

# Meditation 4

## John 15:1-17

### The Virtue of Friendship

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire, and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want, and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I loved you. **No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.** You are my friends if you do what I command you. 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. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.”

### Points for Meditation

- 1) “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (Jn 15:12-15).

- 2) “This is my commandment: love one another as I loved you.”

Fr. Thomas Dubay writes: “. . . Friendship is not merely part of a good life – it is at the heart of what it means to live life to the full. Authentic friendship doesn’t just happen – it is an art that must be learned, a skill that must be practiced. We cannot have true friendships if we are not virtuous. The kind of life required for friendship is a virtuous life. To attempt to have friendship in absence of virtue is self-defeating. Bedrock truth of pre-Christian and Christian civilization: True friendship and virtue are inseparable; you cannot have one without the other. Together, they are the key to human happiness...”

- 3) “You are my friends if you do what I command you. 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.”

Fr. Thomas Dubay says, “An understanding of human friendship enhances our understanding of friendship with God. Indeed, if we do not understand true human friendship, we will be hampered in understanding friendship with God.

“Second and even more pressing, human friendship is the natural preparation for entering into friendship with God. In the quote from John 15:12-15, Christ reveals that He, the Lord of all, intends friendship with His creatures. WHAT A STUNNING REVELATION! But if we do not have some knowledge and experience of true friendship, what will this revelation mean to us? It is clearly part of God’s providential plan that for the most part, humans will first discover and exercise friendship with other human persons. This means that what we know of human friendship and more importantly how we live out human friendship is a critical preparation for the most important ‘relationship’ in our life; friendship with God.”

## Quotes on Friendship

“So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thes. 2:8).

“For there is a friend who is such at his own convenience but will not stand by you in your day of trouble. A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he that has found one has found a treasure” (Sirach 6:8,14).

“A faithful friend is an elixir of life” (Sirach 6:16).

“Love everyone with a great love of charity but have friendship with those capable of communicating virtuous things to you. The more exquisite the virtue you put in your exchanges the more perfect will your friendship be. It will be excellent because it tends to God. Its bond is God. It will last eternally in God. How good it is to love on earth as one loves in Heaven and to learn to cherish one another in this world as we shall do eternally in the next!.” ~St. Francis de Sales

## Possible Resolutions

- 1) Think of your closest friends and spend the day giving thanks to God for the blessing of their friendship.
- 2) Spend some time during adoration talking to Jesus about your friendship with Him. Ask Him to bless it and grow it.
- 3) Resolve to get a book on friendship to study this virtue more in depth.

## Good books about the Virtue of Friendship

- 1) *True Friendship: Where Virtue Becomes Happiness* by John Cuddeback
- 2) *Spiritual Friendship* by Blessed Aelred of Rievaulx
- 3) *Fire Within* by Thomas Dubay (It is an outstanding book on the spiritual life; however, chapter 15 is specifically on friendship.)
- 4) *Friendship in the Lord* by Fr. Paul Hinnebusch

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