

Are your friends making you a better disciple of Christ?

Objective: We are called to love our wives as Christ loved the Church. We know that can mean we need to step outside of our comfort zone and “nourish and tenderly care” in ways that will provide for her emotional, social, and physical needs. Sometimes, “giving himself up for her” means having a good conversation even if we are bad with words. Other times, it means doing an act of service or buying a gift, even if time and/or money is in short supply.

Song Suggestion: Gather Us In

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Psalm 1:1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

Paragraph 2479

Detraction and calumny destroy the *reputation and honor of one's neighbor*. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity.

Paragraph 2472

The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as *witnesses of the Gospel* and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds. Witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth and makes it known. All Christians by the example of their lives and the witness of their word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new man which they have put on in Baptism and to reveal the power of the Holy Spirit by whom they were strengthened at Confirmation.

Saint: St. Francis Xavier went to the University of Paris in his early twenties to study philosophy. He was an ambitious and athletic young man from a noble family deeply involved in the Spanish government and military. He roomed with several men, including saints Peter Faber and Ignatius of Loyola, who were persistent in keeping him involved in the faith, even through his sarcastic skepticism. They were successful and supported each other in evangelization for their entire lives.

Vignette: – Eric has maintained long-standing friendships with several men from college. They play golf on the weekends and share beers, stories, and fantasy football leagues with enthusiasm. He has noticed that many of them have stopped going to church and a couple have struggled with infidelity and divorce. Eric struggles with how to maintain and improve his Catholic faith while his friends do more to hinder and tempt him than support him. He would love to talk about his faith with them but worries that there is too little of substance that binds him and his friends any more.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Who are the people you spend the most time with? Can you think of ways they reflect Christ or do you find yourself making excuses for their behaviors?

Are *you* a person others see reflecting Christ, even in the way you play golf, drink beers, or share hobbies with them?

How do you decide who to spend time with? Is it because of loyalty? Convenience?

What activities bring you closer to Christ? How can you use the activities you enjoy to bring others to Christ?

Action Plan: Write down some of your most important friendships. Reflect on some of the activities and conversations you have shared with them. Pray about whether Christ is important in those relationships.

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