

IN APPRECIATION for the GIFT of FRIENDS

Some friends bring ruin on us,
but a true friend is more loyal than a brother.

Proverbs 18: 24



We pause and recall that we are always in the presence of our Holy and Triune God. The more we call on the Lord the more we can feel His Presence. Day by day He draws us closer to His loving heart.

Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and living forever.

WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?

Friendship colors the very air we breathe. It is everywhere around us. We can see it in the eyes of old women in the kitchens of the women they love. We can hear it in the voices of one young woman giggling to another over a telephone. We can feel it beating in our own hearts on lonely rainy days in far away places when, most alone, we are haunted by the memory of those who have walked through life with us and walk with us still. Friendship binds past and present and makes bearable the uncertainty of the future.

“Two are better than one,” the Book of Ecclesiastes teaches, “for if they fall, the one will lift the other up; but woe to the one that is alone....” It is a simple statement, a profound one, and this biblical commonplace wisdom of a highly mobile, basically anonymous, totally fragmented society affects, at least, to ignore it. “No one is indispensable,” we say so flippantly, so unfeelingly in a massified culture. But the words grate like sandpaper on the wizened and the loving.



There is indeed one thing that renders all of us, any of us, indispensable. As long as there is someone, somewhere whose life breathes in time with my own, I know down deep that I am indeed needed, that I have no right to die. I know that I am truly indispensable, irreplaceable, vital to a life beyond my own. To that person I am indispensable. Whatever my own needs, the love of the other has greater claims on me than I do on myself. Our friends depend on us.

To have a friend is to acknowledge that some part of someone else's life which we have held tenderly, trustingly in our own hands might well die with us. Where does grief for the dead come from, in fact, if not from the anger and sense of abandonment that emerges from the realization that some part of ourselves has been taken away from us without our permission? Grief is simply a measure of the joy, the depth that comes from growing to know another and letting them know me in ways in which I am exposed to no one else.

Indeed, to lose a friend is to be cast back into the insularism that is the self. It is a dark and sniveling place to be, narrow and confined by the limits of the self. Only friendship can really save us from our smallness.

“My friends,” writes the poet Emily Dickinson, “are my estate.” Friends are, in other words, the only thing I will have at the end. My friends will be the treasure I accrue in life and a measure, perhaps, of my own worth, as well.

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 15: 13 - 15

This is My commandment: love one another as I love 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.

COLOSSIANS 3: 12 - 17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him

PSALM 132. BEHOLD HOW GOOD IT IS!

Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is,
Where friends dwell together in unity.
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
that ran down upon the beard, even upon the beard of Aaron.
That went down to the bottom of his clothing :
like as the dew of Hermon, which fell upon Mount Sion.
For there the Lord has commanded blessing, and life for evermore.

A THOUGHT

A person who has friends
Must themselves be friendly,
But there is one *Friend*
Who sticks closer than a brother.

Remember now your Creator
In the days of your youth,
Before the difficult days come,
And the years draw near when you say,
"I have no pleasure in them."
Proverbs 18.24; Ecclesiastes 12.2

A friend that is helped by his/her friend, is like a strong city.
Proverbs 18: 19

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

Response: God of unity and joy, hear us.

That we may always know that Christ is our best friend, we pray:

That we may see and treasure Christ in one another, we pray:

That we may hear the Spirit of God speaking to us through friends, we pray:

That we may always go out of our way for others just as the Good Samaritan did, we pray:

That we may learn to be more Christ-like in our service to others, we pray:

That the law of love may guide and direct all our actions, we pray:

That friendships that are fractured may be repaired, we pray:

Our Father...

HYMN: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE In JESUS

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised Thou wilt all our burdens bear

May we ever, Lord, be bringing all to Thee in earnest prayer.

Soon in glory bright unclouded there will be no need for prayer

Rapture, praise and endless worship will be our sweet portion there.



PRAYER FOR FRIENDS

You have created us to live in community,
O God of love;
bless our friends who provide us
with the grace and love of an extended family.
Endow them with the riches of your blessings:
good health, sight, and mobility,
that they may enjoy the wonders of Your creation
and share their delight with others.
Bless them with keen minds and compassionate hearts
that they may create a better life for all.
Guard them from injustice, oppression, and evil
that they may know freedom and hope lifelong.
In their waking and in their sleeping,
in their laughter and in their tears,
surround them with Your love
until the end of their days;
and so bring them to eternal life in peace.
Through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.
Vienna Cobb Anderson



Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to always be messengers of God's love.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!