

# LETTERS OF JOHN



## INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

**T**his first letter of John, inseparable from his Gospel, reminds us that the Christian way is nothing less than a divinization: our own.

From all time, the Christian ideal has seemed too pale or too narrow for many people. Without directly criticizing the values of Christianity and its benefits to humanity, they saw it as limiting people. We think of all those, like Marx, who affirmed that a real human liberation involves a struggle against faith. We think of those who today rely on science to widen the possibilities of life. We again think of all those who, shunning western activism, seek in oriental wisdom a way to the Absolute which they have failed to see in Christian faith.

Even for Christians, the sentimental religion springing from enthusiasm for Jesus, the good Master teaching universal love, often hides an ignorance of the ambitions of faith. For in Jesus it is God himself we want to reach, we are seekers of truth and we want to merge into this truth from which we have come.

John affirms in this first letter: If you have the Son of God you have total truth, you are on the way to authentic love and you are in communion with God himself.

However, perhaps, we are deceiving ourselves when we pretend to be in Christ. This is why John specifies the criteria, the conditions enabling us to verify if we are truly walking in the light and living in Love:

- In Christ we recognize God himself; yet we must always remember to interiorize his actions, his mission, his way of being human.

- We believe we have been reborn from God: that does not mean that we are above his commandments, nor that we should neglect daily efforts to be worthy of him.

- Faith has renewed our knowledge of God. What matters most is to understand his love and, for that, there is no better teaching than that of the cross.

This letter of John seeks to settle many doubts and confusion concerning Christian faith. It was written when “Gnosticism” or knowledge was beginning. Gnosticism involved an elaborate system that included many elements, already present in the so-called Asian religions, namely, from the Roman province of Asia, today’s Turkey. Paul had already encountered them some thirty years before (see Captivity Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; Paul wrote these letters while in prison) and now John was noticing the expansion of Gnosticism.

The Gospel of John had freed from all ambiguity the faith in Christ, Son of God, and divine person, born from God and having returned to God. But Gnostics were always ready to grasp onto beliefs they ran across to recast them into their endless tales. Gnostics tried to integrate the person of Jesus into their intellectual dialectics, their conflicts of angels and spiritual powers. According to Gnostics, Jesus did come from God although he was only a spirit. He only had a human appearance and he did not die for us. Redemption continues to be a process through which divine sparks come out of matter and what matters to them is to know the secrets of these celestial conflicts. Gnostics claimed to be spiritual and yet, while they condemned marriage, they did not see anything wrong with sexual freedom.

Therefore, it was necessary to reaffirm that Jesus was fully human; he was the Christ who had come in the flesh. Several times, the letter will refer to the sacrifice and to the blood of Jesus.

Some people think that this letter sought to correct some improper interpretations that could be given of John’s Gospel. It must have been written around the years 95–100 A.D.

# FIRST LETTER OF JOHN



**1**<sup>1</sup>This is what has been from the beginning, and what we have heard and have seen with our own eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, I mean the *Word* who is Life....

<sup>2</sup>The *Life* made *itself* known. We have seen Eternal Life and we bear witness, and we are telling you of it. It was with the Father and made himself known to us.

<sup>3</sup>So, we tell you what we have seen and heard that you may be in fellowship with us, and us with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>And we write this that our joy may be complete.

## 1 JOHN 1:1-4

**Read:** The relationship between Jesus and his disciples comes from personal experience. Jesus Christ is not an idea but a reality. The apostles are his witnesses and announce him to those who have not yet heard, seen or touched him that they may also believe in him and enjoy the salvation that he brings.

**Reflect:** Why do you believe in Jesus? What is the foundation of your faith? From whom did you receive it? How do you give witness that Jesus is “the word of life”?

**Pray:** Pray for the gift of insight to see through the eyes of faith and to recognize the divine presence in ordinary daily life.

**Act:** Share your experience of God with other believers.

## Walk in the light

<sup>5</sup>We heard his message from him, and announce it to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him.

