

16 June 2026  
THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS  
“Imitating Christ”

Phil 2:1-11

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In today's passage, we once again see the Apostle's caring love, as he expresses concern for the early fruits of his evangelizing work in Europe. The Christian community in Philippi had made a good start by God's grace and was to continue in the same way. The spiritual communion of which St. Paul speaks consists of a common and sincere effort to live and act according to God's will. This spirit must reign in the community. Everyone must be oriented toward the same goal, exhorting one another in fraternal charity. If the community lives this way, it delights the Apostle to the Gentiles. Let us remember that, as we mentioned in the introduction, the Letter to the Philippians is also known as the “Epistle of Joy.” St. Paul conveys to us time and again what his joy consists of. It fills his heart when the community is of one mind, pursues the same goal, and is driven by a common effort to achieve it.

However, the Apostle does not limit himself to pointing out the goal and the spirit with which it should be pursued. He also speaks of what can prevent its attainment. He mentions rivalry and vainglory, which must be overcome in following the Lord. Christians must continually work to overcome their imperfections because they hinder the work of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual communion of the community. If evil inclinations are not restrained, they become a heavy burden for everyone.

Paul shows us how to overcome them: we must regard others as better than ourselves. This is an effective remedy against pride, which may not always manifest itself openly but can take root in the heart. It can remain unchecked when we secretly compare ourselves to others or feel superior to them.

If we are not blinded by pride, we will easily recognize qualities and virtues in our brothers and sisters that surpass our own. We should acknowledge these qualities with gratitude and strive to emulate them. This will set us on the right path to overcoming vainglory and growing in humility. Likewise, prioritizing the well-being of others over our own interests frees us from unhealthy egocentrism.

In short, the Apostle makes it very clear that it is not enough to believe in the Lord in a general way and, perhaps, to do the occasional good deed. We must also work on our imperfections and strive to overcome everything that hinders charity, so we may have the same sentiments as Christ Jesus.

St. Paul knows that we cannot achieve this noble goal by our own strength, even if we sincerely aspire to do so. That is why he presents Jesus Himself as our model: Jesus stripped Himself of His glory and humbled Himself by becoming man. We must deeply internalize this immeasurable mystery of God's love for us, which we will never cease to praise. It is Jesus whom we must imitate, submitting ourselves to the same obedience with which He served the Heavenly Father even unto death. Jesus remains the unsurpassed Master and the example that guides us. Without a doubt, He will provide us with all the help we need to imitate Him if we ask for it. True discipleship of Christ also involves clinging to authentic faith, as echoed in the final words of today's passage.

It is a magnificent hymn of praise to the glory of Christ! As faithful Christians, we must never forget these words, for they will resound throughout eternity. The name of Jesus is above every other name. Salvation is found in Him alone (Acts 4:12). We cannot allow this certainty of faith to be relativized, for every knee will bow before Him—in heaven, on earth, and in the depths—and every tongue will confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" to the glory of God the Father.

This is the testimony of Sacred Scripture, the faith handed down to us by the apostles. Paul gave his life for this testimony. This is the unadulterated Catholic faith! Blessed is the one who clings to it unwaveringly!

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**Meditation on today's reading:** <https://en.elijamission.net/the-ahabs-of-this-world-have-to-convert-2/>

**Meditation on today's Gospel:** <https://en.elijamission.net/be-perfect-like-your-heavenly-father-2/>