



*chapter one*

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THE GOAL OF LIFE

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*In Christ's Presence*

O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name  
in all the earth.

PSALM 8:2

My dear friend, I am overjoyed to see you. I am with you speaking to you and listening to you. Realize that I am truly present. I am within your soul. Close your ears and eyes to all distractions. Retire within yourself, think my thoughts, and be with me alone.

Do not be afraid. I am your God, your King, robed in majesty, clothed with all power. But I am also human, even as you. I am your Savior.

Do you note what I call you? My friend. Not my creature, not my servant, but my friend. Yes, even more than that, you are my brother, my sister, my mother. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, my sister, my mother.

I am glad that you desire to watch a while with me, to confide in me and allow me to confide in you.

Have you ever wondered what I would have said to you if you had been at my side as Peter was, and John, Mary, Martha, and the rest?

Do you feel that they were especially favored to have lived when they did, because they saw me, heard me, touched me?

Yes; they were favored. But so are you. It is better for you to live now than at any other time in human history.

Do you not realize that this is my hour just as much as nineteen centuries ago? I see you just as clearly as I saw them. I love you as I loved them. I speak to you. Your good impulses, what are they but my grace and the urgings of the Holy Spirit?

But still you are thinking: They saw you face to face.

What was it that my disciples saw? They saw a man; a worker of wonders, yes, but only a man. It was many months before they knew me as "He who is to come," the messias; and as "He Who Is," God. And when they knew me at last, it was not by the sight of their eyes but

by faith. It could not be otherwise. No mortal can see God face to face and live on in this world.

That is exactly how you know me today: by faith.

Happy, then, are you, happy and thrice blessed. Blessed are you because you see me with surer eyes than those of your human nature: the eyes of faith.

Blessed are you because you speak with me in words more easily understood than those of your mouth: prayer of the heart.

Yes, blessed are you, my friend, because you can more easily become intimately associated with me than could my closest followers before the Last Supper.

Peter and Andrew, James and John; and even my own Mother, for many years of their lives did not enjoy the wondrous privilege that awaits you every day. Never during those many months before the Supper did I unite myself with them so closely as I am united with you in Holy Communion. Already you have had more moments of intimate union with me in my sacrament than some of my dearest disciples had in their whole lives.

If you but let me I will come to you daily in the Sacrament of Love. I will come as man. And I will come as God, bringing the Trinity most intimately into your soul. I do not stay away from you; it is you who stay away from me.

Adam and Eve wished to be as God, and could not. But you, despite all your unworthiness, can become "as God" daily in Holy Communion. I enter into you, live in you, transform you. And when my Father looks on you, he sees you no longer, but me, his only-begotten Son.

Indeed you are especially favored, far more than you can realize. Think how many there are in the world who do not even know my Name! Why are you so blessed and not these others?

Why is it my will that you should be so intimate with me? Why have I destined you from eternity for this happy hour with me? Why have I sought you, called you, urged you, aided you all the days of your life to bring you close to me?

It is because my love for you passes human understanding.

Do you wonder how you shall thank your God? Thank me by making your soul a true home for me, and from that home offering myself and yourself in divine thanksgiving to the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Think of this now. Think of it often. Think of it calmly, peacefully, and give me your heart, your mind, your will.

Say to my Father, "I thank you, Lord, with all of myself. I will contemplate all your wondrous deeds. I will be glad and rejoice, and I will sing praise to your holy Name."<sup>1</sup>

*Christ, the Teacher of Happiness*

Happy are the blameless, who walk in the  
way of the Lord.

PSALM 118:1

My dear friend, my greatest desire is that you be happy. It would be more impossible for me not to want you to be happy than for you not to want to eat when you are hungry.

I am not good merely as a creature is good. I am goodness. Goodness is of my very nature. You cannot fully comprehend that. I ask only that you believe it.

Believe that I am goodness itself. Believe that I want your happiness far more than you yourself want it. Believe that I can and will give you happiness.

I have made you in my own image, able to share in my divine life, and destined for that life. Give me your good will here on earth, and your happiness even in this life will surpass your dreams. And when you reach your eternal destiny, your joy will be such as you could never begin to imagine.

Do not refuse to do what will make you happy. Millions of your fellow men spurn me. Adam and Eve, anxious to do as they pleased, lost Paradise.

The chosen people of old, instructed by the prophets and even by my Father himself, refused to walk in his ways. They murdered the prophets. They worshiped idols and false gods. They gave themselves up to lust in the wilderness. And the wrath of the Lord was so kindled

against them that he delivered them into the hands of nations who oppressed and humbled them.

I came upon the earth, sharing in your lowly manhood. By my own life I have shown you how to be happy.

Although I constantly teach men peace and contentment through my Church, many close their ears. They seek joy in a thousand vanities and ten thousand pleasures. But the happiness they pursue in sin turns to ashes in their mouths.

Listen to me. Turn to me, give me your mind, your heart, your soul. I shall not hide the truth from you. You desire happiness. I shall teach you the ways of happiness.

Happy is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, who does not walk in sin, who does not insult his Maker by foolish pride.

Happy is he who is considerate of the needy and the poor.

Happy are the blameless who follow in my path, who keep my laws night and day, who seek me with their whole heart.

Happy are all who take refuge in me. I shall be their shield, encouraging them and protecting them against danger. They will not fear any evil, even though thousands of enemies are arrayed against them on every side.

They will have great peace. For them there is no stumbling block.

