

## Association With The Lord Jesus

-We come to know God by associating ourselves intimately, step by step, with Our Lord Jesus, and as we grow in intimacy with Him He can reveal to us His intimate life with His Father. To know who God is can come only from personal, long-time association and cohabitation with Our Lord.

-Since He is the only Son of God and by rights possesses all the treasures of wisdom, joy, and power His Father possesses, He apparently wants nothing more than to share these treasures with us by granting us a share in his very sonship.

-If His can be communicated to the world through us and all His followers, it is because these perpetuate in the world, in our own flesh, His own Passion and Resurrection. What we are learning at bottom by following Our Lord is how to die to our ourselves so as to live as new creatures in Him. In our own life, too, all our praying and doing should be ordered to a continual act of self-sacrifice in union with Christ's redemptive death.

-If the life of our soul, our very "salvation", consists in knowing God intimately as source of our being, it is also true that only in the Son of God will we come to know God the Father. In other words, *Christ Jesus is the living exegesis of the Father.*

-Our association with Christ within time would then be modeled on the pattern of His own association with the Father in eternity. Christ's presence among us, His disciples, is truly an opening up an extension within us creatures of the eternal relationship of love between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

-The Monastic community and any other Christian community is thus a visible manifestation of the divine life of the Holy Trinity, and the Church – the Body of Christ – and consequently, is the place where the vital knowledge of God that brings salvation is communicated.

-We will know then by experience that, being with Christ, we cannot go wrong, regardless of how contradictory and deeply unsettling many things may seem to be.

-In the order of the affections and loves of our soul, we must strive for the day when we can truly say that the love of God and the desire to do His holy will are our deepest motivation.

-As Christians, and especially as monks, we may not love even our own family more than God and His unfathomable will, and at times very painful sacrifices are required of us if we are to live this truth.

-Regardless of how harassed and perturbed we might be by all life's crises, why can we not, like the Lord Jesus, have our soul at rest, anchored in God's good pleasure? This is the rest that the Lord wants us to partake of, the repose that comes from having taken up obedience and filial love toward the Father as our primary occupation. If we only knew how possible this is! If we admit Christ into the boat of our life for Him to sail with us, even the most tormented moments at the surface of the emotions can coexist with a deep calm, the deep sleep of a will that repose, like the Lord Jesus, in the bosom of the eternal Father.

-We must strive to find happiness that does not vanish every time a tragedy, or even a mild reversal in our expectations, occurs. We cannot surrender our souls as hostages to the whims of this world's waves, to float upon them like helpless corks. Christ Jesus offers us a happiness and a joy grounded in trust in His Father and in the faith that, despite appearances to the contrary, He really is there with us, although His manner may be silent and discreet, there watching over our welfare and guiding our path toward "the other shore", the Kingdom of Heaven. The stakes are high, and the price in self-surrendering trust utterly worth paying.