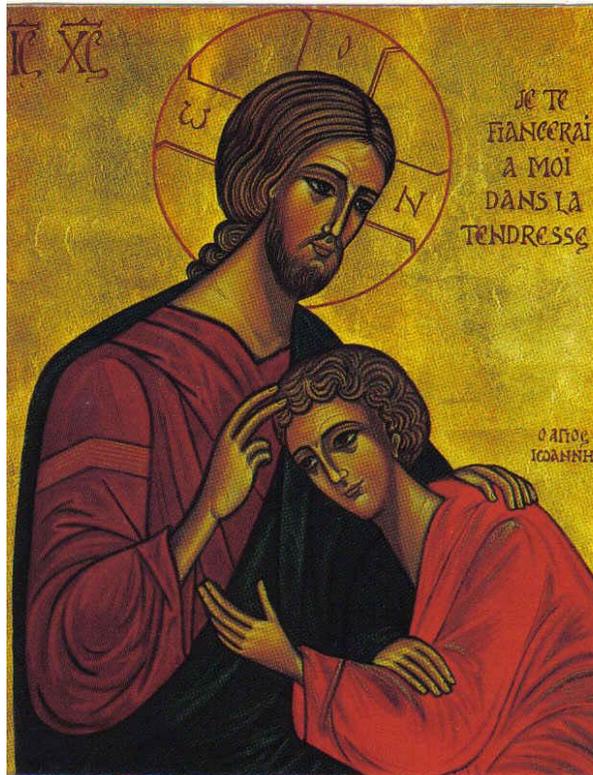


## First Talk, Part 1: Living as a Beloved Child of God



*Icon of Jesus and John from Jn. 13:25  
(Sr. Marie-Paule, Monastery of the Benedictines, Mount Olivet, Jerusalem)*

### **Reflection Questions:**

How easy or difficult is it for me to accept that I am the beloved child of God?

What are my personal “thoughts or litanies of self-rejection”? (E.g., I’m too skinny; I’m ugly; I’m not smart; I’m nobody special; I’m the world’s worst sinner)

Are there any unmistakable times when God showed his love for me? What grace or healing do I need most to accept my belovedness in the eyes of God?

### **Scriptures for Reflection:**

“As the Father loves me, so I love you.” Jn. 15:9

“You are precious in my eyes and glorious, and I love you.” Is. 43:4

“I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Jer. 31:3

“You knit me in my mother’s womb. I give you thanks for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Ps. 139:13-14

“He who touches you touches the apple of God’s eye.” Zech. 2:8. “Keep me, O Lord, as the apple of your eye.” Ps. 17:8

