

Episode: Jesus as a Guest

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence. I ask your pardon for my sins, and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

The tradition of the Church says that St. Luke had a tremendous fortune, because he interviewed the Blessed Virgin Mary. His gospel is based in long conversations that he would have with Mary. St. Luke was a doctor, he knew how to read well and to write very well. And his gospel is, because of that, very special. It is the only gospel that has the infancy of Our Lord. And many details that come from the memories of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Just imagine that for a second, that you have a weekend with Mary. And you can take notes or record what she has said or take some picture with her. That's the gospel of St. Luke basically. All the gospels are amazing obviously, but that is really special to go through the life of Our Lord, through your life, Jesus, knowing that Mary is remembering things, and helping us to consider the most important aspects of your life and the miracles and the interactions. One of them has to do with your friends. Of course, as a mother, Mary was always very attentive to your company. And she was very happy, obviously, in seeing you making friends as a boy or a teenager, later as a young professional, and as a teacher, as a master, as a rabbi. And we just think about, for instance, the wedding feast of Cana, how Our Lady was in a wedding, says the Gospel of St. John, in that case. But Mary was helping Jesus to grow in his friendships, helping you, my Lord, to grow, which is a mystery.

Anyway, there's a scene of the gospel that St. Josemaria really, really liked. And it is when Jesus, when Our Lord, when you, my Lord, would stop by the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. The house of Bethany that was very close to Jerusalem. And if you read in the chapter 9 and 10 of St. Luke's Gospel, it is really, really beautiful, because it says that Our Lord sent the apostles to preach for the first time, two by two. They came back, they were very excited about what they did, and, and they performed some miracles. And Jesus was very happy to see that, you know, the apostles were engaged in the mission, and they were with the fire of God bringing the Gospel to the, to the rest of the country and, and other towns. And then there was some persecution in between, some people didn't receive Our Lord and the apostles, some Samaritans, and Jesus was going to Jerusalem. So imagine the scene, the apostles coming back, Our Lord says, Let's go to Jerusalem, to the city of God. And then they go through Samaria, some people don't receive him, because he's going to Jerusalem. And then just very close to the city, he stops by. And the Gospel says Martha and Mary welcomed Jesus. And then we read that now as they went on their way,

Jesus entered the village, and a woman named Martha received him into her house, and she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, and listened to his teaching.

What a marvelous interaction. How wonderful, just to think about it, you be my guest. As I was telling you, St. Josemaria said that for him, his dream, so to speak, was to create in his soul a little Bethany. A place for Jesus to rest. And I like this angle that St. Josemaria took, and also we see it in the gospel of St. Luke through the memories of Mary, a place where Jesus would go to rest. I really wish, my Lord, that my heart would be a refuge for you. Many times, I am the one almost always, to be honest, seeking you to rest or to ask for stuff that I need or intentions, worries, or to share some good news as well. To give thanks, to adore you, to praise you, to-to feel your company. But today, maybe in my prayer, I want to enter into this dialogue with you from the point of view of inviting you to me. Which sounds a little bit daring. Right? How or why should I invite Jesus? In a sense of, do I have anything to offer to you? Are you interested in coming into my house, into my heart, into my life?

Let's continue with the gospel. Martha was distracted with much serving. A lot of work in the house. The apostles were hungry, they were tired, she was probably a doer, right? With the drinks, with preparing something to wash their hands and their feet. Maybe some lodging as well, maybe they were staying overnight, I don't know. And then Mary was on the other side, sitting down at the feet of Jesus listening to him. It must have been such an amazing scene, to just have Jesus in my living room, sitting down, give me something to drink. And then enjoy the evening with you. I am so envious. My Lord, of course, I have the Eucharist, which is way better than anything in the world. But at the same time, I'm envious of Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the apostles, to have you in my living room. I wish that I could have you with your physical presence with your body, with your smile, seeing you, making eye contact, laughing with you. Resting maybe in your lap as a boy, as a baby. Or just listen to what you have to say. That's prayer. And I want you to come to the living room of my heart Jesus, I want to be your best friend. And this is not just a silly thought or like a dreamy idea. This is the real Jesus that wants to enter into your life. And maybe this is the first intention I need to point out today in my prayer. Seeing how Martha, Mary, and Lazarus offered their house, their home for you without hesitation, without any reserve, can help me to break the walls of anonymity that sometimes is around me, around my heart. Sometimes it is hard to believe that you care. Or that you like me. It is hard to believe that. Because I don't like myself many times when I don't accept myself as I am. And I build around me, maybe in my relationship with you some kind of official way of talking to you, based on external actions. Like it could be even the Mass, right? But but there's this wall, maybe invisible, but real. That blocks me from showing myself to you or, or really believing that you care or you like me. And that you care about me, that you're at ease and enjoying being in my house in my life. That's hard to believe Jesus. Help me in that. That's the first thing.