I say to you, happy shall you be if you fear your Lord and walk trustingly in his way.

Yes, I will your happiness. Never believe that I desire anything but peace and contentment for you. I have given you my own happiness, my own joy, my very own peace. I want you to be a peacemaker, a maker of joy and happiness for those about you. I have commissioned you to help reconcile the world with me, to bring my peace to earth.

I desire your love, and the product of love is not depression, but happiness, enthusiasm, joy. What have you to fear? Live joyfully! Live happily! Live enthusiastically! Your joy is that God exists, ruling all, caring for all.

You will not draw to me the souls I long for so greatly by being ill-natured, gloomy, a pessimist.

Did I not say, "When you fast, do not imitate the gloomy looking hypocrites"?<sup>2</sup>

And did I not say, "Come to me . . . and I will refresh you"?<sup>3</sup>

It grieves me that so many believe that I am a stern, hard God, pleased by the spectacle of lowly man wiping the sweating brow of his soul while he asks himself, "Can I be saved? Can I possibly be saved?"

Did I give my life for you to torment you? To cause you anxiety?

I do not dwell in gloom, darkness, or dejection, but in light, love, and joy. Be of good heart.

Even when men revile you and persecute you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely because of me, be glad and lighthearted.

I am your light and your salvation. Whom shall you fear?

I am the defense of your life. Whom shall you dread?  
 With a great desire, I desire your happiness. I can  
 make you happy. I will make you happy.

Be lighthearted, then, and rejoice in me that you  
 may dwell in my house all the days of your life and  
 enjoy my graciousness and kindness.

### Christ, Maker of Saints

Rejoice in the fact that your names are  
 engraved in heaven.

LUKE 10:20

My friend, the secret of happiness, here on earth  
 and hereafter, is to be as saintly as possible. A saint is a  
 person who is happy—forever.

To be a saint is one goal that you surely can reach.  
 To be healthy, rich, honored, may be beyond your  
 power. But you can confidently expect to be a saint.  
 Ask this of me, and you shall receive it.

Trust yourself to me without reserve; and I say to  
 you that it will be far easier for you to become a saint  
 than not to become one.

You desire happiness. Happiness lies in holiness.

Do not think that holiness consists of unremitting  
 penance, of hair shirts and bloody scourgings, of trances  
 and ecstasies, of long nights spent motionless in prayer.

These are not essential to holiness. Holiness consists  
 of but one thing: the union of your will with mine.

The one service you have in your power to give me  
 is to do my will. The act of love that most honors me



is to make your will one with mine, to desire nothing except what I desire, to will all that I will.

It is not sacrifice, but love, that melts my heart.

I shall show you how to be a saint. Do as I did; follow in my footsteps.

I became man not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. I exalted my Father's glory on earth by doing the task he set before me. I became man at the precise moment and in the exact place he willed me to do so.

In the same way, I have appointed you a task: to bear fruit, to be my witness. For this reason you live at this time, in this nation, in this community, under these particular circumstances. Had you the wisdom of all the angels, you could not have chosen a better time and place for your life. You live here because it is best for you.

Follow me. You will bear abundant fruit if you live in me and I in you; separated from me, you can do nothing. Unite your will with mine, for that union is perfection, holiness, sanctity. In sanctity lies your happiness.

I do not expect you to become perfect overnight. Yet, if I so desire, I can make you perfect in a single instant. In my sight time is nothing; one day is a thousand years.

Be not impatient. Let me mold you as I choose. Let me form in you the image of myself. Let me transform you into me.

Let me teach you, in my own way, the ABCs of sanctity.

Some souls, touched by my consolations, seek to run too fast. They strive almost to kill themselves by penances and fasting. They wish to take on more than they can bear. Avaricious for spiritual advancement, they are forever comparing what they do with the "little" that others do. They want to pray longer than anyone else, to wield greater influence with me, to convert more souls than my great saints. They advance a little in holiness and they fancy themselves perfect. They impede their progress, they sometimes even retrogress, because they refuse to allow me to mold them in my own way.

Be different, I beg you.

Do not let spiritual pride take root in you. Do not be jealous of those who seem more "favored." Be patient. Give me your whole self to do with as I please, in all things, every day of your life, and I promise to shower grace upon you. I shall lead you to a firm, true, unselfish love. I shall remove from you the desire for consolation, and make you content with whatever I send. You will do penance for love of me, but you will learn that penance of itself is a little thing. Millions of persons throughout the world live daily lives of far greater deprivation than you with all your penances, because millions are always hungry, insecure, sick, cold, frightened, lonely. You will understand that holiness does not consist in penance and sacrifice, but in union with my will.

You will realize that I do not wish you to pray when your present duty calls you to active work, and that I do not will that you should work when it is time for prayer.

You will learn that of yourself you are nothing.

Everything good that you do or think comes from me.

Your soul, my dear friend, is but the instrument upon which I work. It is the reservoir into which the water of grace flows. All that you can do is to open or close its valve by the action of your will.

Although your achievements for me may be negligible, the gift of yourself is priceless in my eyes.

Your one desire will be that I may be served and loved. No longer will you desire to be my personal instrument for conversions, for preaching, for wonder-working. No longer will you desire to do more than anyone else. You will only want more to be done. And you will gladly be the least in my Father's house, if by being the least my glory is better served.

You will put on my virtues. You will be a victim with me for the salvation of mankind. You will be another Christ. Identified with me, you will be my other self.

That is the union with me that the greatest saints achieved.

That is the union with me that I have destined for you.