



## *Be open to the challenge*

A widow in her 80's thought about moving to a retirement village. Her youngest son who has no car, came to help her pack. The widow decided to give him her car because she no longer was able to drive. When her other children heard this, they argued about how her mother would divide her assets. The widow heard about their concern, she gathered them together and told them that her things were hers to decide whom she wanted to give them to. What she did with her belongings had nothing to do with her love for each of them, and she felt disappointed about them arguing. She gave away her car because their brother needed it. She hoped they knew that she loved each of them equally. After they had left, the widow wondered what more she had to do to help her children know of her love for them.

The Gospel today raised the same question: what more had God to do to help us know of God's love for us. "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you." this is a very challenged love. The great indicator of growth in our spiritual lives is when we move from the attitude of a servant to the free but, in its own way, more demanding attitude of a friend or relative. Servants work definite hours and walk out if they do not like what they are asked to do. But friendship will go beyond, especially in times of crisis. Friendship entails mutual fidelity and loyalty. If we are friends of God we want to do what is God's will. Love will not want to offend even in the least.

Movement into a friend/friend relationship will also involve a change in the way in which we pray. We will not be praying out of duty, or to save our skins from a God who will punish us if we do not do what we are told. We will be praying because we enjoy being with our friend. In this kind of prayer we will be open to hear what God may be asking us to do in order to respond to his love. We will be open to the challenge that love may make on us, the challenge to live our faith to the full, even when it is risky to do so.