

## **Qualities of a Christian Servant: Spiritual Fellowship with Those One Serves**

The spiritual fellowship between the servant and his children can profoundly influence their feelings and thoughts. Therefore, this fellowship is an integral part of Christian service. Before anything else, service is a *stooping* to the natural level of the children to understand their actual state in life. Such stooping also helps the servant find out the extent of their ignorance, spiritual poverty, darkness, and estrangement from God. It is, therefore, an actual *lifting-up* of the children to a higher state, by virtue of the Holy Spirit's action, by the light of the commandments, and by the power of faith, hope, and love.

Christian service can never be “above” even the filthiest states to which a human soul may degenerate, and it must never scorn a soul for its foulness. Service is not words preached from a pulpit, but rather the act of grasping the hands of a weak and sinful soul and leading it from darkness to light, from death to life.

Emotional fellowship with someone suffering from a bodily illness or injury is a beautiful thing. But spiritual fellowship with someone living in sin—something that involves the scorn and rejection of others—is incomparably more beautiful. It is, in fact, the very work for which Christ was incarnate: “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21). A servant can never succeed in raising a soul from the pits of despair, darkness, and death unless he is prepared by faith and love to enter with that soul into the same pits. He must also be armed with the hope that he will be raised to new life and light by the power of God: “Not an elder or an angel, but the Lord Himself saved them from all their tribulation, because He loved them and spared them” (Is 63:9, OSB).

Excerpts taken from *If You Love Me* by Fr. Matthew the Poor, translated by James Helmy, published by Ancient Faith Publishing, 2018 ([www.ancientfaith.com](http://www.ancientfaith.com)), and used by permission.