

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Sermon Text: John 15:9-17
Related Text: 1 John 5:1-6
Acts 10:44-48
Date Preached: May 17, 2009

Note: Nina Trice, Chelsea Vallorani, and Abbie Werner confirmed

ALLELUIA. CHRIST IS RISEN.
HE IS RISEN INDEED. ALLELUIA.

Friendship has many layers. On one layer there are the friends that we have that we will spend some time with, sharing stories, common interests, hobbies, or association with similar groups. Some friendships go much deeper. Some friends we have for a period of time, such as in high school or college. Graduation comes and many friends go their separate ways.

One of the more popular ways to keep in touch with friends is through computer avenues such as facebook. Through facebook we can invite people to be our friends.

Some people have hundreds of friends through facebook. What does that mean? What level of friendship exists when it is entirely possible that you've never even met the person face to face?

Would you trust those friends with your deepest fears or darkest secrets? Would those friends be there for you in a moment of need? Would those friends tell

you something you need to hear, even if it isn't what you want to hear?

Again, there are many layers to friendship. The deepest level of friendship is that one that Jesus extends to us. Long before facebook and my space, Jesus made a choice. His choice was to say to us, "I want to be your friend."

Jesus takes the initiative in developing a friendship with us. Not only has Jesus chosen us to be his friend, but he offers us a friendship beyond the warm and fuzzy, pie in the sky, everythings wonderful friend.

A friendship with Jesus includes accountability. We can expect him to confront us when we've avoiding doing something or doing something we absolutely shouldn't do. We can expect him to correct us when we are wrong. This should not surprise us. Think of our friends. Do they love us enough to tell us when we are engaging in harmful behavior? Jesus teachings pointed out such dangers to his disciples, and likewise to us.

Jesus friendship is an intimate one. Jesus is the one who will wash your feet. He is the one who through our hands feeds the seventeen year old in the hospital

bed who has just become paralyzed. Jesus is the one who will not loan money but will give you what you need. Jesus through us will stay with us to teach us how to handle life's difficult situations. Jesus continues his friendship with us even when we are pushing him away.

The friendship Jesus offers us is one that is built on the foundations of love and grace. Jesus friendship with us has no limits. He knows our deepest fears. He's seen us at our most embarrassing moments. He will even go so far as to take our own foot out of our mouth when we've said something completely wrong or inappropriate.

The friendship that Jesus initiates with us is a reflection of the perfect relationship with God. This perfect friendship expressed and lived in the Trinity between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit extends to us.

Jesus friendship is real especially as he has experienced what many of us experience in our lives. Jesus showed his anger against injustice. Jesus shed tears of grief at the death of his friend, Lazarus. Jesus was vulnerable, coming to us as needy as an infant, and vulnerable to betrayal, false innuendo, and

gossip. Jesus has experienced the stuff that true friends know.

He is such a true friend that he will take the punishment for our wrong doing and suffer for them. He sees us at our best and worst and loves us anyway. Nothing we do will scare him away from us.

Today, Abbie, Chelsea and Nina, you will affirm the promises your parents made on your behalf at your baptism. You've studied. You've grown in your faith. You've grown in your friendship with God. Your friends, your siblings in the faith are here to celebrate this day with you.

Today your friendship takes on a new level. You will make a promise to God to live in this relationship God started with you at your baptism. You will make a promise to God to deepen your friendship with him through our life together as a congregation.

The gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you. You were sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Christ has claimed you as a friend. The joy and adventure now is just beginning. The adventure now is to see how your friendship with God will blossom and we will

continue to help you nurture your friendship with
God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.