



# Faith in 52

A yearlong parish retreat based on the work *I Believe in Love*  
by Father Jean C. J. d'Elbee

*Week 25: April 22nd through April 28th, 2013*

## For Individuals

(pages 150-156 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

1. Speaking to the Holy Spirit, say: *“O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that You ask of me, and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Only show me what is Your will”* (Cardinal Mercier).

### **STEP 2: PRAYERFUL READING**

1. Prayerfully read ONLY the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*.
2. While reading, pay careful attention to the phrases, ideas, or images that might bring about comfort or even those that are challenging. Rest on these a while and speak with the Lord about them, receive His graces, and ponder what has been laid out before you.

### **STEP 3: MEDITATION**

1. Keeping your imagination quiet, figuratively or literally shutting your eyes to all the things of sense, and closing your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do the following:
  - Do you suffer from envy and the hatred that comes with it? Of whom or of what are you envious; be honest with yourself. Say with all your will: *“I do not will—no, I do not approve of—these feelings of vengeance which are in me and which, in spite of myself, rise to attack my heart. I repudiate them”* (p. 151). In those moments of spiritual attack, *“ask Him (Jesus) to rebuke the rising waves, to calm them; ask Him who, in the boat, stilled furious sea with one word”* (p. 153).
  - Have you been deeply hurt by someone? *“Pray for that person, trying to put your whole heart into it. Do not pray only for his conversion—that would be irony—but that he may receive as much good as you wished him evil in spite of yourself”* (p. 152). Courageously say with Christ: *“I love him who has hurt me, and I shall do my very best to show him that!”* (p. 152).
  - Jesus *“has made things right in me, but what about the evil I have done to others”* (p. 154)? *“We cannot always repair things ourselves. We cannot always ask pardon of those offended, make excuses, put things right—at least not immediately—and often the remedy would be worse than the evil. So say, ‘I would like to do it; I cannot, but You will do it Yourself, because of my confidence’”* (p. 155). Say: *“Jesus, repair what I have done badly”* (p. 154). *“You must believe that He will do it”* (p. 155).
- Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■

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## David and Jonathan, Model of Spiritual Friendship

That outstanding youth, Jonathan, son of King Saul, made an alliance with David, but it was not in the hope of obtaining the royal crown or winning the kingdom. For the sake of their friendship, he set David above himself as if he had been his master and not his own father's servant, expelled, hiding in the desert, sentenced to death, destined for execution – he abased himself and raised David up: *You will be king, he said, and I will be next below you in rank.*

What an excellent example of true friendship! What a wonder! The king was raging against his servant and stirring up the whole country as if against a pretender to the throne. He accuses priests of treachery and has them killed on the mere suspicion – he has the forests and the valleys searched – he posts armed guards on cliffs and mountains. Everyone swears to punish the object of the king's anger; but Jonathan, who alone has the right to envy the designated successor to the throne – Jonathan chose to resist his father, keep his friend supplied with news, give him counsel in his adversity. Thinking it better to be a friend than a king: *You will*

*be king, he said, and I will be next below you in rank.*

See how the father tried to make the young man envy his friend, how he goaded him with insults, threatened him with dispossession, and warned him of the honors he would lose. But even when Saul had condemned David to death, Jonathan did not fail his friend. "Why should David die? What has he done wrong? What has he done? It was he who took his life in his hands and struck down the Philistine – you rejoiced, then. So why should he die?"

At these words the king was beside himself with rage and tried to pin Jonathan to the wall with his spear, pouring out new insults and threats. "Son of a wanton and lascivious woman! I know that you love him, to your own shame and the shame of your shameless mother!" Then he poured out on the young man all the venom he had in him. He tried to stir up ambition and envy, bitterness and jealousy in Jonathan's breast: *As long as the son of Jesse lives, your kingdom cannot be established.*

Who would not have been moved to jealousy by these



The Friendship of David and Jonathan  
1 Samuel 20:40-43

words? Whose love would not have been corrupted, grace diminished, friendship wiped out? But this most loving youth held fast to the oaths of friendship he had sworn, stood up to the threats, endured the insults, and disdained the kingdom for the sake of friendship, careless of the glory he would miss but mindful of the integrity he would keep. *You will be king, he said, and I will be next below you in rank.*

Here is a true and perfect friendship, solid and eternal: a friendship that envy does not corrupt, suspicion does not diminish or ambition wipe out. It does not cease even under such a trial; even under such a battering it does not collapse. Assailed with abuse, it stands firm; beaten with insults, it does not bend. Go thou, and do likewise.

