

## ***John 1: 29-42***

### ***The Lamb of God***

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, ‘Here is the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John testified, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it **remained** on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and **remain** is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I myself have seen and have testified that **this is the Son of God.**’

### ***The First Disciples of Jesus***

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, ‘Look, here is the **Lamb of God!**’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, ‘**What are you looking for?**’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which translated means **Teacher**), ‘where are you **staying?**’ He said to them, ‘**Come and see.**’ They came and saw where he **was staying**, and they **remained with him** that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated **Anointed**). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas’ (which is translated Peter).

<https://youtu.be/-OHPoVhwgnM>

## Sermon – Sun, Jan 15, 2023 – St James, Epiphany 2

Do you ever wonder what it means to be a follower of Christ? How does that actually look? How do we experience belonging to Christ? Well in today's Gospel there are some signposts. Abiding is a part of it...abiding with our Lord Jesus...staying with Him. We are in the season of Epiphany...the season of revelations...God revealing to us every week in the scriptures, glimpses of who God is.

In our Gospel today, John the Baptist, is still proclaiming but no longer in the waters of the Jordan baptizing but on land, in a place where Jesus is. He says 'Here is the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!' 'Lamb of God' is an unusual image for people then. It would bring to mind the sacrifice – the blood of the lambs brushed above the doors of the Israelites, Passed Over by the angel of death so they could flee Egypt.

John also says 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it **remained** on him.' He is directing his disciples to Jesus because he is special, the Spirit abides with him. He repeats his declaration to his disciples the next day ...see! This is the Lamb of God...he is THE One! The Spirit is abiding in him.

So two disciples follow Jesus. He turns and says to them '**What are you looking for?**' his first words in John's Gospel They call him Rabbi – Teacher and ask where he is staying or abiding. He says '**Come and See**'...an invitation and so they do just that. They '**go and see**' where he **is abiding** and they **stay or abide** with him that day. They will return and abide with Jesus throughout his ministry.

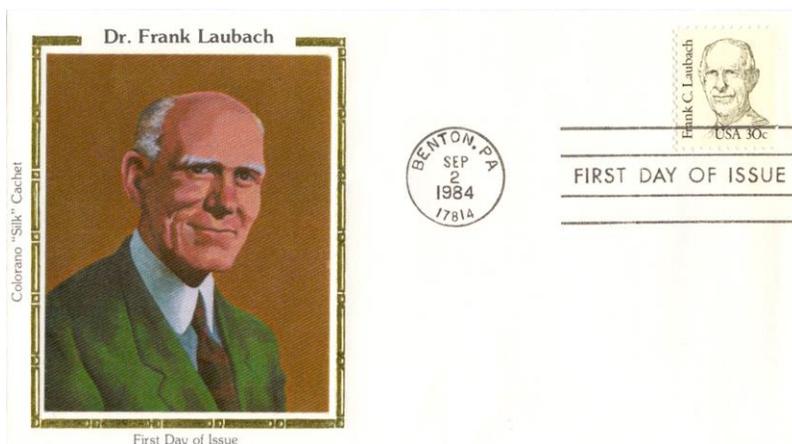
Here begins a pattern of invitation which marks Jesus' life and ministry as a Rabbi (Teacher). From calling his disciples, to the Transfiguration, from healings, to the night of agonizing prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus repeatedly invites his disciples to be near, to stay, to be with him.

Jesus's words in John 15 are still our abiding invitation. Like his first disciples, Jesus invites us to **come and see**, uniting us with the same Spirit that anointed and remained with him. In John 15,

*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. .. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

In *Streams of Living Water*: a famous book about the Six Great Christian Traditions.. the author, Richard Foster uses missionary Frank Laubach (1884-1970) as an example of the “Contemplative: Prayer-Filled” life with God. Or, the “abide” or “remain with” life. Laubach taught Philipinos to read.



Among the ways Laubach stayed in communion with God throughout the day, was to focus on the person of Christ being present with him, even if unseen. He’d place an empty chair at the table during meal times, he’d read the newspaper out loud and verbalize his prayers. Drawn to the refrain of the hymn, [“Moment by Moment,”](#)

*Moment by moment, I’m kept in His love;  
Moment by moment I’ve life from above;  
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine;  
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.*

