

# JESUS: OUR BEST FRIEND

**Sixth Sunday of Easter - B**  
**May 9, 2021**  
**John 15:9-17**

## **Background on the Gospel:**

The last two Sunday Gospels from John have described our relationship with Christ as risen Lord by reference to Him as our “good shepherd” and by reference to our bond with Him and each other by means of the vine. Today, Christ offers a very compelling and perhaps more powerful and contemporary metaphor: we are called to friendship with the Lord. While many things and relationships come our way simply by birth or hard work, friendship is the result of two people who explicitly choose each other and maintain a commitment to each other, often friendship involves deep sacrifices as Christ also explains in today’s Gospel: no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

Friends also share their joys (and sorrows); they eagerly share all that they know and experience with the other. Christ explains that He desires to share with us His intimacy with the Father, the greatest gift He could offer – and He will do that precisely by giving His life. He has already washed their feet (an act of a slave) and assures them they are more than followers/disciples; they are indeed friends.

An important point in this Gospel is also that Christ chose them (and us); this teaching is core to Christianity and is also mentioned in today’s second reading from I John 4:10. God first loved us: He is the source of all life and love. We would not even exist if He had not chosen us to come into being and now He chooses us; a second way for sharing His intimacy with the Father. As Christ remains in a bond of love with the Father so He now empowers us to share in His obedience toward the Father; we do so as we obey His commandment/example of love, that is, making our whole existence a self-sacrificing gift as Christ does.

## **Thoughts for prayer and reflection:**

- 1) *Chosen. God first chose us. Because He loved us, we can know love and respond in love. While it’s exciting to be “chosen” and feel “special” it can also be somewhat enervating and unsettling. It’s usually easier to be the lover, the giver and not the receiver; we all like control. Being loved can sometimes seem to be very demanding and can require the difficult and often inconvenient response of acceptance. Pray about your willingness to accept all as gift of God’s love.*
- 2) *To make things even more complicated, in today’s text Jesus speaks of sharing in His love for the Father and the Father’s love for Him. Theirs was/is an eternal love of mutual deference and total obedience. Their very identities are inter-related. Christ is offering us a share in their mutual giving and receiving – can I be open to such a great mystery? How am I resisting this invitation and how am I striving to accept it?*
- 3) *“No greater love...” Contemplate our call to follow the example of Christ by laying down our life for others. We do that through marriage and/or religious vows; we literally lay down our life on the floor in the ordination ritual. Parenting is truly a daily “death-to-self” out of love (and often that love is not understood or accepted). On this Mother’s Day week-end consider the love of your mother and your relationship with her. Pray over that special and unique bond, asking for healing if recognized as needed and/or intercede for her well-being now on earth or thank her for her heavenly intercession if she’s already in her eternal home. ☺*