<sup>6</sup>If we say we are in fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie, instead of being in the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we are in fellowship with one another; and the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, purifies us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we say, “We have no sin,” we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>If we say that we do not sin, we make God a liar, his word is not in us.

### **Fulfill the commandment of love**

**2**<sup>1</sup>My little children, I write to you that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an intercessor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Just One. <sup>2</sup>He is the sacrificial victim for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

<sup>3</sup>How can we know that we know him? If we fulfill his commands.

<sup>4</sup>If you say, “I know him,” but do not fulfill his commands, you are a liar and the truth is not in you. <sup>5</sup>But if you keep his word, God’s love is made complete in you. This is how we know that we are in him:

<sup>6</sup>he who claims to live in him, must live as he lived.

#### **1 JOHN 1:5—2:6**

**Read:** God is light and truth, sin is darkness and lies. If a Christian sins, he or she should trust in the loving mercy of God and ask for forgiveness, since Jesus “offered himself in sacrifice so that our sins may be forgiven.”

**Reflect:** Have you personally experienced that “God is light” in your moments of darkness? Do you trust in God’s forgiveness? Do you illumine your daily life with the Word of God and with his Gospel? Are you light for others?

**Pray:** Give thanks to God for all the times God has to illumine your life and ask to live always in His light: in His love and in loving your neighbors. Ask also for all those men and women who are going through moments of “darkness,” that Christian witness may reflect divine light.

**Act:** Refuse to live in darkness. Trust in God’s love and ask

forgiveness for your sins. When forgiven, share the gift of reconciliation with others, especially with those whom you have offended.

<sup>7</sup>My dear friends, I am not writing you a new commandment, but reminding you of an old one, one you had from the beginning. This old commandment is the word you have heard.

<sup>8</sup>But, in a way, I give it as a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shines.

<sup>9</sup>If you claim to be in the light but hate your brother, you are still in darkness.

<sup>10</sup>If you love your brothers and sisters, you remain in the light, and nothing in you will make you fall. <sup>11</sup>But if you hate your brother, you are in the dark, and walk in darkness without knowing where you go, for the darkness has blinded you.

<sup>12</sup>My dear children, I write this to you: you have already received the forgiveness of your sins through the name of Jesus. <sup>13</sup>Fathers, I write this to you: you know him who is from the beginning. Young men, I write this to you: you have overcome the evil one. My dear children, I write to you because you already know the Father.

<sup>14</sup>Fathers, I write to you, because you know him who is from the beginning. Young men, I write to you because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you who have, indeed, overcome the evil one.

<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world, or what is in it. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

<sup>16</sup>For everything in the world—  
the craving of the flesh,  
the greed of eyes  
and people boasting of their superiority—  
all this belongs to the world, not to the Father.

<sup>17</sup>The world passes away with all its craving, but those who do the will of God remain for ever.

**1 JOHN 2:7-17**

**Read:** To live in light is to live in love. Our goal for loving God is our constantly keeping His word, which is to love others. The life of Jesus is the model of life for all Christians.

**Reflect:** How closely do people associate the love of God with the love of others? Do people even try to love God, or is the love of material things stronger?

**Pray:** Pray for God's assistance in helping you to overcome any difficulty you are having with relationships at this time of your life. Ask for the grace to live in the love that Jesus, God's Son, taught us.

**Act:** Perform simple actions that will show in your relationship with others that you "walk in the light" and not "in darkness."

**Reject the antichrist**

<sup>18</sup>My dear children, it is the last hour. You were told that an antichrist would come; but several antichrists have already come, by which we know that it is now the last hour.

<sup>19</sup>They went out from us, though they did not really belong to us. Had they belonged to us, they would have remained with us. So it became clear, that not all of us were really ours.

<sup>20</sup>But you have the anointing from the Holy One so that all of you have true wisdom.

<sup>21</sup>I write to you, not because you lack knowledge of the truth, but because you already know it, and lies have nothing in common with the truth. <sup>22</sup>Who is the liar?

