

Gospel: Jn 16: 12-15

Relationships. Our lives are built on relationships, our families, our co-workers, our friendships. Some of the relationships are great, others not so good. Some are deep, others are very superficial. As we heard in today's gospel, God also exists in a relationship, three unique divine persons, but not three Gods, one Blessed Trinity, one immortal Godhead.

The more we love someone, the more we desire to have a deep, personal, loving relationship with him or her. As I was preparing this homily I began to think that, and this might sound like heresy, but I think that there might be something God cannot do. Since God is infinite love, I think it is not possible for him to not love me or any person who will ever live. Because of his love for us, God, himself, desires a special unique personal relationship with each one of us, a relationship that begins here on earth and will reach its perfect fulfillment in heaven. The Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son represents God, waiting for us to return to him and restore any breaks in the relationship. If there is a rift in our personal relationship with God then we caused it and it's on us, with his help, to fix it.

In *Cristifideles Laici* Pope Saint John Paul wrote "[T]he "good news" is directed to stirring a person to a conversion of heart and life and a clinging to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour." Notice the Pope didn't say following Jesus or listening to him. He said clinging to him. Clinging – that's safety, security, a lifeline. We often see a young child clinging to her parent or older sibling as she crosses the street or as she walks through a crowd. And no relationships are deeper and more important to a child than those within her family. That's the depth of the relationship the saint was referring to here.

Sadly, there are obstacles to having this relationship with our Lord. It might be a misconception about the nature of God. We might envision God as being distant. After all he is in heaven while we're here on earth. I recently heard a speaker explain that when God told Moses his name, it carried with it a sense of power, but also intimate presence, of nearness. However, there was no word to convey this concept when translated into Greek, and the sense became that of one far away. Or possibly we see him as *Deus Irae*, the God of Wrath. Fire and brimstone preaching was common among many Protestant ministers and even some Catholic priests when I was young. Although the sequence for the funeral Mass ended with a plea to Jesus for mercy, there was an earlier stanza that went "And now before the judge severe, all hidden things must plain appear. No crime can pass unpunished here." Not exactly something to inspire a close relationship! Other obstacles might be chemical or alcohol addictions or an attraction to something sinful such as pornography, prejudice, habitual gossiping or lying, just to name a few.

There are many ways to help us cultivate a relationship with God. Participating at Mass and receiving Communion is certainly at the top of the list. Coming to Eucharistic adoration is another. Our parish is starting to have twenty-four hour adoration instead of the twelve hours we have had in the past. When Jesus asked his disciples if they could not spend one hour with him, it was at night. So consider dropping by in the late evening

or early morning hours. What better time could there be for us to spend an hour with Jesus, reflecting on what he has done for us, especially on that Friday when he took our sins upon himself and allowed himself to be nailed to the cross?

When I was still working, I can think of many times my mind drifted and I thought of Fran or our son or other family members, but I can't think of many times it drifted off and I thought of God. When we perform acts of charity, when we give something to that hungry, homeless person holding her sign on the corner or donate to a relief effort, or when we put our envelope in the collection plate, when we take a public stand for what's right, whenever we pray in front of that slaughterhouse known as Planned Parenthood or another abortion clinic or defend the rights of those on the margins of society, just say a quick prayer, "Dear God, for all you have done for me, I'm doing this for you." And then spend a few moments thinking of all the good God has done for us. The more we find ourselves performing acts of charity or justice for God, the more generous we might become with our time, talent, and treasure.

One of the corporal works of mercy is to visit the sick, but we can actually do something more important for the sick than simply visiting them. We can share with them a part of ourselves and give them the gift of life. I'm talking about visiting the Red Cross and donating a pint of blood. It's only a few miles away. With summer coming soon, the need for blood will be at its greatest. So don't just wait for a blood drive; become a regular donor. If you have more time available, please consider donating platelets. We can do that up to twenty-four times per year. Most of us probably know someone who has had leukemia or has undergone chemotherapy for other forms of cancer, or has had an organ or bone marrow transplant. Platelets have only a five day lifespan, and were essential for those persons' survival. Remember Jesus promise that whatever we do for his brothers and sisters we do for him. So just think of God and add the prayer, "Dear God, for all you have done for me, I'm doing this for you." God knows we're doing it for him; we're just reminding ourselves.