Maybe right now, all of us in this time of prayer, we can ask Martha and Mary and Lazarus to help us to be hosting Jesus, in our communion or in our time of prayer. What did you say to Jesus? How's your house? How is your interaction with Jesus? Can you help me, Martha? You were distracted with much serving, but Jesus was happy there. And Mary, you too, you were engaged in a conversation in listening, in looking at Jesus. Maybe sitting down on the ground. I don't know your family, but in my family, I don't know, I don't want to be, I have to be careful with this, but in general, my sisters when we would watch TV together or whatever, or sitting down for after dinner get together, they would sit on the ground many times, not because they were women, but I don't know why they liked that. And, and I imagine Mary sitting down on the floor. Maybe because it is easier to get closer to someone when you are not sitting in a chair or sofa because you can get closer, you can you know have a seat and then people are more merciful, and that's how Mary took advantage of the presence of Jesus in her house. And Martha was not sitting down there. But she was listening. And actually, she was a little upset because Our Lord was there and Mary was not

helping in the house. So she interrupted Jesus. And I like it a lot because it shows you confidence. Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me. So a woman is giving orders to God. She's telling God what to do. Hey Jesus, I'm sorry, this is super important I get it. But before that my sister is doing nothing, tell her to just to serve with me. Tell her to come with me to the kitchen or to just to help me with this laundry or whatever. So, but I like it a lot because it shows you affection. It shows your confidence.

How do you talk to Jesus? How do I talk to Our Lord? Is there a wall? Am I hiding, Jesus? Am I hiding? Am I showing myself to you? There's this friend of mine that is a big fan of this band music band, that the name of the band is 21 Pilots. And to me, I was sitting listening to some of the songs I thought it was a little depressing. And he said actually, no, you need to understand the story of the whole thing. I said okay okay. But then I listened to one of the albums and just the title of the album is Suicide Squad. I say, Come on, man. This is a little bit sad. But then he said listen to the lyrics. Okay, I picked that one song. And they made me laugh, because it's actually it is good for my prayer that the song starts saying, "All my friends are heathens, take it slow. All my friends are heathens, take it slow." Like, I need to talk to you, all my friends are pagans, take it easy. Right? These are my friends, right? So you're gonna be my friend, you can be a friend of my friends. And all of them are heathens or pagan. So take it easy. And I don't know the intentions of the band when they did this song, where they performed or created the lyrics or whatever. But I think when we invite Jesus, when I invite you, my Lord, maybe all my friends are heathens or maybe I am myself with a lot of imperfections. But I want you to be my, my guest. Again, I don't want to have any wall that embarrasses me or stops me from from being myself in front of you. That's the first step because if we don't show ourselves as we are, we're keeping some distance. We have like an official external, yeah it's a fake relationship with Our Lord. So the first thing is to show everything.

And then, the next step is Jesus will change us. Our Lord will give light to your friends if they are heathens or yourself, sometimes you don't believe, I don't believe well, our our will transform us to is like a two steps in any friendship. I think it's very important. First of all, to show everything to have trust. How's your prayer? Do you show yourself? Do you trust? Even with wild questions that you may have about the existence of evil in the world. About the the pace of God, sometimes God seems to be slow in answer to prayer, or, or sometimes Jesus seems asleep or indifferent. And then we should react like Martha, Jesus, don't you care? Or the apostles, Jesus, wake up! We are sinking. But you see, we show, hey, I have these wild question. In my prayer, I don't just repeat vocal prayers or just no. I may have times a prayer in which I finished my prayer and I don't have the answer of a doubt of faith. And that's perfectly fine. It may be years for us to to get to something that is bothering us or or maybe it's a family issue, and not in our families that we don't know how to undo and it may take years of you know, approaching the mystery of human freedom and, and in our prayer, we show that and you say, geez, I don't know what to do with this. But please come to my house. Be my guest, shed light here in this feature of me or my character or in this problem that I have or in this joy.