The one who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

This is an antichrist who denies both the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup>The one who denies the Son is without the Father, and those who acknowledge the Son also have the Father.

<sup>24</sup>Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you too will remain in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup>And this is the promise he, himself, gave us: eternal life.

<sup>26</sup>I write this to you thinking of those who try to lead you astray.

<sup>27</sup>You received from him an anointing, and it remains in you, so you do not need someone to teach you. His anointing teaches you all things. It speaks the truth and does not lie to you; so remain in him, and keep what he has taught you.

<sup>28</sup>And now, my children, live in him, so that when he appears in his glory, we may be confident and not ashamed before him when he comes.

<sup>29</sup>You know that he is the Just One: know, then, that anyone living justly is born of God.

### 1 JOHN 2:18-29

**Read:** Once again the Christian community is divided by different factions. The “antichrist” faction looks after their own benefit instead of the community.

**Reflect:** What does it mean for you to “abide in God”? In what ways does God “abide” in you? Can a person be a Christian without being a part of the Church?

**Pray:** Ask for the grace to always be united with God and His Son through the Holy Spirit. Pray that your parish that its everyday life will live according to the teachings of the Gospel.

**Act:** Decide what you need to do to abide in God in your everyday life and as a member of your parish.

**3**<sup>1</sup> See what singular love the Father has for us: we are called children of God, and we really are. This is why the world does not know us because it did not know him.

<sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God’s children, and what we shall be has not yet been shown. Yet, when he appears in his glory, we know that we shall be like him, for then, we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>All who have such hope try to be pure as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Anyone who commits a sin acts as an enemy of the law of God; any sin acts wickedly because all sin is wickedness. <sup>5</sup>You know that he came to take away our sins and that there is no sin in him. <sup>6</sup>Whoever remains in him has no sin, whoever sins has not seen or known him.

<sup>7</sup>My little children, do not be led astray; those who do what is right are upright, just as Jesus Christ is upright. <sup>8</sup>But those who sin belong to the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning.

This is why the Son of God was shown to us, he was to undo the works of the devil.

<sup>9</sup>Those born of God do not sin, for the seed of God remains in them; they cannot sin because they are born of God.

<sup>10</sup>What is the way to recognize the children of God, and those of the devil? The one who does not do what is right is not of God; so, too, the one who does not love his brother or sister.

### 1 JOHN 3:1-10

**Read:** The Father's love makes us his children who will continually grow in love by doing good and rejecting evil.

**Reflect:** Are you aware of being a child of God? What are its implications for you? Do you recognize others as your brothers and sisters since they are also children of God? What does the following expression tell you: "The one who does not do what is right is not of God; so, too, the one who does not love his brother or sister"?

**Pray:** Ask for the grace to live as a child of God, doing good and avoiding evil. Ask also that the Christian community may be a witness to the universal fellowship willed by God in its day-to-day living.

**Act:** Express the love of God to the people near you with gestures that will make them feel loved, special persons, sons, and daughters of God.

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message taught to you from the beginning: we must love one another. <sup>12</sup>Do not imitate Cain, who killed his brother, for he belonged to the Evil One. Why did he kill him? Because he, himself, did evil, and his brother did good.

<sup>13</sup>So, be not surprised, brothers, if the world hates us; <sup>14</sup>we love our brothers and sisters, and with this, we know that we have passed from death to life. The one who does not love remains in death.

<sup>15</sup>The one who hates his brother is a murderer, and, as you know, eternal life does not remain in the murderer.

<sup>16</sup>This is how we have known what love is: he gave his life for us. We, too, ought to give our life for our brothers and sisters.



<sup>17</sup>If anyone enjoys the riches of this world but closes his heart when he sees his brother or sister in need, how will the love of God remain in him? <sup>18</sup>My dear children, let us love, not only with words and with our lips, but in truth and in deed.

<sup>19</sup>Then, we shall know that we are of the truth, and we may calm our conscience in his presence. <sup>20</sup>Every time it reproaches us, let us say: God is greater than our conscience, and he knows everything.

