

"Abide in me as I abide in you" – Life Abiding in Christ's *body*

Why does Jesus give himself to us most especially in the Eucharist? An answer could include: because Jesus loves and cares for us, right now, and wants us to help others to trust in God's love and care too.

Jesus says, "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)

This is why **Pope Benedict XVI** reminds us, *the beating heart of the Christian faith is a living encounter with the living person of Jesus Christ* (Deus Caritas Est, 1).

How does this encounter with Jesus happen?

As we grow up, we start by knowing our family and the home where we live. Then, when we go to school, we start to know the world is bigger than just our family and home.

When we get to know about Jesus, we realise there is even more than just this world and this life – Jesus has prepared the way to eternal life. He did this by dying on the cross and being raised up to new life to be with us forever so we can have new life too.

This means we can get to know not only *about* Jesus, we can get to know Jesus himself and

be friends with him, right now, and trust in his love and care. We have the community of believers, called the Church, who are guided by the Holy Spirit to help us to know and love Jesus in return for his living-giving love of us.

Becoming friends with Jesus is like waking up to see the one who loves you the most looking at you lovingly. At any time, we can gaze with our hearts towards Jesus who we know loves us and who is already looking at us and giving us life.

Jesus helps us to see the 'extraordinary in the ordinary' everyday things and people around us that open up a 'meeting place' of shared joy and delighting with God; for example, when you see something, like a sunset or rose, and delight in it, God is



delighting in it too and in your appreciation of the gift of life – and may share with you God's experience of loving you.

We can also make special times to be with Jesus through prayer. Here is what **Saint Teresa of Jesus** (of Avila) says about the truly loving importance of this:

... prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.

– Saint Teresa of Avila,
The Book of Her Life, ch. 8, 5.

Saint Teresa says in one of her other books called The Interior Castle that the goal of prayer is *"the birth always of good works, good works"* (Interior Castle, Book VII, ch.4, n.6).

Faith and Good Works

Good works that are truly loving stem from being in faithful, life-giving relationship with God, others and my own self, which is a 'fruit' of remaining or abiding in God as Jesus says to do:

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)



How can you tell that a plant is full of life and strength?



What does the presence of fruit on a plant tell us?



Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Another saint (= friend of God) who put being present to God first that led to doing good works that would last, liked Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux so much that, when she became a nun, she called herself Teresa.

She became known as **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**, which was the place in India where she and her Missionaries of Charity

nuns looked after the poor and those without homes. Mother Teresa was officially recognised as a saint in 2016.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta reminds us: "Every Holy Communion fills us with Jesus."

The Holy Spirit also helps to make us more and more like Jesus by filling us with certain gifts, which are Jesus-like qualities, that help us to become more active and alive in doing good.

See the picture below that represents a person using the Gifts of the Spirit that 'shine out' the Fruits of the Spirit that help build up others and ourselves...



Note: the word 'fear' (of the Lord) in the gift box above comes from a Hebrew word that means 'deep love and respect that does not want to do wrong or offend the one we love.'



TO REMEMBER

The fruits of the Holy Spirit
show that we are cooperating
with the Spirit of God
within us.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you have gifted each one of us with unique potential to do good for the human family and to care for your creation. We thank you for these gifts, unique to each one of us. Let us never be jealous of talents we don't have, rather let us rejoice in the way you have made us and use our gifts together with those of other people for the good of all.

Amen