Let's continue with the gospel. Our Lord, and the gospel doesn't say that he was laughing but I bet you that he was laughing, said to Martha, "Martha, Martha, you're anxious and you trouble about many things. And one thing is needful." Only one thing in Latin. It says that is necessary and it's like saying this thing for need for just focusing on one thing isn't that Jesus is saying to her stop working or anything like that. He's saying you're anxious because your heart is not here. I don't know what you meant with that, my Lord, but I think what you're saying is that the only thing that is necessary is that we talk. That you share with me what's in your heart. That's the only thing that matters, right? That instead of being scattered in what I say, when you say, what I shouldn't be thinking, what you should be thinking now is, what do you have? And I'll give it to you sincerely in prayer. You are my guest. With the guests, I'm straightforward. Of course,

I give you my heart, I welcome you warmly, I really care. But at the same time, I show it to you, myself. And that's what you say to Martha, I say, don't worry. Now we know, now we know your guests in your house. And now that I know, you can be at peace, because in company with friendship, everything can be overcome. Everything can be, you know, any challenge can be conquered or can be done if we're together.

Some years ago, I read this book, it was a New York Times bestseller. The name of the book is "The Shack," like 20 years ago, it was a really big hit. I don't want to spoil the book just in case you want to read it, but long story short, or the summary of the book, the beginning at least, is that there's this person, and it's a fictional character that is married and tragedy happens in the family, one of the daughters is kidnapped and killed. And then he, he gets really upset with God, he's a Christian, in the book, a Christian dad, and then he just, he doesn't want to talk to God, and few years later, and again it's a fictional book so don't panic, he receives a note from God, saying, "It's been a while we need to talk." And then God, quote unquote, is telling him, "I'll be this weekend at the shack. If you want to just talk. Come and let's talk." And then the book is him going into the shack and spending a weekend with the Blessed Trinity. Now the book has some things that are a little difficult to understand, in a sense. Anyway, I don't want to spoil the book, but it is really good, the dialogue. So if you you're able to put aside how they represent the Trinity, I think you can enjoy the dialogues. And then I think it's the second day, or the first night or second night, he's having dinner with the Blessed Trinity, and all of them have human figures. And they're either cooking or, or taking care of the garden or working in the basement. And then for dinner as a family, they sit down at a table, and they talk and they eat. And anyway, he's talking about different things. And then God the Father at the table asks him, "Hey, how's your family doing?" And then the protagonist starts talking, "Oh you know so and so is doing this and that, and next week, and we're going to do this and then vacation, and then Jamie's applying to the summer job..." and at some point, the protagonist stops and say, "Well, wait a second, why are you asking me this?" And then there's an awkward silence at the table and the Trinity, so to speak, look at him. And he says, "Well if you're God you know everything. What's the point of me explaining to you, how's my family doing or whatever?" And then in the book, and again, it's a fictional thing that don't get stuck into the theology maybe. But the Holy Spirit answers and says, "Well, yeah, we know everything. But we didn't create your reaction in front of things. And we know history. And we know we're, so to speak over time. And we know, know the outcome of history. But yeah, but we haven't crate created your reaction. That's something that is not under our control. And we love to hear how you see the world. We love to hear from you, from other human beings, from our sons and daughters, our creation, how you see the world because it's the non-created part that is open to freedom and to love. And that's the best part of being God, that we we have created something open to to a better world, not in the sense of materially speaking in which as well we can improve some stuff in the world or build or improve creation but especially your hearts, your souls, your freedom."

But it is a really interesting idea. When we are having Jesus as a guest, when St. Paul says that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. When we read in the Bible and in the book of Genesis, how God created the world, when we see the actions of the Blessed Trinity in history, we need to remember that the Trinity wants to be inside us, that the Trinity enjoys being our guest. And this is really, really deep. It's deeper than we think our own possibilities, our capability of God is real. My Lord, you, it's not that you care if I follow the commandments of the Church, or if I go to Mass on Sundays. It's not that you're spying on me. Regarding if it's a mortal sin, if it's a venial sin, it's not that you get upset when I am mediocre. Those are very bad reductions of who God really is. And your interaction with him should not be based, my interaction with you, my Lord, should never be based on fear. It is an interaction of love, it is a friendship, and it is for real. I don't know when was the last time you made a joke to the Trinity or to Jesus Christ. Or when you laugh and at some of the things that God has created, like, like a zebra, like a super awkward, and you say, how did you do that? Like or when you were in awe in front of the stars at night or those

things are your reactions, your gift to the Trinity. That's the way we invite the Trinity to our own lives, not just following a bunch of pre-fabricated ways of thinking. But actually exercising our freedom, our creativity, and breaking down those walls of indifference or embarrassment that suddenly stops us from being ourselves. At the same time, the Trinity or God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ will encourage you to change that, no question about it. But to be better, doesn't mean to be like artificially perfect. They are encouraging you to be happier. Which is different than the idea that sometimes we have of perfection. So when God invites you it's not because he's jealous. Or greedy about your time, it's because he really wants you to be happier than you are. And that's such a huge gift, my Lord, that you love me as I am, as you loved Martha and Mary, as they were with different personalities.

