



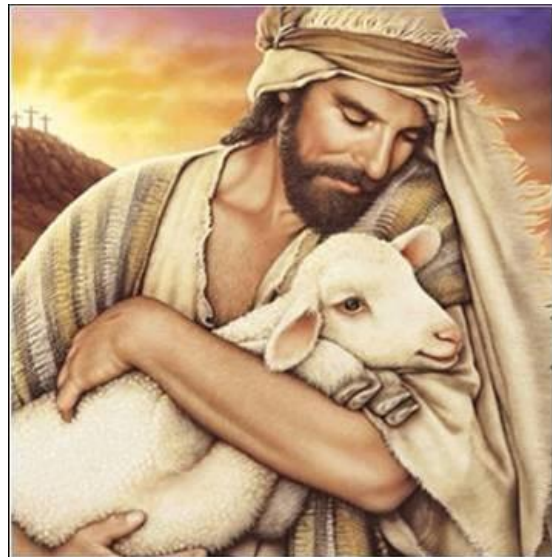
RETREAT FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2024

I am here to engage in prayer in the presence of Jesus, Who is ALL COMPASSION, but I cannot do it alone, and that is why I cry out from the bottom of my heart: JESUS, HAVE MERCY ON ME! Cleanse me of everything in me that may be hindering me from becoming what You dream for me, "to be compassionate and merciful. as our Father in Heaven."

"Give me, O Lord, depth in mercy toward my wounded neighbor. Inspire me with opportune gestures and comforting words before the dejected person. Help me to always be at the service toward others, to create environments of welcome, familiarity, cordiality, fraternity."

Today, we need to live a new experience of Jesus rekindling our relationship with Him. To put it decisively at the center of our lives. To move from a Jesus acknowledged in a routine way to a Jesus who is vitally welcomed. The Gospel of John makes some important suggestions when speaking of the relationship of the sheep to their Shepherd. (**John 10:11-18**)

The first thing is to "listen to his voice" in all its freshness and originality, not to be confused with respect for traditions or the novelty of fashions. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted or stunned by other strange voices that, although they are heard within the Church, do not communicate the Good News of the Church.



It is important to feel called by Jesus "by our name;" to allow ourselves to be attracted by Him personally. It is fundamental to discover little by little, and with ever greater joy, that no one answers our most decisive questions, our deepest longings and our ultimate needs like He does.

We also find in Jesus a compassionate affection for people, which is not a sign of weakness, but of a deep feeling of love and friendship. (Matthew 20:34).

Friendship also means benevolence, that is, an affection that wants the good of people and seeks it. It is this feeling that also moves Jesus. "When He landed, He saw a great crowd: He was moved because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:33).



It is decisive to "follow" Jesus. The Christian faith does not consist in believing things about Jesus, but in believing Him: trusting in His person. It means being inspired by his lifestyle, allowing it to guide our own existence with lucidity and responsibility.

It is vital to walk with Jesus. We must not make our life journey alone. We must experience at some point, even if it is clumsily, that it is possible to live life from its roots: from that God who offers himself to us in Jesus, more human, more friendly, closer and more credible than all our theories.

Jesus offers his friendship to everyone, even to those who live excluded from the social coexistence and religious communion of the Covenant. Jesus approaches, welcomes them, sits at table with them. "The Pharisees call him the friend of tax collectors and sinners. (Matthew 11:19).

Jesus lives and cultivates a close friendship with his disciples. Jesus gathers them into the community of affection. The disciples are not servants of the Master but friends. This is what Jesus calls them: "My friends" (Luke 12:4).

From this communion of friendship with Jesus is born a new style of life, a new need: to live in love. (John 15:9-12).

Pope Francis believes that the encounter with God's love must also be the "source of evangelizing action". We are more human to the extent that we allow God, who is Love, to become incarnate in our lives.

Friendship is always a gift of self. But what the friend offers are not things, but time, company, support.

How do you cultivate a climate that helps your Community, the people who come to the house...a relationship with God in a more joyful and trusting way...with our God who is a friend and a savior?

Write a motivating message for your community

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A community of equals

The fundamental equality of the members of Jesus' community is illustrated by Matthew in the parable of the hired servants in the vineyard (19:30-20:16). The parable clearly shows that all those called to work for a new humanity ("the vineyard", symbol of the Kingdom of God) receive the same wage, regardless of the time of the call and the fatigue of the work. That equal wage for all is a figure of the Spirit/life that each member of the community receives as a result of their work, their choice and dedication.

According to the parable, in the new community the work is not to be done with a view to a reward, but out of a desire to serve, as a spontaneous fruit of the Spirit/love. We do not work to create inequality, but to ensure equality among all, and this must be evident in the Christian community. The quantity or quality of the work or service, the seniority, the greater performance, must not create situations of privilege or be a source of merit, since this service must be the disinterested response to a free appeal.

Jesus himself establishes a bond of equality with his own by calling them "friends" (Mk 2:17 par.; Lk 12:4; Jn 15:15) and "brothers" (Mk 3:35 par.; Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17). That is why he does not consent to anything that creates inequality among his followers (Mt 23:8-10).

With your behavior in the Community, with the people who come to our house, with those in general services: do you feel that you are part of the community of Jesus? What are you lacking?

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were friends of Jesus. Their house was always open to receive Him and His disciples. (Luke 10:38-42)

You who come to *Bethany* looking with restlessness for the sources of your being, feel at home through fraternal WELCOME.

You are invited to the Lord's praise through common PRAYER and moments of personal friendship with Jesus.

End your prayer by praying an Our Father and Hail Mary.

SHARING IN A CELEBRATORY ATMOSPHERE:

Life is not just work, effort and agitation. It is also a celebration, gestures expressing gratitude. It is good to come together to celebrate the gift of friendship...

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Personal notes
Bible