“I have carved you in the palm of my hands.” Is. 49:15-16

“I no longer call you servants; I call you friends.” Jn. 15:15

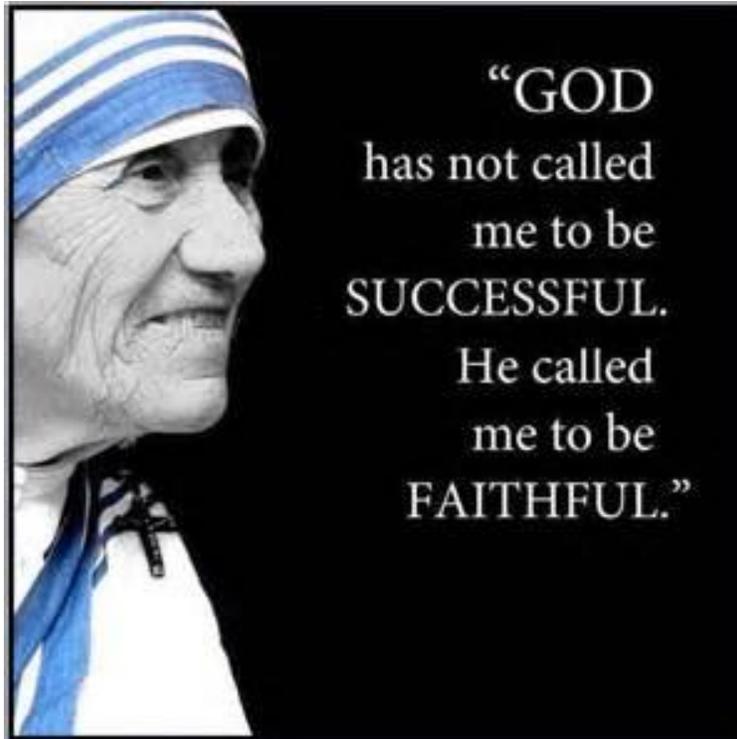
### **Writings for Reflection:**

“Jesus wants you to know how much love he has for each one of you – beyond all you can imagine. I worry that some of you have not really experienced the love of Jesus. We may spend time in the chapel – but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how he looks at you with love? Do you really know the living Jesus – not from books but from being with him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words he speaks to you? Ask for the grace; he is longing it give it. And be careful of all that can block your personal contact with Jesus. The devil will try to use the hurts of your life, and sometimes your own mistakes – to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. Even when not accepted by others, even when you cannot accept yourselves – Jesus is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don’t have to be different for Jesus to love you. Only believe that you are precious to him.” St. Teresa of Kolkota (Mother Teresa), Talk to the Missionary Sisters of Charity.



Daily Affirmation: "I AM A UNIQUE,  
UNREPEATABLE, BELOVED CHILD OF GOD"

*First Talk, Part 2: Living as a Beloved Child of God without needing to be Successful or Perfect*



**Reflection Questions:**

In what areas of my life do I most often try to be successful? Perfect?

Do I place undue expectations on myself in terms of prayer, ministry, family or other commitments?

Do I experience myself as beloved even when my efforts do not go according to plans or expectations?

Do I experience myself as beloved even when I am selfish or sinful?

**Scriptures and Writings for Reflection:**

“God has not called me to be successful. God has called me to be faithful.” Mother Teresa

Jesus engages the Samaritan Woman at the Well, a woman who was spectacularly unsuccessful and imperfect in relationships. Jn. 4:4-41

Jesus allows himself to receive ministry from a weeping, sinful woman. Lk. 7:36-50

Jesus loves and forgives Simon Peter in spite of his denial and failure. Jn. 21:15-17

“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all else will be given unto you.”  
Mt. 6:33

“We all have leprosy, even the greatest and most admired among us. I mean that we all have something that bedevils us, embarrasses us and humiliates us. Maybe no one else knows about it, but we know about it. There is an old saying in the spiritual tradition: where you stumble, dig for treasure. *Usually, it is not our accomplishments, our gifts, our talents, our beauty, or our success that lead us to God; usually, it is our suffering.* As you contemplate your leprosy, whatever it is, you could bemoan your fate, you could curse God, you could lash out at others in resentment, or you could see it as the vehicle that will bring you to God.” Bishop Robert Barron (October, 2016)



**Second Talk: Living as a Beloved Child of God without Needing Human Praise or Approval**



**Reflection Questions:**

Where and when do I find myself most seeking praise and approval in my life?

Have I experienced that praise lifts me and criticism sinks me?

Are there times when I have received affirmation for efforts and felt that it was God who was affirming me through others?

Do I desire to seek my belovedness in God and try to avoid seeking human praise and approval?

**Scriptures and Writings for Reflection:**

“When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, but the lowest place.” Lk. 14:8-10

“Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them.” Mt. 6:1

When Jesus healed a deaf and mute man, he ordered him not to tell anyone in order that the people would not try to deify him. Mk. 7

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior for the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is His name.” Mary recognizes that God is the source of all her good. Lk. 1:46-55

“For whoever exalts himself shall be humbled.” Mt. 23:1

“I am the Prodigal Son every time I take the gifts that God has given me and use them to try to impress others, receive affirmation and praise, and compete for rewards.” Fr. Henri Nouwen, “The Return of the Prodigal Son,” p. 39.

“If we perform righteous deed in order to receive human recognition, we spoil the gift we could have given to God.” Dr. Edward Sri, “Aquinas on Vainglory: Seeking the Praise of Men”



**Third Talk: Living as a Beloved Child of God**  
**Without needing to be in Control**



**Reflection Questions:**

How easy or hard is it for me to allow someone else to be in control, or to surrender control of someone or something to God?

Can I make suggestions and offer ideas, but then peacefully back away when things go in a different direction?

What is one person or thing I have not been able to surrender to God? Can I do that today?

**Scriptures for Reflection:**

“My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” The Father refuses to allow the Elder Son to control his response to his Younger Son. Luke 15:31

“Therefore, I tell you do not worry about your life. Look at the birds of the sky; they do not sow or reap . . . yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they?” Mt. 6:25

“Trust in the Lord with your whole heart, and rely not on your own understanding.” Pv. 3:5

“I am the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.” Mary cedes control of her life to God. Luke 1:38

“Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.” Jesus cedes control of his life to the Father. Luke 23:46



“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken from her.” Jesus refuses to allow Martha to control his actions toward Mary. Luke 10:41