<sup>21</sup>When our conscience does not condemn us, dear friends, we may have complete confidence in God. <sup>22</sup>Then, whatever we ask, we shall receive, since we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup>His command is that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he has commanded us.

<sup>24</sup>Whoever keeps his commands remains in God and God in him. It is by the Spirit God has given us that we know he lives in us.

### 1 JOHN 3:11-24

**Read:** The central message of the Gospel is mutual love. This love is the sign that identifies Christians. Love begets life, hatred death. Jesus gave his life for us and sent us his Spirit, the same one who impels us to live as Jesus lived.

**Reflect:** What does the following text suggest to you: "Let us love, not only in words and with our lips, but in truth and in deed"? How can we give our life for others nowadays?

**Pray:** Preaching as an old man, St. John would repeat again and again, "Love one another." Repeat these words as a mantra, a prayer.

**Act:** Share what God inspired you in this moment of reflection. Express your faith by loving others not only in words but also with concrete deeds.

### Do not trust every inspiration

**4**<sup>1</sup>My beloved, do not trust every inspiration. Test the spirits to see whether they come from God because many false prophets are now in the world.

<sup>2</sup>How will you recognize the Spirit of God? Any spirit, recognizing Jesus as the Christ who has taken our flesh, is of God. <sup>3</sup>But any spirit

that does not recognize Jesus is not from God, it is the spirit of the antichrist. You have heard of his coming, and even now, he is in the world.

<sup>4</sup>You, my dear children, are of God, and you have already overcome these people because the one who is in you is more powerful than he who is in the world.

<sup>5</sup>They are of the world and the world inspires them, and those of the world listen to them.

<sup>6</sup>We are of God, and those who know God, listen to us, but those who are not of God, ignore us. This is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood as well.

### **God-Love is the source of love**

<sup>7</sup>My dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

<sup>8</sup>Those who do not love have not known God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup>How did the love of God appear among us? God sent his only Son into this world, that we might have life through him.

<sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he first loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

<sup>11</sup>Dear friends, if such has been the love of God, we, too, must love one another.

<sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love comes to its perfection in us.

<sup>13</sup>How may we know that we live in God and he in us? Because God has given us his Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>We ourselves have seen and declare that the Father sent his Son to save the world. <sup>15</sup>Those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in them and they in God.

<sup>16</sup>We have known the love of God and have believed in it. God is love. The one who lives in love, lives in God and God in him.

<sup>17</sup>When do we know that we have reached a perfect love? When, in this world, we are like him in everything, and expect, with confidence, the Day of Judgment.

<sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love. Perfect love drives away fear, for fear has to do with punishment; those who fear do not know perfect love.

<sup>19</sup>So, let us love one another since he loved us first.

<sup>20</sup>If you say, "I love God," while you hate your brother or sister, you

are a liar. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your brother whom you see? <sup>21</sup>We received from him this commandment: let those who love God also love their brothers.

### 1 JOHN 4:1-21

**Read:** The summit of Christian life is love because God is love. And out of love, God sent us His Son. And out of love, His Son died on the cross for us. And because of love, His Spirit is with us. Christians live in God by sharing their love with the world.

Then it is our task as Christians to show this love in the world with mutual love and loving everybody.

**Reflect:** Have you experienced the love of God in your life? How? Do you think that you love God? How is it manifested? What does the following expression suggest to you: "If you say, 'I love God,' while you hate your brother or sister, you are a liar. How can you love God, whom you do not see if you do not love your brother, whom you see"?

**Pray:** Ask God the grace to love others with the same passion as how God loves us. Give Him thanks for His loving presence in your life.

**Act:** Show in your dealing with others the love that God has for you. Try to see in the face of others the face of God who loves you.

### Faith comes from God

**5**<sup>1</sup>All those who believe that Jesus is the Anointed are born of God; whoever loves the Father loves the Son. <sup>2</sup>How may we know that we love the children of God? If we love God and fulfill his commands,

<sup>3</sup>for God's love requires us to keep his commands. In fact, his commandments are not a burden

<sup>4</sup>because all those born of God overcome the world. And the victory, which overcomes the world, is our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who has overcome the world? The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

<sup>6</sup>Jesus Christ was acknowledged through water, but also through blood.

