

6th Sunday of Easter
May 8-9, 2021

God shows no partiality

Readings: Acts 10:25-48; 1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17

“So, how is my favorite #3 son today?” I heard this question from time to time when growing up. I so wanted to feel special, until it dawned upon me- “Wait, I am your only #3 son.” “You are still my favorite #3 son,” came the reply. I had been bamboozled, but it did not even bother me. In truth, my siblings and I are in agreement that our parents never played favorites. My mother’s clever phrase was said with a twinkle in her eye.

Good parents show no partiality. They cannot show this- it is antithetical to their role as leaders of the family. They strive to love all unconditionally, sharing the fullness of love possible. Children learn- or at least should learn- that it is in no one’s interest to have favorites. Children have an innate sense of justice; they despise partiality every bit as much at home as they would in a classroom.

God shows no partiality, and neither ought we to do so. He offers His friendship to all equally, even though it is true that God’s gifts are not distributed evenly. We ought never equate our own perceived lack of gifts with a lack of love on the part of the Lord. He may have chosen to give us differing gifts, in order to beckon us to seek and discover them anew. Having discovered your own gifts, put them at the service of one another.

A 1st century BC Roman poet¹ described friendship using a rhyming phrase in his native Latin language- *idem velle, idem nolle*, which is very loosely translated as “same desires, same dislikes.” This he wrote, was at last the essence of true friendship, having the same likes and dislikes. Many friends generally agree with this assessment. So, how much more so with the Lord?

¹ Sallust, *Gaius Sallustius Crispus* (b. 86 BC) *Bellum Catilinae* Catil., XX, 4) *Idem velle atque idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est.*

We seek to love what the Lord loves and abhor what he abhors. And who better to help us in this endeavor than the Blessed Mother herself? Mary's entire life was predicated on doing the will of the Lord on "syncing" her life to that of Jesus.

Just the other day, while simply installing an update on my desktop computer, I suddenly lost all my bookmarks on my other devices, including an iPad and my iPhone. For 12 hours, I was utterly lost...where did my bookmarks go? What did I do wrong? Thankfully a google search helped and I learned that the devices became out of sync with each another. I finally managed, after several unsuccessful tries, to reset, restart and re-sync. This forced me to stop and think. Why was I so upset?

Have you ever felt that out of sync spiritually? It is no picnic, is it? In this month of May, I most heartily suggest that we become more in sync with the Blessed Mother, for in doing so, we will draw closer to Jesus. If we forget Mary, we do so to our own demise and detriment. While a student in the college seminary, I read a book length interview about Cardinal Ratzinger. He mentioned in that book several reasons why we should not forget about Mary. I wish to quote just one of those:

The head must reflect with lucidity, but the heart must be able to feel warmth: devotion to Mary (which 'avoids every false exaggeration on the one hand, and excessive narrow-mindedness in the contemplation of the surpassing dignity of the Mother of God on the other,' as the Council urges) thus assures the faith its full human dimension.²

Here was a brilliant theologian, reminding us not to forget the connection between the head and the heart. That made an impact upon me, the eager philosophy student. Mary remains a powerful intercessor on our behalf. The month of May has been dedicated to Mary since the 13th century.

² Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report*, page 108, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1985)

In a letter written by Pope Paul VI in 1965, he stated: “For this is the month during which Christians, in their churches and their homes, offer the Virgin Mother more fervent and loving acts of homage and veneration; and it is the month in which a greater abundance of God's merciful gifts comes down to us from our Mother's throne.”³

When we honor her this month, we will surely receive so much in return. We will be better united to her Son, because in loving his mother, we will more readily become adoptive sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Our friendship with Jesus will grow, the closer we draw to his mother.

The Gospel is reduced to its most basic components today. When we keep God's commandments, we remain in His love. When we remain in His love, we will experience friendship with God. Our faith assures us that our best efforts and good works will never be in vain.

³ Pope Paul VI, *Mense Maio*, encyclical letter on April 29, 1965, from the introduction.