

Confirmation



Coptic Icon Christ and Abba Mena (commonly known as Christ and his friend), 5th Century, the Louvre, Paris

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

John 15:15



Describe what you can see, what is actually happening.

Thinking about the expressions on the faces of the Jesus and his friend, place yourself in this picture, how would you react?

What sort of relationship does Jesus want to have with you?

How does this painting help me reflect on the Sacrament of Confirmation?

What is the Lord saying to me today?

Notes:

This 6th Century Coptic icon is known as the Icon of Christ and His friend. It can show us what it is to live the Christian life, do pastoral work and help form disciples in Christ.

Christ slightly taller, word Saviour written next to his head. As sign of introduction and also protective gesture his right hand is placed on shoulder of St Mena, an abbot from 285-309AD. Inscription says Abba Mena superior.

Embrace signals our change in status, we are no longer servants but friends.

Relational love that Christ has for us shown in position of the eyes. Christ has an eye on the friend and another looking straight at us. The friend's eyes are the same. We need to do the same at all times having one eye on Christ, and one on those under our care.

Christ holds the Book of Gospels, symbolizing that he is the Word, the Truth. We are like the friend in the icon, we also have been given something to share, as signified by the small scroll the friend is holding, but we are only given a small part of the truth of God, our knowledge is always growing yet always remains incomplete.

Christ has no feet. The friend does, so it is the friend who is sent out like the Father sent the Son.

Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours. St Teresa of Avila 1515-1582

6. Christ and his friend have their mouths closed. There is silence. The silence of prayer. The friend, however, has very prominent ears. We are to be primary listeners of God. God speaks to us through scripture and those we encounter.

7. There is a prayerful silence in the icon. Mother Teresa when asked what her secret was said 'My secret is simple, I pray'. When asked what God said to her she replied 'Nothing, He listens.' Prayer is a mutual listening.

Perhaps as we look at this icon we might hear again the call of Christ to his friends and brothers to join Him on pilgrimage.

Adapted from

<https://fuelforpilgrims.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/the-icon-of-christ-and-his-friend/>