Not only water but water and blood.

And the Spirit, too, witnesses to him, for the Spirit is truth.

<sup>7</sup>There are, then, three testimonies:

<sup>8</sup>the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three witnesses agree.

<sup>9</sup>If we accept human testimony, with greater reason must we accept that of God given in favor of his Son. <sup>10</sup>If you believe in the Son of God you have God's testimony in you.

But those who do not believe make God a liar, since they do not believe his words when he witnesses to his Son.

<sup>11</sup>What has God said? That he has granted us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>The one who has the Son has life; those who do not have the Son of God do not have life.

### 1 JOHN 5:1-12

**Read:** God's love for humanity is shown by His Son, Jesus Christ. As Christians, we should give witness of this.

**Reflect:** What does it mean for you personally to say Jesus Christ is the Son of God? What are the implications for your life?

**Pray:** Give thanks to God for His Son sent to the world and for the faith that you have received. Ask for strength and courage to be a witness of this truth.

**Act:** Describe the contents of your faith. In what you believe and why. Share your reflection with others and encourage them to witness to the love of God in the world.

## Keep yourselves from idols

<sup>13</sup>I write you, then, all these things, that you may know that you have eternal life, all you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

<sup>14</sup>Through him, we are fully confident that whatever we ask according to his will, he will grant us. <sup>15</sup>If we know that he hears us whenever we ask, we know that we already have what we asked of him.

<sup>16</sup>If you see your brother committing sin, a sin which does not lead to death, pray for him, and God will give life to your brother. I speak, of course, of the sin which does not lead to death. There is also a sin that leads to death; I do not speak of praying about this. <sup>17</sup>Every kind of wrongdoing is sin, but not all sin leads to death.

<sup>18</sup>We know that those born of God do not sin, but the one who was born of God protects them, and the evil one does not touch them.

<sup>19</sup>We know that we belong to God, while the whole world lies in evil.

<sup>20</sup>We know that the Son of God has come and has given us power to know the truth. We are in him who is true, his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

<sup>21</sup>My dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

### 1 JOHN 5:13-21

**Read:** This section repeats the main themes of the letter and concludes by encouraging Christians to help and support each other in believing in Jesus. This support requires a communal effort.

**Reflect:** Do you trust in God's goodness? How do you show this trust? In your opinion, nowadays, how do people show their trust? Is Christian witnessing an alternative to this situation?

**Pray:** Ask from God what you really need, knowing that you are talking to a God who loves you and whom you can completely trust.

**Act:** As much as possible, share what gives security in your life: accepting people in your home; inviting to your table friends or relatives who may be going through some difficulties.

# SECOND LETTER OF JOHN



**C***hosen Lady*: this is the way John greets the community of an unknown city. The Church is chosen and holy, just as the people in it are the chosen and holy ones of God.

John invites the people to have a steadfast and emphatic attitude toward those who do not accept the faith of the apostles. At the same time, he reminds them of the fundamental law for Christians: love.

To remain zealously faithful to the truth is to love Christ who entrusted this truth to us. We need the whole truth and not only what is most pleasing to people today.

<sup>1</sup>I, the elder, to the chosen Lady and her children, whom I love sincerely—and with me, all who know the truth—<sup>2</sup>because of this same truth which is, and will be, in us forever.

<sup>3</sup>Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, in the name of God the Father, and of his Son, Christ Jesus, in truth and love.

<sup>4</sup>I rejoiced greatly on meeting some of your children who live in accordance with the truth, according to the command we have received from the Father. <sup>5</sup>And now, I ask you, Lady—I write to you not a new

commandment, but that which we had from the beginning—I ask you: *let us love one another.*

<sup>6</sup>This is love: to walk according to his commandments. And this is the commandment: that you walk in love, as you have learned from the beginning.

