

What keeps you from trusting Jesus as a true friend?

In her candid prayer and advice, St. Therese of Lisieux invites us to “cut through the clutter” that keeps us from a relationship with Jesus, and to step forward and approach Jesus “without any hesitation or holding back.”

Pope Francis agrees that we often approach Jesus with hesitations and conditions, like the people in the Gospels. The Gospels reveal many people who approached Jesus and wanted to follow Him, but were held back by worries about what it would mean for their lives. Some like Nicodemus approached Jesus at night when they wouldn't be seen. Others approached Jesus skeptically, trying to test His power and stay in control of their lives and possessions. Some like the Samaritan woman were very careful with their words to Jesus, and tried not to share too much about what was really going on in their lives.

Pope Francis invites us to pay attention to the bold few in the Gospels who “approach Jesus without duplicity or conditions, with a heart open to God's revelation.” With a ready heart, he says, “They put everything on the table.”

St. Therese reminds us that “laying everything on the table” and speaking candidly to Jesus is the path to true friendship with Him. As John Udris describes, she knew that “trust and intimacy are only possible in a friendship where openness and outspokenness exist.”

She also reminds us that Jesus *shows us* how to speak candidly before Him in friendship, through the way that He approaches God in prayer and friendship. As our Catechism explains, when Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer he showed us how to communicate with Him with “straightforward simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, and the certainty of being loved.”

In this section of the Catechism there is a picture of Jesus praying that illustrates His friendship with God, as John Udris describes:

“The Catechism icon recalls the scene from the Gospel in which the disciples have stumbled on Jesus praying. They find themselves privileged to witness...the astonishing intimacy of his communion with the Father. They are spellbound. What they observe makes them long to share the same experience...Eagerly they ask him to teach them to pray...The Jesus depicted in this painting is making eye contact with his heavenly Father...He has nothing to hide...He is standing rather than kneeling, his head is lifted up rather than bowed down, his eyes are open wide and he is stepping forward...Nothing is withheld. His trust is transparent...In giving his disciples the Our Father, Jesus is not merely handing them a formula of words, but his own way of being before God, the hallmark of which is ‘a humble and trusting heart.’”

“Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and He gives you everything.”

– Pope Benedict XVI

For Prayer and Reflection

As you contemplate what keeps you from trusting Jesus as a friend, consider these words of St. Therese of Lisieux: "It is trust, and nothing but trust, that must bring us to Love."

You are invited to spend some quiet time today reflecting on what keeps you from trusting Jesus as a friend by writing responses to these questions.

In My Daily Life

- *When have you experienced a time of "clutter" in your life that made it difficult to focus on a friendship with Jesus? List those items of "clutter", in hopes that God will help you remove them and draw closer to Him.*

In Our Catholic Faith

Our Catechism explains that learning from Jesus means entering into his "boundless trust" in God.

- *What have Jesus's life experiences taught you about trust in God?*

In Friendship with Jesus Christ

- *What would it mean for you to approach Jesus without conditions, and lay everything on the table?*
- *What would you like to share with Jesus today that you have never shared with Him before?*

Sharing the Journey

If you feel comfortable, take some time to share your insights with a friend, family member, spouse, spiritual companion or fellow parishioner.

**"And I tell you,
ask and you will receive.
Seek and you will find.
Knock and the door will
be opened to you."**

– Luke 11:9

SOURCES:

Pope Francis (2013). *Open Mind, Faithful Heart*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 3-7.
Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (2011). San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 262.
John Udris (1997). *Holy Daring: The Fearless Trust of St. Therese of Lisieux*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1-25.



***Encountering Christ* is a series of personal faith reflections offered during Mass.**

Each reflection will build upon the last.

This handout is for you to keep as personal faith resource.



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