



Important Connections

Devotion

Connecting with people is important in today's world. We feel that we have to stay connected through our cellphone, tablet, or computer — checking in every day, or even every hour. We are much more involved in the lives of people, both near and far, today than a generation ago. Back then, a letter or a long-distance phone call rarely came daily, and almost never hourly!

Jesus knew how to connect with people in His day, too. He was capable of healing people with a word across long distances. Yet, when a leper knelt before Him and said, "*Lord, if you will, you can make me clean,*" Jesus said to him, "*I will; be clean*" (Matthew 8:2–3). And then He reached out and touched the "untouchable." Imagine how much it meant to a leper for someone to touch him. Who knows how long it had been since he had felt the warmth of human touch!

Jesus made a habit of connecting with people that others would not. He had a conversation with a woman at a well. He called attention to her sins by telling her He knew she was living with a man that was not her husband; yet she was drawn to Him and brought others to meet Him. He hugged children and blessed them, at a time when children were considered little more than property. He reclined at a table and dipped into the common bowl with tax collectors and other "sinners," giving the religious leaders ammunition against Him, but extending Himself to those who needed Him most and who grew to love Him. If you feel disconnected, unloved, and possibly untouched for days, even weeks, at a time, let Jesus hold you. He continues to connect with us through His Word and Sacrament of Holy Communion, just as He said He would, as He assures us in Matthew 28:20, "*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

Is there someone who needs you to connect with them? Someone who needs Jesus? A danger today is that we can connect with people with whom we do not need to connect (Do I really need to know what Taylor Swift "tweeted" today?) while neglecting to make the connections at our fingertips. God has intentionally placed you in your family, your church, and your community to make connections for Him. Follow Jesus' example. Reach out and touch someone who may rarely be touched. Hug someone who needs a hug. Take every opportunity to connect through conversation. Most importantly, stay connected to our Lord through the greatest love letter ever written, the Bible, and through conversation with Him in prayer. These will provide the basis for all your other connections.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us traverse this world of constant connections. Guide us to discern between the connections that need to be made and those that are better left disconnected. Open our eyes to see Your children who are near to us, and those at a distance with whom You want us to connect. Then, give us the desire and the ability to extend ourselves to them for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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