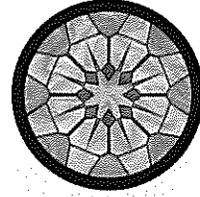


SECTION 4



I Will
Follow

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.*

ISAIAH 43:1.

HELLO, LORD. I'm back. Are you surprised? I'm not surprised that you're here. You are always here! I'm not *surprised*. But I am *amazed*! Never let me lose that sense of wonder at you being here always and ever! As a kid, I always liked places like this where I could go that seemed safe and secluded—a tree house—a little cave in the rock hill—the side of a huge tree that couldn't be seen from the road. It always gave me a sense of security—that place I knew about—and usually a few others knew about it also. We thought we were special because we had those places that were “ours.” We felt like we belonged when we went to those places.

We are big into identity, Lord. We like belonging, being in the group. We pledge allegiance to the flag; as children we make the Boy or Girl Scout Promise; we have great pride in being inducted into our sorority or fraternity and knowing the secret sign.

We like being asked to join the club or invited to a place one has to “belong” in order to get in. No one likes to be left out. If there's one thing that makes me feel awful, Lord, it's being on the outside with my nose pressed against the window, watching everyone who belongs having a good time inside. Belonging is very important to all of us, Lord.

We are American. We are Christian. We are Catholic.

But most importantly, we are yours. Let that be the “belonging” that motivates how I look at all the rest of my “belongings.”

You have called me, and I am yours. The very thought that you call me by name sends chills right up my spine, Lord. I don’t need to “belong” to a club; I belong to you, and nothing else matters. Please help me remember that when I’m fretting about whether I’ll get to be part of the “in” crowd. It really doesn’t matter, does it? But sometimes it seems like it does. Please don’t let that hurt so badly, Lord. Just let me be happy that I belong to you.

Amen.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 7:21

I ADORE YOU, PRECIOUS JESUS. I believe that you are present here—true God and true man. Allow me to give myself to you totally, Lord. I come to you just as I am. This is not about me, Lord. It is about you. You are what matters, and you desire that I come to you—in whatever condition—to become one with you. Sometimes I’m a little too preoccupied with myself to focus on you.

Help me forget me and abide in you. Take my mind that I may know you better. Take my will that I may serve you with resignation. Take my body and my senses that each may glorify you as I use it for your purposes, to the fullest extent of my ability. And especially, Jesus, take my heart that I may love you deeply and passionately without reserve. Let me give everything of *myself* to you in this sacrament of *yourself*.

Let me forget my own personal agenda and allow you to be my only agenda. Let me set aside my plans to be totally in sync with your incredible plan. Let me give up my wants in favor of your will. Let there be less of me and more of you, Dear Jesus. I offer you my free will that my choices may be your choices, precious Lord.

Grant that my joy comes only in attuning myself to that

instant in time when you spoke the words of consecration for the first time, that moment when unconditional love decided to stay with us forever.

Let those words: "Take and eat..." "This is my body..." "Drink you all of this..." "This is my blood..." echo through my very being, becoming the driving force by which I live my every day. Take the first place in my life, allowing nothing to cloud my vision of who you are. Send your Holy Spirit to free me of all that isn't you.

Amen.

*At the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,...*

PHILIPPIANS 2:10

JESUS, at the mere mention of your beautiful name—*Jesus*—every knee should bend in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth! Let my heart bend, too, Lord. Let it bend with flexibility to what the Father wills of me. Let it bend to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

Let it bend patiently when I have plans of my own and someone asks a favor, or when I see a person in need of my time and I'd rather not give it.

Let it bend in acceptance when I pour all my energy into a project, envisioning a successful outcome, and it turns out to be a disappointing flop.

Let it bend when I don't get what I want, but my friend who didn't even care got it instead.

Let it bend in humility when I feel like a misfit!

Let it bend when things are pretty much going my way and I'm tempted to be just a little smug as I ride the crest of the wave.

Let it bend in submission when I ask you in prayer to do something my way and you choose to do it your way, because you know what's best for me.

Yes, Jesus, let my heart bend with love for you because you are the God who cared enough to save me from my

self-chosen disasters. Every time I walk into a church and my knee bends out of reverence, let my heart bend out of love and gratitude. Let me always remember that you are so totally awesome, Jesus, that my whole being—all that I am—has every reason to bend before you, not only here in the Eucharist, but in every person I encounter.

Amen.

“Let it be with me according to your word.”

LUKE 1:38

DEAR JESUS, please open my heart to adore you as your Blessed Mother, Queen of the Cenacle, did in her intimate mother-son relationship with you. From the beginning, she believed in you with every breath she took.