I was reading the other day, some quotes about friendship. And some of them are cheesy, but many of them have some truth, some deep truth there that is worth thinking about in your friendship with Jesus Christ. "Friends are those rare people who ask how we are, and then wait to hear the answer." That might be a little cheesy, but it's so true. So Jesus asks you, when you do pray, or you invite him over, Jesus tells you or asks you, "How are you doing?" He waits. He isn't expecting like, "I adore you, oh Blessed Trinity in my heart" like blah, blah, blah, no he says, "How you doing?" And he wants to listen, and you can say anything, actually. Because Jesus Christ is your friend, like Martha interrupted Jesus, gave him orders. So everybody's ready to do the exact same thing with you as your friend. Another quote, "A true friend never gets in your way, unless you happen to be going down." I think this is so true. True friendships are based on love when the person is in his or her worst moment. Sometimes we think friendship is when we are both laughing in a sunset, or whatever, walking on the beach in Santa Monica. Well, that's that'd be great actually. But that's also friendship. But real friendship, my best friends in life are people that know me, inside out. And they have loved me after seeing me in the worst scenario, in the most pathetic moment in my life, and they're still faithful to me. Those are the real friends. I don't know who said it. But I think something like that. This quote I found says, "A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out." That accompanies you, and if human beings can do that, imagine Jesus Christ. Imagine now the friendship of Jesus Christ. My Lord, I want my heart to be Bethany, a house for you, always open. I want you to enter whenever you want, whenever you're tired, because I'll be there with you, waiting for you. And I want you to just rest.

It is so awesome to make people rest. There they had an experience. People are so good in the world. Sometimes in the news, we see bad news or violence or social unrest, and then you interact with human people and they are awesome. And so the other day, we had a delay in my plane, I was on a trip. And so everyone was in and then suddenly, they needed to change something or to check and we were asked to abandon the plane, to take our bags and wait in the airport and then come back. Anyway it was pretty annoying. So when we came back, I saw the flight attendants there. And they were it was pretty, you know, large faces and upsetting. So I made a joke to them. I say "I hope," I was smiling so it was obviously a joke, I told them, "I hope we have a really, really good snack today on this trip or whatever." And they were laughing and I went to my seat. A few hours later, when one of the flight attendants is were, you know, serving the drinks or whatever, and it was at the end of the trip, she recognized me. "Oh, by the way, did you get the snack?" And, and I was in front of some of the people that didn't know the whole story. So I said, "No, no, I'm fine. Don't worry. Just it was just a joke." "No, no. What do you want?" And I say, "I don't know." I was super embarrassed. Everyone's looking at me. "Come on, what do you say?" "Well, I really like chocolate." "Oh I gotcha." And then she just flew to the back of the plane actually, and brought me a few minutes later, for free, a bag of chocolates with, you know, orange chocolate super dark. I loved it. I was so she made my day. And I prayed for her. And I said, "Thank you so much." "Oh, don't worry. That's great. What's the deal? Remember, big snack?" I go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." But you see people make you feel important. Just getting in other ways. And they make a difference in the world. They really do.

And it's up to us to follow the example of Jesus Christ, of saints, and to do the same. So maybe, maybe we should be, just be very grateful for Our Lord, and also for the saints we have, like Martha, Mary, Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, John, Bartholomew, Nathaniel, right? So Jesus appreciates just being genuine, and then he will change us. But first of all, being genuine, inviting him over, showing to him, showing to you, my Lord, everything that I have inside. Again, the Gospel of St. Luke was based on his interview with the Blessed Virgin Mary. What a dream to be asking Mary how about her memories, right? So let's ask St. Luke, let's ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to help us to read the gospel, and to discover or rediscover the real Jesus, the Jesus that is our best friend.

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections, and inspirations which you have communicated to me in this meditation. I ask your help to put them into effect. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.