

I have called you friends

John 15:15



The Bare Minimum

Read: John 15:9-17

In the gospel Jesus tells us that if we claim to be his friends, and have a personal relationship with him, we will do what he commands. His primary command is that, because God is love, we must love God and love our neighbor. However, we aren't always aware what the commandment of love entails.

Based on the scriptures, the Church simplifies the intricacies of the commandments by boiling our obligation down to five precepts. These are “the necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbour” (CCC 2041). They are as follows:

1. “You shall attend Mass on Sundays” requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.
2. “You shall confess your sins at least once a year” continues Baptism’s work of conversion, repentance and forgiveness.
3. “You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season” guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord’s Body and Blood. However, the Church encourages frequent communion for our spiritual benefit.
4. “You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence” ensures times for asesis and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and helps us acquire mastery over ourselves.
5. “You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church” means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability.

If we are serious about being Jesus’ friends then we must be serious about meeting His requirements for that friendship. What he asks of us is not difficult, though it does require sacrifice, but in the end, we will be able to call Jesus our friend.