lamenting or depression, they have drawn wisdom from experiencing those moments. It is as if pain has strengthened them in kindness and love. Difficulties do not frighten them, nor do failures prevent them from continuing. What is there in these persons who seem to be invincible? They have connected to the Love Fountain. Their love for others, and the desire to live push them beyond the boundaries of purely personal well-being. They are not moved by the flattering invitations of television ads that invite them to collaborate in some collection for the "poorest". Rather, to love and to serve has become a lifestyle for them.



When we connect with God and understand that His love for us is greater than any difficulty, when our trust in Jesus is stronger than death, and when we understand that nothing will separate us from Him, we find that in every stumble, we experience there is a firm and strong hand that is extended to lift us up. That is God, the kind and merciful Father who loves us like no other. Love that is not understood until you experience it, or until you get a glimpse of it in the beating of the hearts of people with the capacity to love. Your heart, is it able to love and serve?

Original: Spanish

JESUS CALLS US HIS FRIENDS