- from Blessed Aelred's *Treatise on Spiritual Friendship*. Bl. Aelred was a Cistercian Abbot in 12th century England. ■

# Faith in 52

Week 25: April 22nd through April 28th, 2013

## For Group Sharing

(pages 150-156 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☩ symbol)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

1. Gathering with your spouse, family, or a group of friends at a time of your choosing, though preferably on the following Sunday, make the Sign of the Cross and then say together to the Holy Spirit:  
*“Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved Spouse.”*

### **STEP 2: PUBLIC READING**

1. Depute or invite a competent reader among the group to read aloud the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*. All should be encouraged to listen attentively; any distractions, i.e., cell phones, televisions, etc., should be turned off or removed during this time.

### **STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION**

1. After the public reading, someone should facilitate the public discussion. This facilitator should read aloud the questions below. Considering the constraints of time or the particular audience, not every question need be asked nor discussed. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when in doubt.
  2. Everyone may speak but should not speak over others, should not dominate the conversation, and should not ridicule others. All should try to be like Christ who is “gentle and humble of heart.” Moreover, all should be asked to keep confidential the contents of the discussion. No one should reveal more than what they feel comfortable sharing or be forced to speak.
- What is envy? Discuss this particular deadly sin.
  - How easy is it to confuse “what we feel and what we will” (p. 153)? “Truly to love someone is sin-

### ***On Envy***

by St. John Vianney

**E**nvy, my children, follows pride; whoever is envious is proud. See, envy comes to us from Hell; the devils having sinned through pride, sinned also through envy, envying our glory, our happiness. Why do we envy the happiness and the goods of others? Because we are proud; we should like to be the sole possessors of talents, riches, of the esteem and love of all the world! We hate our equals, because they are our equals; our inferiors, from the fear that they may equal us; our superiors, because they are above us. In the same way, my children, that the devil after his fall felt, and still feels, extreme anger at seeing us the heirs of the glory of the good God, so the envious man feels sadness at seeing the spiritual and temporal prosperity of his neighbor.

We walk, my children, in the footsteps of the devil; like him, we are vexed at good, and rejoice at evil. If our neighbor loses anything, if his affairs go wrong, if he is humbled, if he is unfortunate, we are joyful... we triumph! The devil, too, is full of joy and triumph when we fall, when he can make us fall as low as himself. What does he gain by it? Nothing. Shall we be richer, because our neighbor is poorer? Shall we be greater, because he is less?

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## For Group Sharing

(Continued from page 3)

cerely to will good for him, whatever feelings we may have at the moment" (p. 153). What keeps us from willing good for our neighbor, for our enemy?

- "Often He (Jesus) will leave you the trial, He will leave you the humiliation," (p. 154) because "the occasion for struggle is the occasion for victory... because these very struggles which humiliate us are precious" (p. 153). Do you agree with this assessment? As much as we would wish our difficulties away, why can struggles with temptation be helpful?
- Throughout the book, the author has emphasized the role of confidence, believing that "this loving certainty that the Savior makes things right is necessary to you for the peace of your soul" (p. 155). Is this belief that "all will be well" a copout or the essence of faith?

### **STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER**

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the *Regina Caeli* or *Queen of Heaven*:

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia. • For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia. • Has risen, as he said, alleluia. • Pray for us to God, alleluia. ■



### **Prayer When We Sin**

Jesus, from this evil also which I have wrought around me, draw forth good. Even, I dare to ask You, draw a greater good from it than if I had not done the evil. I ask You this humbly, in my smallness, beating my breast and saying *mea culpa*, with a contrite heart, recognizing my fault. I ask it of You with an immense confidence, recognizing Your mercy and the limitless price You paid for our Redemption. Make reparation in me and around me (p. 154-155). Amen. ■

**On Envy** (Continued from page 3)

Shall we be happier, because he is more unhappy? O my children! how much we are to be pitied for being like this! St. Cyprian said that other evils had limits, but that envy had none. In fact, my children, the envious man invents all sorts of wickedness; he has recourse to evil speaking, to calumny, to cunning, in order to blacken his neighbor; he repeats what he knows, and what he does not know he invents, he exaggerates....

Through the envy of the devil, death entered into the world; and also through envy we kill our neighbor; by dint of malice, of falsehood, we make him lose his reputation, his place.... Good Christians, my children, do not do so; they envy no one; they love their neighbor; they rejoice at the good that happens to him, and they weep with him if any misfortune comes upon him. How happy should we be if we were good Christians. Ah! my children, let us, then, be good Christians and we shall no more envy the good fortune of our neighbor; we shall never speak evil of him; we shall enjoy a sweet peace; our soul will be calm; we shall find paradise on earth. ■

### **Next Eucharistic "Hour of Power" in English**

- Saturday, May 4th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter Church

### **Next Parish Dessert Potluck\***

- Saturday, May 4th, 8-9 p.m., McMahon Hall