"What is Friendship with Christ?" A Four Minute Retreat for February, 2025

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Introduction

In the second phase of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, he invites a retreatant to pray to deepen one's relationship with Jesus and grow into a friendship with him. How does one do this? We do this in the same way we grow into human relationships and friendships. Initially one person is attracted to another. There follows a desire to spend time with the person to get to know who they are, what their hopes and dreams are, and what their likes and preferences are. As one comes to know the person, feelings of love begin to be experienced. And as this love deepens, one comes to view the world as the other person does and some of their preferences and desires become ours. In this same way we grow in a relationship with Christ. We are attracted to him and then we want to get to know him. We can only do this by spending time with him and listening to him. We do this through reading and praying with Scripture, participating in Eucharist, and experiencing the Christian community. The gospels not only describe the loving deeds of Jesus but give us an insight into his motivation, his values, and his dreams for the world. Eucharist reveals the depths of his love for us and his desire to be with us as food and drink. And Christian community makes Jesus more believable as we witness others living with faith. But this desire for friendship with Jesus is not all our initiative. He takes the lead as he states in the following Scripture.

Scripture: John 15.13-17

A person can have no greater love than to lay down one's life for friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants anymore because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my father. You did not choose me, but I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And then the Father will give you everything I ask you in my Father's name.

Reflection Questions

Christ wants to be our friend. Will we accept his invitation?
Deepening a friendship takes time. Are we willing to take the time?

Action: Pray St. Paul's Prayer

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you have the strength to know Christ, which is beyond all knowledge. Glory be to him whose power working in us, can do infinitely more than we can as or imagine.