I came across this quote on Facebook...St Alphonse Liguori a lowly monk says

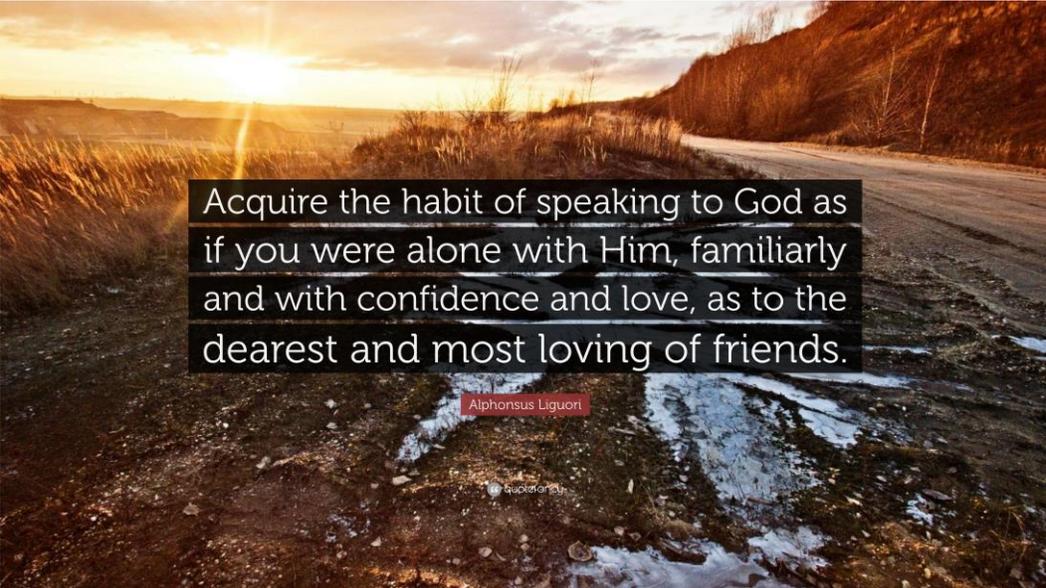


Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends.

-St. Alphonsus Liguori

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It is worth repeating again.



Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends.

Alphonsus Liguori

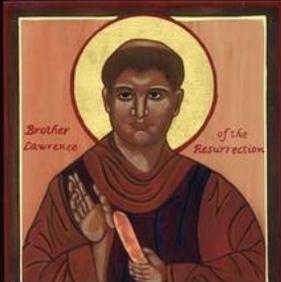
## **Brother Lawrence is another example of someone who abided in our Lord Jesus.**

In June 1640, he joined the Carmelite [Priory](#) in Paris.<sup>[6]</sup> as a lay brother and took the [religious name](#) "**Lawrence of the Resurrection**". He spent the rest of his life with the community, where he worked in the kitchen and, in his later years, repaired sandals.<sup>[8]</sup> He entered fearing 'they would skin him alive' for his awkwardness and faults—as he said in his own unpolished language, often seasoned with humor—but fortunately for himself and his brothers 'he experienced only satisfaction'

In the monastery kitchen amidst the tedious chores of cooking and cleaning at the constant bidding of his superiors, he developed his rule of spirituality and work. In his Maxims, Lawrence writes, "Men invent means and methods of coming at God's love, ...and ...it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple. Is it not quicker and easier just to do our common business wholly for the love of him?"

For Brother Lawrence, "common business," no matter how mundane or routine, was the medium of God's love. The issue was not the sacredness or worldly status of the task but the motivation behind it. "Nor is it needful that we should have great things to do. . . We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God." Here are some of Brother Lawrence's sayings

Brother Lawrence



The most holy and important practice in the spiritual life is the presence of God - that is, every moment to take great pleasure that God is with you

AZ QUOTES

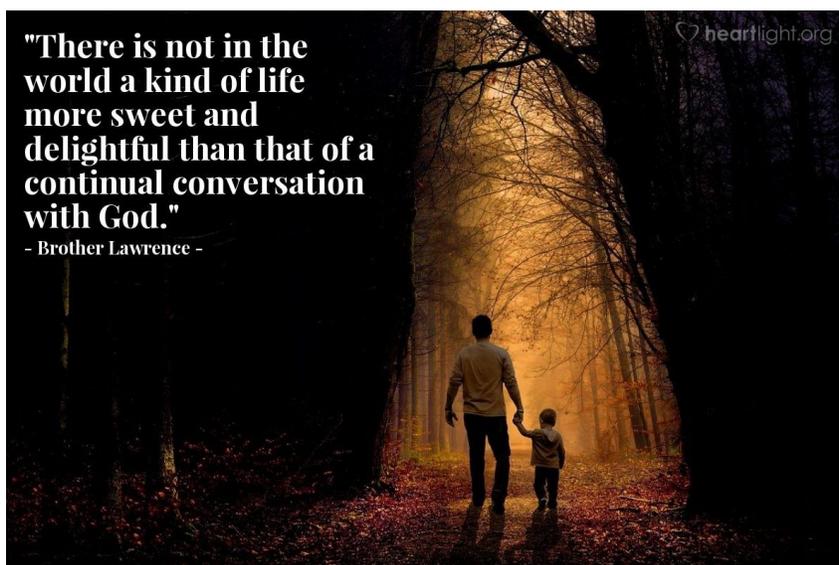
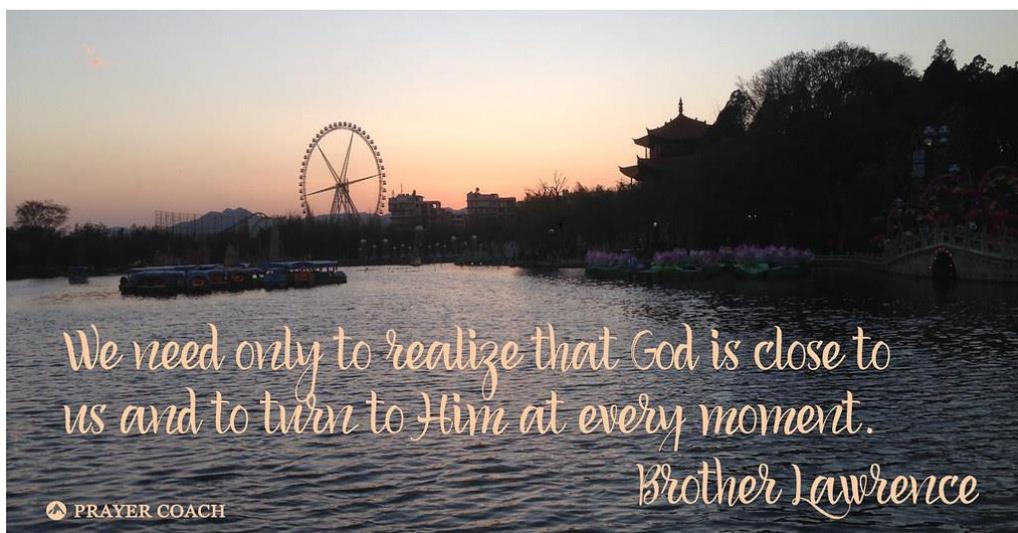
It is enough for me to  
pick up but a straw  
from the ground for  
the love of God.

