
“Lord, My Friend”



In the years I was a seminarian, there were a number of priests and sisters who “evangelised” us by their popular religious songs. The time had not yet arrived for Robert Lebel, but we had Sœur Sourire and her Number One hit, “Dominique.” We also had Father Bernard’s “Sur tous les chemins du monde, [“On the Roads of the World”], and Jacqueline Lemay with “La moisson est abondante” [“The Harvest is Great”]. Besides, there was also Father Aimé Duval who sang about “Ma petite tête” [“My Little Head”], “J’ai joué de la flûte” [“I Played the Pipe”], and “Le ciel est rouge” [“The Sky Is Red”]. But I remember especially his “Seigneur, mon ami” [“Lord, My Friend”]. I remember vividly shortly after my ordination when I visited the children of Arc-en-ciel School in Saint-Odilon, how the children and I sang the five verses of this wonderful gathering song.

“J’IRAI AVEC TOI...” [“I SHALL GO WITH YOU...”]

*Lord, my friend, you have taken my hand:
I shall follow you fearlessly,
to the end of the road.*

*I walk with you in the wind and the cold,
I walk, and who cares,
For I carry you in my heart, in my walk with you.*

*Everywhere there is dance, there are smiles, there is fun,
And I continue on
As I seek your face, in all this.*

*I shall go willingly with a song on my lips.
I know you are there, waiting
At the door of your beautiful home.*

*So, you are there, I see you as you are,
I see your face
And the table where you have set two places.*

NO LONGER SERVANTS BUT FRIENDS

The words of Jesus to his apostles rang in my ears: “I no longer call you servants but friends, because the servant ignores what the master does. I call you friends because I have taught you everything I have learned from my Father.” Could there be a greater sign of God’s love for me than my ordination? “It is not you who chose me, but I have chosen you and sent you so that you may bear lasting fruit.” This was practically a time of euphoria, as I realised that I had so much love for Jesus: Father Duval had found for me words that expressed this deep love which bound me to Jesus, and I knew that it was Jesus himself who had taken the initiative. Never would I have thought that the dreams in a child’s night would become a reality on May 8, 1965. This friendship with Jesus would become more and more the cause not only of my gratitude, but also the reason for my whole life.

LOVE CAN BE SEEN!

If I was so drawn to singing, at that time, it was because my happiness at being a friend of Jesus knew no bounds. I remember these moments of intensity: it really showed that something had happened in my life.

When Danny and Carrie are out playing together, we can see that they are friends. When the baby-sitter consoles a crying child in pre-kindergarten, we can see that she loves the child. The same holds true for the elements and animal life. Refreshing water, the shining sun, beautiful snow, all these can be our friends. Even Milo the puppy who is so lonesome when you are not there, or Cimba the cat who follows you everywhere, they too are capable of showing affection and warmth to humans. We can always meet friends, in our hearts. However, there are times when you think of your friends and you really feel the need to tell them your love, either by phone, walkie-talkie, or email. You sometimes express your love on a letter or a card on which you draw a great number of hearts. Love is expressed by one's whole person. The fact of being there may express the love I have for someone: when Dale is sick, I simply pay him a visit; when Amy is sad, I sit with her. These are signs that I love them.

FRIENDLY WORDS

There are some who have the knack of getting just the right card for expressing feelings and love to someone, personalised cards that say much in a few words! Listen to these words of love: "Dear Mother, I love you like a great ball of yarn. I love you very much when I hug you." "To my loving friend: please come for a visit. I love you like a mother, and when I am with you I feel as if I am swimming in the sea. When I am with you, I am happy. When I dance with you I feel like a pro! When I play with you it is very special because you are my friend." Words like these can also be prayers: "To my friend Jesus. Thank you, Jesus whom I love! I want to love you always. I will always love you and live by your love. Come with me to the velvet sky and we shall talk of love!" We only need to dig out a few valentine cards, to discover the sweetest secrets!

FRIENDSHIP IS SO PRECIOUS

If you come back to your friend instead of sulking or leaving the friend, if you come back in a happy mood, and if instead of causing sadness to the other you say you're sorry, everything changes not only for a day but for all of life. A friend is so precious: we smile at one another and we give to one another. We forget what has happened and we keep on playing. But sometimes we may lose somebody's friendship by hurting him or her. We can always mend the break by apologising, asking forgiveness, by taking the first steps. If at the end of the day we could tabulate our friendships, it would probably incite us to start the day over again. "I felt very good with my friends, today; I made peace with them, played with them. I smiled at them and told them I loved them. I even told them secrets. I invited them to my house..." You see, we could say that there are various degrees of friendship; the more I love someone, the more I can share my deepest secrets with him/her. Jesus had such friends; we easily recall the moments of intimacy he spent with Martha, Mary and Lazarus: his friends had the joy of receiving great revelations.

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