

Your Holy Friend of the Month

Alberto Hurtado



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Jesus of Nazareth, Our Model



Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga, known as Saint Alberto Hurtado, was born on January 22, 1901, in Viña del Mar, Chile. He grew up in a middle-class family that valued education and faith. From a young age, Alberto displayed an exceptional intellect and a compassionate heart, which would shape his remarkable journey as a Jesuit priest and a tireless advocate for the marginalized. After completing his studies in Santiago, Alberto entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1923. Throughout his formation, he dedicated himself to deepening his spiritual life and intellectual pursuits. Ordained a priest in 1933, he embarked on a mission to alleviate the suffering of the poor and neglected. Deeply influenced by his encounters with poverty, Father Hurtado founded El Hogar de Cristo (The Home of Christ) in 1944. This organization aimed to provide shelter, food, healthcare, and education to the most vulnerable members of society, including abandoned children, homeless individuals, and the elderly.

Father Hurtado's unwavering commitment to serving those in need earned him the respect and admiration of many, both within and outside the Church. Saint Alberto Hurtado's holistic approach to social justice extended beyond material support. He recognized the importance of instilling dignity and self-worth in the marginalized, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment. Father Hurtado established numerous workshops and training programs to equip people with the skills necessary to secure employment and regain their independence.

His writings, including his influential book "Is Chile a Catholic Country?" challenged the Church and society to confront systemic injustices and advocate for the rights and dignity of all people. Recognizing his profound impact, Pope Benedict XVI canonized him on October 23, 2005, declaring him a saint of the Catholic Church. Today, El Hogar de Cristo stands as a testament to his enduring legacy, providing assistance to countless individuals in need.

Become A Resident Scholar At Ignacio House Of Studies!

If you are passionate about your education and wish to continue your academic journey post-release, Ignacio House offers transitional supportive housing along with a holistic suite of services for formerly incarcerated students. Find a sense of purpose and overcome barriers to employment, housing, and education.

Interested in joining? Send the following to our contact information at the top of this page:

- Full name & DIN number •
- Current college you are enrolled in and/or where you will study post-release •
- Contact information for college/university where you will study •

Sometimes Jesus had a way of turning people's assumptions about the way the world works upside down. The story of his baptism is a great example! To understand how strange it is, let's conduct an imaginary thought experiment. Think of a famous person you deeply admire...maybe a movie star, a musical artist, a writer, an activist for a just cause, a philosopher, an athlete, or an influential historical figure. What would you do if you saw this person walking down the street? Chances are, you might run up to him or her and ask for an autograph. But now imagine that the tables are turned: how strange would it be if the famous person ran up to you and asked for your autograph?

Something similar is happening in this Gospel account of Jesus's baptism. Like John, you might expect that Jesus should be the one doing the baptizing. Jesus is the person people should be traveling long distances to see, to hear, to be healed. And yet the exact opposite happens! Jesus makes a long, difficult journey to the desert—a hot, remote place in the middle of nowhere—specifically to seek out sinners and stand with them in solidarity.

Sometimes, especially when life feels hopeless, it can be easy to imagine God as standing far away from us, impossible to reach and impossible to please. But by being baptized, Jesus is symbolically telling us sinners that he loves us and wants to be close to us. While he is always calling us to greater holiness, he does so as our companion and brother, someone who will never abandon us, someone who would travel to the ends of the earth to tell us that we, too, are God's beloved sons and daughters.

The Baptism of Jesus

(Mt 3: 13-17)

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Questions for Reflection

- 1 What does my baptism mean to me, to be a child of God and to belong to the family of Christians?
- 2 Can I allow God to want to touch me?
- 3 If heaven opens over me, what would God say to me?

Daily Ignatian Examen

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God's presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day. What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you. What were the good moments of today? What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

Mark 1: 16-20

“As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, ‘Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.”

Questions for Reflection

- 1 Is Jesus also calling me and wanting me to follow Him?
- 2 What do I have to leave behind in order to follow Jesus more?
- 3 With what expectations do I follow Jesus?

...as we forgive those who trespass against us.

David, Thrive For Life Volunteer

As we read in last month's issue, forgiveness is at the core of God's interactions with human beings. We don't have to convince God to forgive us, any more than we have to “convince” the sun to shine. Forgiveness is just part of God being God!

But is there any situation where God will not forgive? In the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 18: 21-35), Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant. In the story, a servant owed the king a huge sum of money—the equivalent of about a million dollars. Since the man couldn't pay it back, the king forgave the debt in full. Later, however, the servant turned around and assaulted another person who only owed him about ten dollars! When the king found out, he threw the unforgiving servant into a dungeon.

What are we to make of all this? Jesus is clear and consistent that we must forgive others the same way God forgives us. This can be scary and difficult: all of us have felt anger towards another person for hurting us. Instead of forgiving, we often prefer to hold on to grudges, or worse, seek revenge. But here's the catch: over time, our refusal to forgive others prevents us from understanding how much God loves us. Holding a grudge is a little like walking into a cave and refusing to come out: even though the sun always shines, we can still choose to avoid the light!

But as always, there is good news: God is extremely patient and does not abandon us! God Himself helps us forgive more consistently. Notice what was missing in the servant from Jesus's story? Gratitude. The servant did not take the time to appreciate what the king had done for him! The more we come to God in prayer, the more we understand how generous God is with us. And the more grateful we are for that generosity, the easier it will be to extend love and mercy to others.