

Love your  
neighbor as  
yourself

-Jesus



I want to  
accustom  
all the  
inhabitants  
...to look on me  
as their brother

-Br. Charles de  
Foucauld

To my brothers and sisters in Christ,

I apologize for the delay in writing! I recently changed jobs and am looking at housing, so I simply forgot about the newsletter in April.

It was amazing to see the outpouring of love and respect during the recent death of Pope John Paul II. As I caught glimpses of the activities on television or read about the coverage in a newspaper, I saw how the glory of the Church was displayed to the world. The triumph and solemnity impressed many of my friends and coworkers, along with the stories of John Paul's wisdom and compassion. He will be missed, but his intercession for us is more powerful than ever.

I was overjoyed to see Cardinal Ratzinger chosen as the new Pope. I pray that he will continue John Paul II's strong push towards stabilization in this post-Vatican II era. The last thing this world needs is a Church that lacks conviction in its beliefs, and Benedict XVI is a man who truly knows the foundational theology that has supported the Church of God through 2000 years. May we all pray that he is courageous.

On the home front, I was hired in March by the Beau Rivage Casino as a computer engineer. This job will allow me more stability in Biloxi, and will provide the opportunity to buy a small home. I absolutely love living here, and the purchase of a 1- or 2-bedroom home will be a wise way to make my presence permanent.

Every day, I continue to find opportunities for apostolic work and prayer. I have been blessed to discover a men's prayer group at my parish, and I derive much joy and strength from our meetings. When my schedule changes soon, I look forward to continuing to help with the St. Vincent de Paul society.

God keep you and guide you, and I pray for your peace and happiness.

In peace and love,  
Matthew

Please send all  
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Prayers are needed and appreciated!  
(no postal fee required)



# meditation

May 2005

In the last meditation, we considered our Ultimate End—why we are here. In this meditation, we look at the first step towards that end, which is detachment.

When detachment is mentioned, we instinctively think of a cold response; an aloof spirit. This attitude, though common, is dead wrong. Detachment is simply seeing things for what they are without allowing ourselves to be ensnared. For example, we all must eat. Yet, if I become upset when my favorite food is unavailable, I cannot eat right away, or I can't eat all that I want, then I am attached to eating. Note that eating in itself is not bad—it is my attachment to eating. An attachment is an *inordinate* desire for something. It is a desire against nature, and, therefore, will hinder me in my relationship with God. St. John of the Cross stated that we live on the level of our attachments. If the love of my life is, for instance, my money, then how will I love others, let alone God?

Does detachment mean that we cannot love other people warmly? Of course not! In fact, only those who are detached can truly love. When we become wrapped up in someone else's life to an unhealthy degree, we will swear that our concern stems from pure love. Yet, our reasoning is distorted because of our attachment, so we cannot see what is truly best for them. And what is true love? It is to wish and do what is best for each person, which requires detachment. My favorite illustration for this is Brother Francis of Assisi's calling his body "Brother Ass." He calls his body "brother" because it is holy and to be loved and taken care of. But he calls it "ass" because it is as unruly as a donkey and must be controlled with a resolute, detached love.

The main goal of detachment is *freedom*. Grasping our lives, money, health, and relationships chokes the very life out of them, and makes us miserable. Letting go, we are free to devote our lives to God, and we are ready to follow His will at a moment's notice. When we gain the proper, detached perspective on life, we see everything lit with a radiance of love. We greet each moment as a holy messenger of the will of God, and this spurs us on to greater love of God Himself. This is where Christian detachment is different from Buddhist detachment. Where the Buddhist seeks an ultimate freedom from all desire in a state of nothingness, the Christian seeks a freedom that leads to an eternal, sweeping love with the infinite fire that is God.