Brother Lawrence

BrainyQuote®

"Lord of all pots and  
pans and things...  
Make me a saint  
by getting meals and  
washing up the plates."

- Brother Lawrence



So what is God saying to us today through this Scripture?

Our Lord still asks each of us **‘What are you looking for?’** Our Lord cares about our answers.

Also our Lord still invites **us** to **‘Come and see’** and to stay...to abide with him.

*Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*

We are called to abide with our blessed Lord, to be in continual conversation with him, even in the kitchen, even at the computer, even in the car...it is quite simple. We are offered the precious gift at every Eucharist...that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us. Amen.

Taize

- 1 what does it tell us about God?
  - 2 what does it tell us about us, our human condition?
  - 3 what does it tell us to do? What action or decision can we make?
- Each of these needs to be illustrated.

In *Streams of Living Water: Essential Practices from the Six Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, Richard Foster uses missionary Frank Laubach (1884-1970) as an example of the “Contemplative: Prayer-Filled” life with God. Or, what we might call the “abide” or “remain with” life. Among the prayer-filled ways Laubach explored staying in communion with God throughout the day, was to focus on the person of Christ being present with him, even if unseen. He’d place an empty chair at the table during meal times, he’d read the newspaper out loud and verbalize his prayers. Drawn to the refrain of the hymn, [“Moment by Moment,”](#) Laubach reflected,

. He carried out this office of cook until his leg became ulcerated, at which point his superiors assigned him an easier task, as sandal maker. Lawrence suffered from 'a kind of [sciatic gout](#) that made him limp' and worsened as the years went by. Gradually, the influence of the humble sandal-maker grew, not only among the poor. Many learned people, religious and ecclesiastics had esteem for him as well.

Despite his lowly position in life and the priory, his character attracted many to him. He had a reputation for experiencing profound peace and visitors came to seek spiritual guidance from him.<sup>[9]</sup> The wisdom he passed on to them, in conversations and in letters, would later become the basis for the book [The Practice of the Presence of God](#). The conversations had been conducted and recorded by a notable cleric, the Abbé Joseph de Beaufort, who compiled this work after Brother Lawrence died.<sup>[10]</sup> This little book was approved by Archbishop of Paris, [Louis Antoine de Noailles](#). When the Archbishop of Paris approved the life of Brother Lawrence made by his Grand Vicar and in his own organisation, he approved that it is said that this brother "forgot himself and was willing to lose himself for God, That he no longer thought of virtue or his salvation ... that he had always governed himself by love without interest.<sup>[11]</sup> The book consists of sixteen short *Letters* by himself, a short collection of *Spiritual Maxims* embodying his views, four *Conversations*, probably written down by M. Beaufort and a brief *Life*, apparently from the same hand. It became popular among [Catholics](#) and [Protestants](#) alike, with [John Wesley](#),<sup>[12]</sup> Willard L Sperry,<sup>[13][14]</sup> [A. W. Tozer](#)<sup>[15]</sup> and [Hannah Whitall Smith](#) recommending it to others. [Hannah Whitall Smith](#) writes "This little book seems to me on

In the deep of winter, Herman looked at a barren tree, stripped of leaves and fruit, waiting silently and patiently for the sure hope of summer abundance. Gazing at the tree, Herman grasped for the first time the extravagance of God's grace and the unfailing sovereignty of divine providence. Like the tree, he himself was seemingly dead, but God had life waiting for him, and the turn of seasons would bring fullness. At that moment, he said, that leafless tree "first flashed in upon my soul the fact of God," and a love for God that never after ceased to burn. Sometime later, an injury forced his retirement from the army, and after a stint as a footman, he sought a place where he could suffer for his failures. He thus entered the Discalced Carmelite monastery in Paris as Brother Lawrence.