

*True story:*

## **FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH**

*In* the United States of America , there was a Jewish young man aged 28 years, whose background was religious and very conservative, though he lived in an area polluted with a lot of temptations and sins. In spite of all this, he attended the Jewish synagogue every Saturday and was faithful to all the orders and commandments of the Jewish law as much as possible.

*He* worked as a manager for a very rich lady, managing her business and money. He was honest in his work, doing all he could and sometimes even more.

*The* lady was in her forties, living in a luxurious, ill-mannered life, but the boy didn't expect what happened for the lady became attached to him and tried to seduce him.. so he started to avoid her, but she insisted to no avail, when her pride was hurt she started to persecute him.

*One* day he found himself under arrest and was put in jail. The lady and her lawyer lied that he had squandered her money and that he was very careless in his job. That was false, of course, but the lady had a lot of money and influence.

*In* the jail, he was deeply depressed and felt that he was treated unjustly but he waited until the end of investigation, because he had no where and no one to go to . A priest visited the prison, to ask about another prisoner, and he saw the Jewish young man. He talked to him and gave him a Bible. Although as a Jew he did not believe in the Bible he started reading it out of boredom. He opened at the miracle of feeding the multitude and then the storm the disciples faced, when Christ came to them walking on the water ordering the winds and the waves to stop with a wonderful authority.

*His* heart was wonderfully affected in a way that he never felt before .He found himself praying a different prayer "If you get me of this injustice today, I will submit my life to You forever "

*Less* than an hour passed, he was asked to stand before the district attorney, who asked him some precise questions and *then set him free* without bail. He was very happy, and went to a Christian friend to teach him the orthodox faith. After a short time, he was baptized and became a new creation in Christ.

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*A boy's diary:*

**When You see me a withering member..!**

I'll never forget that holy Mass which I once attended ; **I don't know weather the church had risen up to heaven or heaven had descended to earth .....**

People around me were standing with reverence, which helped me feel the holiness of the place, especially the Holy Fraction prayer. Every body was alert to the different events that were happening in the service. In the midst of that holy atmosphere some words that the priest had said touched my heart and I was deeply affected . They were:

*“O' the wounds of Christ, stab me with the spear of Divine love.*

*O' the death of Christ, exhilarate me with the love of the One who died for me.*

*O' the Blood of Christ cleanse me of all sins.*

*O' my beloved Jesus, when you see me a withering member, revive me with the oil of Your grace”.*

Tears that came out of love started falling , declaring that a new start is going to begin . The holy service of the Mass ended and I partook the Holy Communion. I left the church quickly feeling that I had a treasure which I didn't want to lose by talking to people .

I went home, sat in my room and closed the door. I took a pencil and started writing: "Dear *JESUS*, when you see me a withering member revive me with the oil of your grace."

These words shook me. I went on writing down my thoughts: "Dear *LORD JESUS*, you know my weakness and my inability to do any good , whenever I try to raise up I always end up by falling down . There is no one else except you who can put in me the will to do good and satiate me with your love ".

I went on saying this sentence many times: "Dear *JESUS* , if you see me a withering member ...." . I was happy because the saint who wrote this Holy Fraction prayer shared his feelings and his needs with me.

At the end of my contemplation, I found a comforting voice inside me saying **if you want to become a saint deny yourself and feel your weakness, depend on God who gives grace to the lowly .**

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### [My mother the church:](#)

## **THE CANDLES IN MY CHURCH**

The use of candles in church dates back to the apostolic era, as they were used for lighting. Afterwards they were used in church to show deep spiritual meanings. The candles are also used to symbolize the spirits of the martyrs, who gave themselves up and shed their blood for the love of the Savior, as the candle gives up itself to light for others .

### *\* Spiritual meanings:*

- 1- A lighted candle represents the believer as he stands before God, whilst the fire of the Holy Spirit acts inside him .
- 2- An unlighted candle has no value, but a lighted one has a special beauty. This reminds us of our nature, which is weak when it is away from the action of the fiery Holy spirit, who gives the glorified nature before God and man.
- 3- When reading the Bible it reminds us of the word of Jesus: "I am the light of the

world" and of the beautiful verse: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105)

**\* Candles lighted in front of the icons:**

- + **In front of the icons of St. Mary:** declares that she is the mother of light of the world.
- + **In front of the icons of all other saints:** declares that their lives shines to us, showing us the way to the kingdom of God, so we could be guided by their faith.

**\* Why do believers light candles in church:**

To show that they are ready to give themselves up as a live purified sacrifice, through their good deeds.

One of the fathers said about candles: *"Do not think it's a small thing to light a candle in front of an icon while praying, and remember that you are offering it to the Lord who is full of glory, who lives in the unperceived light".*

**Let's practice this saying and promise God to offer our lives and our souls as candles for His sake.**

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### **Wherever He leads me, I shall go!**

Last summer, a group of servants went for a retreat to one of the monasteries, on the last day they went to ask for the blessings of the Rev. Father who is in charge of the retreat house, and ask him to pray on their behalf. But he asked them to wait for a little while because he wanted to give one of them a book to be translated.

A long time passed, and the bus had to leave, then one of them went to him again to ask for the book, but found him busy with some of the youth.

After a while he went again, but then the Rev. Fr. apologized by saying that he could not find the book. The servants felt sorry for themselves, and for the three hours lost and for the bus that left.

At last they found another transportation to take them back to Alexandria. After about 2 km from the monastery they saw the first bus that was supposed to take them. An accident had happened which led to the injury of the passengers.

In silence the servants began to thank God for his loving care.

**My friend, God's management to our lives is beneficial, because it's built on perfect love. So if we accept it with thanks and faith - after doing our share of work - we shall experience God's deep love and His management of our lives.**

*"My eyes are upon you, from the beginning of the year to its end"*

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### **When does friendship end?**

**By Fr. Andrawes Matta**

A successful friendship, based on correct principles and conditions is supposed to continue and burst out with great results .

But still there is this question which all adolescents are wandering about, concerning their friends .

**Q: I've known a friend since childhood, but his attitude started to change on approaching teens and his (her) way of thinking diverged , his (her) way of life has changed .**

**THE QUESTION IS, SHOULD I KEEP ON WITH THIS RELATIONSHIP OR SHOULD I BREAK OF..... ? !**

**A:** IN ORDER TO ANSWER SUCH A QUESTION , let us review together some of the features of a successful friendship. **A friend helps me to promote in everything**, he cares about my future. Also, **me and my friend should be in conformity in our aims and nature.**

In this question it is clear that a change has started to happen concerning our ways of life and our aims and principles .

SO AT FIRST , I should think it over and start to point at that change that has occurred between us, and show him (her) that the principles on which we have built our friendship has started to break and terminate. I should urge him (her) , to go back to our usual way of getting to be friends together . But if he (she) insists on that unusual change of being away from God, then I should break off, because this is considered a source of danger on my life, since I am exposed to the same danger like he (she) was. Here is when friendship ends, since its most important principles has ended.

**YET THERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION , is this attitude considered to be loyal to our friendship, when I leave my friend to perish ?**

I would say that, to be loyal is **to pray for my friend and send a guide** like the priest or the servant to save him , because I would never be able to do it on my own .

Here's an example to emphasize my point. if the house of a friend of yours is on fire and he (she) is sleeping in there, you would go in to save him only if the fire hasn't become strong yet. But if it had spread to cover all the house, you won't be able to save. But , you can do something for him to save in another way. you can call the fire department . this is because if you went into this fire with your friend, which is not wise, you would both die. That is the burning sin will kill both of you .

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