



Allocutio



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Allocutio: Soak in God's love

Abide in my love. Remain in my love.

This call of Jesus to us from the Last Supper has to be lived if we are to bear any good fruits, if our lives are to produce any long lasting good results.

Many of us, nay all of us, suffer something of what the pair in the Garden who hid themselves out of fear of God. We become aware of our sins, we know we have transgressed in some ways and so we hide, we run away, we block God out. But that approach is the opposite to what we need.

Our Lord, on the evening before he died, knowing that his disciples would so badly betray him, still says to them, "Abide in my love!" As if to say to them, keep trusting in my love, come and douse yourselves in my love, stay with me and keep company with me despite your sins, because it is by being immersed in my love that your sins will be overcome.

There is a psalm (62) that goes, "O God, you are my God, for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. For your love is better than life." For your love is better than life! Think of those words: your love Lord is better than life itself. What greater reality could we have than to be loved by God? That, deep down, is what we really all want but we fear and dread lest it might not be so. Because if God does love me then I am secure even in death.

I was speaking with someone recently who had been reading something around death and suicide. It was suggested that behind so many suicides lies a deficit of love, souls who did not sense being loved enough. There is a huge deficit of love out in the world because not enough people are immersing themselves in the ocean of God's love. We need people who will abide in God's love and soak themselves first in it so that it can overflow into the lives and hearts of others.

"My body pines for you like a dry weary land without water". Have you even seen a plant drooping with its leaves fading because it has been deprived of water? And you take it and put it in a basin of water. And within 24 hrs it is thriving again. It looks alive, it has regained its strength and its leaves are glowing.

The reality of so many baptised is that they immerse themselves in concerns about the world, listening to the word of FM, or street and office gossip or beautifying themselves. Behind so much there lies on the one hand an insecurity about life and self and a desire to be accepted and loved on the other. But they do not go to the source of love. They go to the radio and television, the bar, the beauty parlour. But hear this voice of God shout out on the highways of life, "Hey! All you who thirst come to the waters! And even if you have no money come and eat, come although you have no money, come buy wine and milk. Why spend your money on what does not satisfy!" (Is 55) Or again he says, "Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, even by your sins, and you will find rest for your souls." (Mt 11)

Many people have heard this call to come and soak themselves in the life and love of God. The world is in need of people who hear the call to come and abide in his love and to soak themselves in it. That is what for example the Little Flower did, she whom we celebrate next



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week. In fact she illustrates what God is saying to us. "The branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. He who lives in me and I in him bears fruit in plenty." The closer we draw to God the more capable we become of being instruments of his grace. And maybe if we have not been bearing that much fruit it is because we have not drawn close enough to God.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta records that it was when they decided to give more time to prayer that the Missionaries of Charity began to grow.

If God is real then let's contact him and get familiar with him. This calls for courage and perseverance. But it also helps to bring Our Lady with you to that encounter. She helps us come with the right attitude, remaining humble and little. God seems to have a preference for the humble. "The last will be first". Let us go in the company of Mary who gives us confidence before God and who will speak for us. She too will help us deepen our sense of God's love and his ongoing support.

I would like to finish by referring to another of my favourite women saints, Saint Teresa of Avila whose feast also occurs across the next month. She was an extraordinary pray-er. She took God seriously and was not slow to tell him her opinions on things so to speak. But her prayer was so intense because she knew he was there and that she could turn to him all the time. And she certainly gave one word in regard to prayer: perseverance. Do not stop adverting to God's presence and coming to him, even though you be a great sinner and know you do not deserve his company or love.

Do not let your sins block you as it did her initially when she gave up praying because she knew she was a hypocrite. She realised you have to turn to him and let him come because it is he who heals us and makes things possible for us sinners.

In this season of such great saints let us resolve to draw close to Christ and abide in his love.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill