

## Homily 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Easter Year B 2024

To be called a friend by Jesus, as he does in the gospel, is not only uplifting but affirming. It speaks of honour and respect which are so important to us.

In fact, one of the greatest gifts in life is friendship. Wisdom states that, *'A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter: whoever has found one has found a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend'*.

The image of a faithful friend is that of a sturdy shelter or a treasure. Having a faithful friend, who loves us as we are, who listens to us when we need a listening ear, who stands by us in good times and in dark times, is a great and important gift. Being told that Jesus is a faithful friend like this offers true sustenance to life.

Jesus reveals his friendship in two ways.

Friends trust one another enough to share what is deepest in their hearts which Jesus has done. He tells us, *'I have made known to you, everything I have learnt from my Father'*. St John also makes it very clear that the dearest element in Jesus' heart was his relationship with God, his Father, and that he has shared that loving relationship with us.

How special does that make each of us??

The second reading, also by St John, adds that Jesus has revealed God to be Love. He hasn't simply spoken to us about God's love but has given expression to God's love by joining us in our humanity and offering his life, death and resurrection for us as proof.

A second way in which Jesus reveals his friendship is by going the extra mile. Jesus did this in making the ultimate sacrifice for us. As he says: *'A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends'*. His great mission was to reveal God's love for us, and he was faithful to that mission even though he knew that it would cost him his life.

In laying down his life for us, he showed the true extent and depth of his friendship. Jesus' friendship is an incredible gift to us, and one he will never take back.

We can confidently call him the ultimate and supreme *'faithful friend'*.

The gift of true friendship is a blessing that brings joy and a faithful friend is one of the great joys of life.

Jesus himself knew the joy of God his Father's friendship. By befriending us, he wants us to share in his joy. By loving us as God loves him, he wants us to know a joy above anything that this world could give, a joy that is complete.

We can seek happiness in all kinds of places, but true joy, a joy that is deeply rooted and lasting, is only found by opening ourselves to the gift of the Lord's faithful friendship. Jesus wants us to experience this joy *now* although it will only be fulfilled in heaven.

It is reassuring to know that the Lord's friendship is faithful, it remains; but it is only by remaining in his friendship will we realise this. A primary way of remaining in a loving friendship with Jesus is by allowing his faithful love to flow through us. In doing so we are better able to love one another as he has loved us, to befriend one another as he has befriended us. Jesus poured out on us the love he received from God his Father, and he calls on us to pour out on others the love we have received from him. When this happens, then we will know something of Jesus' own joy. The joy of eternal life starts here, welcome it!!

### **Found in a Newspaper a senior's version of Facebook**

I am trying to make friends outside Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I've eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog, and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them the "thumbs up" and tell them I like them.  
And it works just like Facebook.

And, I already have four people following me: **two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.**