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Friendship and Betrayal.....

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As this is the 50th issue, a kind of *celebration* and *thanksgiving*, it seemed appropriate to write on friendship, as we are all the friends of Jesus and in Him with each other. We all need friends, we all have people in our lives who we call friends (hopefully). Some are acquaintances, colleagues or work associates or people we relate to on a regular basis. Some became what can be defined as more 'close' friends, bosom pals, and lifelong allies in our walk through life. In a very real way we should be able to call all those that we meet as dear friends because that is what Jesus calls us, no longer servants but friends because He has shared, with us what 'Our Father' has revealed to him. Yet we fall short of aligning ourselves in this way with all people we meet. Clearly too there are those friends who have been provided to accompany us on our lives journey and who sustain us through the trials and tribulations of life and who we call very dear. Jesus too picked 'the twelve' and knew them, well spending much time with them instructing and guiding them. It was to them that he turned in the 'Garden of Suffering' with the words... 'will you not watch, wait one hour with Me' and again when speaking of the Eucharist, being the bread of life and which others could not accept, He asked them – 'will you too now leave me', receiving the reply from Peter – 'to whom shall we go you have the message of eternal life'.

How then should we treat people who have a special place in our lives and hearts, and those who we meet in the 'everyday' of our lives? There are two expressions that sum up the essence of friendship. We all know the saying 'a friend in need is a friend indeed', as well as the contrary phrase that is to be called a 'fair weather friend'.

Today in our society, although having access to instant communication people live lonely lives, with families living apart and busy-ness leading to lack of communication yet all longing for friendship and support,. Increasing numbers of people when asked about their fears put loneliness as top of the list. Yet we are surrounded by people all the time and do not live in deserted places. We also have among us those

the Old and New Testament mention with special reference as Widows and Orphans. People now journey through times of trouble totally alone with little or no support in their time of need. How frequently people who have had a bereavement, major loss, or tragedy, illness find that those who they counted as 'friends' have disappeared out of sight in what is increasingly called 'the cross the road syndrome'. Friends, who once the immediacy of the situation has stopped or passed, simply remove themselves from company adjudging that their friend will be alright now or that their friend must move on and that they are not needed any more when quite the reverse is true. Sometimes awkwardness or being afraid of what they will find or not knowing what to say or how to assist leads them away but few brave the discomfort and realise to their gain that even a smile can assuage a broken heart or a wave heal a wound.



We all struggle at times in knowing what we should say or do but this should not hold us back from giving each other the gift of true friendship.

Henri Nouwen had this to say...

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who instead of giving advice, solutions or cures have chosen rather to share our pain and touch the wounds with a warm and tender heart.

We are all called to love one another- a central theme of the Gospel. Indeed no disciple, or follower of Jesus can truly call themselves such unless they take on board that central and pivotal command of 'loving one another as I (Jesus) have loved you' there is no room for complacency or denial. We love each other because we are the reflection to each other of the love that the Father has for each of us. As we gaze on the Lord His reflection touches our face and it is this face we show to those around us. Stephen Furtick a young

'A good friend is one who walks in when the world walks out'

Walter Winskill

evangelist preacher recently said, 'tell your face to smile, you are loved'. He said that our emotions often are led by our body's reactions. But it is true that what we believe should be evident in our bearing.

There is no better time to show that we care than when a friend is in need of support however hard the task of comfort may be. There are many ways of showing this and honestly declaring our frailty in this matter does not break the relationship – but absence does and leads to an inability to receive friendship from that person taking time to heal. Once trust has been damaged, or a hurt sustained it is difficult to repair.

As well as this there is one form of activity that can damage a friendship. Gossiping, breaking confidences or even betrayal, a two faced approach or damaging comment can all add to the cause of breaks in friendship. Jesus himself was no stranger to betrayal. Both Judas and Peter betrayed Him and Peter, who said he would follow Jesus, even give up His life for Jesus, denied he even knew him in the greatest hour of His need and wept bitterly. The Apostles fled at the fear of the Cross. Yes, we can all at times betray even our closest friends but the secret lies in forgiveness if we seek reconciliation and restoration. Indeed friendship can often be stronger as a result. It is never easy to do this – but as Jesus showed and taught we must forgive. Yet we must try not to let this betrayal take place. What could I have done better is a good starting point in the process of reconciliation. Prayer is always available to us to aid us in this resolve.

There is another aspect of friendship. The phrases soul-mates is used to describe a friendship somehow deeper than only support or enjoyment of company. It underlines that we are body and soul, mind and Spirit and that we have spiritual need too. St Francis had to part with St Claire and journey alone. Once she was established in her convent in St Damiano which she founded with his help they never saw each other again save when he stayed once to recuperate when his eyesight was failing and where he wrote the famous 'Canticle of Brother Sun a hymn of sublime praise'. Theirs was a bond of close friendship and love too. So too was the bond between St Jane- Francis Chantal and St Francis de Sales and St Vincent de Paul and St Louise Marillac. Pope John-Paul spoke of many such very close friends as does Pope Francis which God gives us to sustain us on our journey both temporally and spiritually. Some married couple develop this bond too and are greatly blessed by it. St Aelred who wrote much about the many types of friendship said the following:



Friendship is a medicine for life. A faithful friend (amicus fidelis) helps one endure life's sorrows, cultivates virtue, overcome vices, and shares good and bad times and leads us to a love and knowledge of God.

Today when men are hungry for the truth, when the souls of man are abandoned to the wolves of destruction of the spirit, spiritual friendship is crucial. Those who can share our spiritual journey are precious and a gift from God. Opening ourselves and others to this potential as both givers and receivers is truly a blessing.

A test of enduring friendship is the test of Jesus himself (John 15.15) Are we prepared to lay down our lives for a friend. Many parents do so for their children but Jesus laid down His life for us whom He counted as friends (though we are unfaithful ones.) If Jesus counts us as His friends surely we can be friends to each other. Can we lay down our lives for our friends? Countless people have and do so today. ... or go that extra mile for their sake. Are we prepared to define friendship in these terms... people often say 'I would do anything for you' to a friend. Do we mean it?

Halina Holman

Pope Francis and Friendship

The Pope underlined three key words in the Gospel: "Friend, the Father and gift". Jesus shows the disciples what prayer is. It is like a man who goes to a friend at midnight asking for something. "In life there are truest friends who really give their all. There are others who are good friends more or less, but the Bible tells us, 'one, two, or three ... no more!' Then, others who are friends, but not like these. And even if we are demanding and intrusive the bond of friendship means that we are given what we ask".

Rome 10/10/2014

Let us pray that we consider all people that we meet as friends and not enemies and learn to love those especially that we find difficult.

Feast Days in September.

3rd St Gregory the Great. 8th Our Lady's Birthday.

14th Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

15th Our Lady of Sorrows. 21st St Matthew.

23rd St Padre Pio. 29th The Archangels.

30th St Jerome

In this 50th Issue we would like to thank all those who support The Host Apostolate by prayer, donations of all types and yes, 'encouragement'.

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