<sup>7</sup>Many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, who came in the flesh. They are impostors and antichrists. <sup>8</sup>Take care of yourselves that you do not lose the fruit of your labors, but receive a perfect reward. <sup>9</sup>Everyone who goes beyond, and does not remain within the teaching of Christ, does not have God. The one who remains in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup>If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your houses, or even greet him. <sup>11</sup>Even in greeting him, you would become an accomplice in his wicked deeds.

<sup>12</sup>I have many things to write to you, but I prefer not to use paper and ink. I hope to meet you and speak to you personally, that our joy may be full.

<sup>13</sup>The children of your chosen sister greet you.

## 2 JOHN 1-13

**Read:** This letter calls the community to the grace, mercy and truth that come from God. The image suggested by the words “chosen Lady” seems to reflect a united Christian community as if they were all brothers and sisters.

**Reflect:** Love is the commandment we must walk in. How do you walk in love? What role does Jesus have in your walk of love?

**Pray:** Instead of considering the negative aspects of evaluating our lives, offer a prayer of rejoicing for those who live and walk following the commandments of God’s love.

**Act:** Determine to walk in a path of love you have avoided because of fear of what it may cost you.

# THIRD LETTER OF JOHN



**T**o the Christians who knew him, the apostle John was not “Saint John,” but a man. For a certain Diotrefes, to whom John gave the responsibility of a community that we do not know, John was a bothersome old man. To better dominate his church, Diotrefes was cutting off the relationship.

John, however, in his three letters, as in the Gospel, speaks of the “communion” which must exist among Christians. Any church or group must remain open to others, maintaining constant contact with them. Paul also insists on this responsibility: to welcome in their homes all Christians coming from other places in order to strengthen the bonds of the common faith.

<sup>1</sup>I, the elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love sincerely.

<sup>2</sup>Dear friend, may everything go well with you and may you enjoy health of body and soul. <sup>3</sup>I greatly rejoiced with the friends who arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely, how you walk in the truth. <sup>4</sup>Nothing gives me greater joy than to know that my children live in the truth.

<sup>5</sup>Beloved, you do well to care for the brothers and sisters as you do. I mean those coming from other places. <sup>6</sup>They spoke of your charity before the assembled Church. It will be well to provide them with what they



need to continue their journey, as if you did it for God. <sup>7</sup>In reality, they have set out on the road for his name without accepting anything from the pagans. <sup>8</sup>We should receive such persons, making ourselves their cooperators in the work of the truth.

<sup>9</sup>I have written these words to the Church. But Diotrephes, who is anxious to preside over it, does not acknowledge our authority. <sup>10</sup>So when I come, I will not cease reproaching his manner of acting, since he discredited us with words of evil intent. And not content with that, he does not receive the friends, and even restrains those who want to receive them, and expels them from the Church.

<sup>11</sup>Dear friend, do not imitate evil, but only the good. Whoever does good is of God. Whoever does evil does not know God. <sup>12</sup>Now, about Demetrius: everyone praises him, even the truth itself. We, too, praise him, and you know that our testimony is true. <sup>13</sup>I have many things to tell you, but I do not want to do it in writing. <sup>14</sup>I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

<sup>15</sup>Peace be with you. Your friends greet you. Greet the friends for me, each one by name.

### 3 JOHN 1-15

**Read:** Scholars believe that this is a reply to a letter Gaius wrote to John, that letter is lost. But it appears to have concerned a misuse of authority by Diotrephes who seems to be creating some divisions and problems in the community.

**Reflect:** Two references are made to friendship: first, what you do faithfully for friends, do for strangers; and secondly, “he even refuses to welcome his friends.” In what way is friendship part of your faith?

**Pray:** Ask for understanding and patience in dealing with someone like Diotrephes, who seems to like to dominate the group and who does not know how to work well with others.

**Act:** This letter concludes with a particular instruction to greet others, each one by name. Take the necessary time and make an effort to know the name of a person who is now a casual acquaintance or whose name you do not know. From now on, greet that person by name.

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