

“The great Friend who never lets you down”

You seek the company of friends who, with their conversation and affection, with their friendship, make the exile of this world more bearable for you. There is nothing wrong with that, although friends sometimes let you down. But how is it you don't frequent daily with greater intensity the company, the conversation, of the great Friend, who never lets you down? (The Way, 88)

September 13

Our life belongs to God. We are here to spend it in his service, concerning ourselves generously with souls, showing, through our words and our example, the extent of the Christian dedication that is expected of us.

Jesus expects us to nourish the desire to acquire this knowledge, so that he can repeat to us: “If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink” [1]. And we answer: teach us to forget ourselves, so that we may concern ourselves with you and with all souls. In this way, our Lord will lead us forward with his grace, just as when we were learning to write. Do you remember that childish scrawl, guided by the teacher’s hand? And we will begin to taste the joy of showing our faith, which is yet another gift from God, and showing

it with clear strokes of Christian conduct, in which all will be able to read the wonders of God.

He is our friend, *the Friend*: “I have called you friends” [2], he says. He calls us his friends; and he is the one who took the first step, because he loved us first. Still, he does not impose his love — he offers it. He shows it with the clearest possible sign: “Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends” [3]. He was Lazarus’ friend. He wept for him when he saw him dead, and he raised him from the dead. If he sees us cold, unwilling, rigid perhaps with the stiffness of a dying interior life, his tears will be our life — “I say to you, my friend, arise and walk” [4], leave that narrow life which is no life at all. (Christ is passing by, 93)

[1] John 7:37

[2] John 15:15: *Vos autem dixi amicos*

[3] John 15:13

[4] Cf John 11:43; Luke 5:24

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