



The seventy-two disciples returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven." At that very moment he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him." Turning to the disciples in private he said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

Introductory Prayer: Jesus, I approach you in prayer, knowing that these are some of the most important moments of the day. This time I spend with you helps put the rest of the day in perspective and gives me a sense of my total dependence on you. With childlike simplicity I trust in your loving providence. Though I am unworthy to be in your presence, I at least want to offer you my best effort during this prayer, seeking only to please you.

Petition: Let me see, Holy Spirit, that the most important thing in life is to reach heaven, and to act as if I really believe that.

1. Name-dropping: The disciples marvel at the power of Jesus' name, even before demons. Such is the great power of Christ in the world. "There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12). Christ, as the Messiah who came to redeem us, is in a league by himself. Thus, all authentic devotion, be it to Mary, be it to a favorite patron saint, only has sense insofar as it leads us to Christ. He is and remains the best

model for us. As Vatican II teaches, Christ "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (Gaudium et Spes, 22). Is there anyone I put ahead of Christ in my life?

2. The Ledger: Jesus seems to shrug off the victories over Satan. What he deems more important for his disciples is that their names are written in heaven. Indeed, Christianity is about more than just defeating the devil. Ours is an eminently positive faith, designed to help us grow in our love for God and in our imitation of the virtues of Christ. As an exercise in love, it is open-ended, always inviting us to do more for others and for Christ. Love knows no limits, so we shouldn't think that we "have arrived." Do I understand that I'm called to love and to imitate Christ till the last moment of life?

3. Model Son: Love drives Christ, specifically love for his heavenly Father. The realization that he does his Father's will impels Christ to undergo hardships, tiredness, hunger and rejection. But he won't be deterred. As a young man in love, Christ seems to have an endless reserve of energy for the sake of his Beloved. It is his secret source of strength, so to speak. Thus, he teaches us a deep truth of human nature. "Man cannot live without love," wrote Pope Saint John Paul II in his first encyclical. "He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him." If ever we feel burned out by the world, we should ask ourselves, "How much do I love others? Do I gladly sacrifice myself for others? Do I seek the good of others first?"

Conversation with Christ: My faith is first and foremost a relationship with you, Lord. It requires a constant response of love on my part. Help me be generous in responding to your inspirations toward love.

Resolution: I will show thanks for my faith by doing an extra act of charity today.