Her Immaculate Heart, on fire with love, was the first to adore you in Nazareth within her virginal womb.

At Bethlehem, her maternal love was your first birthday present—the original act of faith.

At Cana, she was the first to recognize your power and offer your gift of service to humankind from her heart of love.

On Calvary, she stood silently worshipping at the foot of your altar-of-a-cross, uniting herself with your passion.

Upon your ascension and return to the Father, we can only imagine her intimate maternal relationship with you in the Eucharist. I can't even imagine the joy in her heart when she received your precious body and blood and held you once again within her, recreating that humbling mother-son bond.

What an awesome Emmanuel (God with us) moment it must have been every time she came into your presence in the Blessed Sacrament. How she must have treasured that time to be with you and share the innermost thoughts of her heart, to relinquish her entire being into your loving presence, and just be.

Allow me, Lord Jesus, to experience with a loving heart your divine presence as our Blessed Mother did. Help me utter a willing "*Fiat*" to whatever you say to my heart. Let me leave here resolved to adore you in the Eucharist through all the Bethlehems, Nazareths, Calvaries, and Cenacles of my life.

Let me listen attentively as you speak to my heart, and please send your Holy Spirit to help me always to do whatever you tell me to do.

Amen.

Create in me a clean heart, O God...

PSALM 51:10

PRECIOUS JESUS, thank you for you! We are overwhelmed by your love. The magnitude of what you did and continue to do for us is amazing! You are just so good!

We praise and thank you for planting the seeds in our hearts that have grown into a relationship with you in this sacrament. As we are magnetized to your presence on the altar, we ask you to come into our hearts and make them more like you. As we realize how willing you were to give yourself to us in the depths of our sinfulness, Lord, we ask you to pour out the grace we need to follow your example.

And so, Jesus, we pray now for the person who has hurt each one of us most of all and for the person we have most hurt. Allow your forgiveness to be all that remains of those unpleasant circumstances when we forgot who you are and who we profess to be. Give us the grace to forgive and be forgiven with none of the trappings of self-righteousness and complacency.

We pray for those who disagree with us—who vote for people we regard as unfit, who stand for policies we consider obviously undesirable. We ask you to bless those whose opinions differ from ours and those who get on our nerves as they blatantly speak their minds to that effect. Help us to be tolerant of those whose religious foundation we share

but whose approach to it differs from ours. Allow us to be aware that sometimes gray is more desirable than black *or* white. Give us humility when we are right and don't allow us ever to gloat, Lord. You know how often we are wrong, and you overlook it time and time and time again for no other reason than love.

Help us remember to be aware of your choice to dwell within the person we dislike or disdain every bit as willingly as you dwell within us. Allow us, Jesus, to live out our prayer when we come before you and say, "I love you, Lord" by loving—truly loving—each and every one of the Father's children. Help us remember what it means when we choose to call ourselves Christians.

As we present ourselves right here before you, allow us to let you change our prejudices, our preconceptions, our narrow-mindedness, our biases, and our bigotry. Please, Lord, open our hearts, warm our coldness, increase our love, and please, Lord Jesus, make us more like you in our hearts.

Amen.

*For God is not unjust; he will not overlook
your work and the love that you showed for his sake
in serving the saints, as you still do.*

HEBREWS 6:10

DEAR AND PRECIOUS JESUS, praise and glory to you for all you are and all you call me to be. In thanksgiving for allowing this incredible relationship with you, I come on behalf of those who are not blessed in the plethora of ways I am.

Lord Jesus, I offer your goodness for those whose lives are a relentless negative escapade and who never experience the beauty of what is good in their lives.

Lord Jesus, I offer your love for those who know only rejection, abuse, and suffering, and whose ears never hear the words "I love you!"

Lord Jesus, I offer your compassion and forgiveness for those whose lives have been racked by poor choices and who live in a constant state of despair, never realizing that hope is within their reach.

Lord Jesus, I offer your peace for those whose lives are ravaged by war, violence, and discord and who don't know the inner rest that comes with harmony and tranquility of body and spirit.

Lord Jesus, I offer your healing for those who suffer from critical spiritual, physical, mental, or psychological illnesses and who have no idea where to go to be mended.

Lord Jesus, I offer the Eucharist, Bread of Angels, for those who hunger and thirst, not only for physical sustenance, but for spiritual fullness that can only come from knowing you and experiencing your love.

Lord Jesus, I pray that your presence in our world will fill the voids in these lives. Please Jesus, let me never forget that I am called to be your hands and feet, your heart, and your words, knowing that in serving your people, I serve you.

Amen.