

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

FEBRUARY 26, 2017

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

PRAYER Part IV

Here are some final thoughts on prayer.

7. Devotions

One of my favorite role models growing up was an old lady in my parish named Dorothy. Dorothy stood out to me as a kid because every day she would pray the Stations of the Cross. Watching her pray the Stations of the Cross each day was my first lesson in Catholic Devotions. As I grew up, I would learn to pray the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and Mother of Perpetual help prayers. These prayers have a way of drawing me to a calm place where I can recall how God has always been there for me. Like watching a rerun on television or listening to a favorite song, these devotions invoke in me memories, feelings, and much more of how God loves me.

8. Discernment

St. Ignatius of Loyola in his writings points out that we have three enemies in our spiritual life. The first is ourselves because we are tainted by original sin. Sometimes we feel a need to rebel against God like Adam and Eve did

for one reason or another. We need to remember though that this is never a good choice because we are not turning away from a divine dictator but rather we are refusing divine love. The second enemy of the spiritual life is our culture/society/world. The world presents us a path that it says will lead us to

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happiness and Jesus presents us a different path to happiness. The two paths lead in different directions. If we follow the world's path we will eventually end up a lone and perpetually frustrated because we have turned away from Love. Finally the third enemy of the spiritual life is the devil. The devil, who finds himself miserable for having rejected God's will, has decided to try to make us miserable also.

It is therefore important to take the time therefore to discern the messages that we receive in prayer to make sure it is from God or not. A simple tool for discernment that I use is a set

8th Sun. Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 82 Gospel MT 6:24-34

Spiritual Reflection: "Our life is made of time and time is God's gift, and it is therefore important to make use of it by performing good and fruitful actions. Perhaps many teenagers and young people waste too much time in futile activities: chatting on the Internet or on mobile phones, watching 'soap operas' on TV, technological progress that should simplify and improve the quality of life, but sometimes distract you from what is really important. Among the many things to do in our daily routine, one of the priorities should be reminding ourselves of our Creator who allows us to live, who loves us, who accompanies us on our journey." The more time we spend serving money as our master the less time we have serving our true master God.

Spiritual Questions

1. How much time a day do you give God?
2. How do you keep the poor in mind when you are shopping?
3. How does where we spend our time testify to what we consider important?
4. How does where we spend our money testify to what we consider important?
5. What does God spend His time doing?

of principles. The first principle is that God never condones sin. The second principle is that God never tears us down and finally God never abandons us. If any of my spiritual thoughts breaks the three principles above I know that it is not from God.

9. Unanswered Prayers

St. Paul's in his First Letter to the Corinthian gives us a beautiful description of what "love" is: **Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.)**

And St. John tell us "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Therefore everything St. Paul's says about love we can

say about God and this is the reason why sometimes our prayers to God goes unanswered. God cannot do anything that will harm us because He is love. It is better to say that God answered our prayers in the negative than to say our prayers went unanswered because "no" is an answer. This gives us a freedom in our prayer because God will not harm us by giving us something we ask for that is ultimately harmful for us.

10. Goal of Prayer

Always remember that goal of Prayer is to help you strengthen your relationship with God. Our God desires to have a healthy and consistent relationship with you. He does not need this relationship but He does desire it. God will do His part in being therefore you and giving you what you need. He will however never force Himself upon you and so He humbles Himself to

be present in a way that still requires you to have faith.

One of the best ways that you can develop your prayer life is by joining an accountability group or getting a spiritual director and take time each month to ask yourself the following three questions: 1) where have you seen God this past month? 2) what have you learned about God this past month? And 3) what are you going to do for God this upcoming month. This is great way to keep your focus on the goal of prayer because you know you will have to answer these questions each month. I had also heard that Mother Teresa each night before going to bed would thank God for five things and ask pardon for five things. She said she did this because it made it easier to see God active throughout her day. She focused on five wrong things because she said it reminded her that she still needed God no matter what others told her.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Lent & Easter Prayer

On March 1st we will begin Lent. The following is a prayer to be said during Lent and a follow up prayer to be said on Easter.

Lent Prayer

Dear Lord, we are now in the holy season of Lent. We begin to realize anew that these are the days of salvation, these are the acceptable days. We know that we are all sinners. We know that in many things we have all offended Your infinite majesty. We know that sin destroys Your life in us as a drought withers the leaves and chokes the life from the land, leaving an arid, dusty desert.

Help us now, Lord, in our feeble attempts to make up for past sin. Bless our efforts with the rich blessing of Your grace. Make us realize ever more our need of penance and of mortification. Help us to see, in our ordinary difficulties and duties, in the trials and temptations of every day, the best opportunity of making up for past infidelities. Every day we are so often reminded in field and wood, in sky and stream, of Your own boundless generosity to us.

Help us to realize that You are never outdone in generosity, and

that the least thing we do for You will be rewarded, full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and flowing over. Then we shall see, in our own souls, how the desert can blossom, and the dry and wasted land can bring forth the rich, useful fruit that was expected of it from the beginning. Amen.

Easter Prayer

Today, dear Lord, we celebrate Your rising from the dead. We are happy with You that You have been victor over death. We look around us at the green fields, filled with new life, and are everywhere reminded of

You.

The seeds we plant seem dry and dead, but with the combined wonders of rain and sun, and the powers of the earth, they rise from their death-like sleep and grow green and beautiful in our fields. The trees, too, that stood so stark and lifeless through the winter are now bright with living green.

With these reminders of a resurrection all about us every day, help us remember that death is not the end of things for us, but the beginning.

rise again on the last day, to live with You forever.

Then there will be no weeping any more, nor any tears; no suffering, nor any pain, but joy and happiness and love with You forever. With You, then, will we celebrate the eternal Easter. It will be an everlasting spring for us, if we only realize now that there is no glory without suffering, no Easter without a Good Friday. Help us, by Your grace, to live the good lives that will merit this new life in heaven forever with You. Amen.

Help us keep in mind that we shall

CATHOLIC TRIVIA

Last Week Answers: Match the Saint with his quote

1. E If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!
 2. D This is the very perfection of a man, to find out his own imperfections.
 3. B To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.
 4. C He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. He never stops desiring what he already knows.
 5. A Let us begin in earnest to work out our salvation, for no one will do it for us, since even He Himself, Who made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.
- A) St. Margaret Mary Alacoque B) Bl. John Newman
C) St. Gregory of Nissa D) St. Augustine
E) St. Catherine of Sienna

This' Week's Trivia:

1. In what city was Jesus born?
2. How many books are in the New Testament?
3. What type of insect did John the Baptist eat in the desert?
4. Who were the first apostles called to follow Jesus?

Seven Catholic Reasons For Fasting

1) From the beginning, God commanded some fasting, and sin entered the world because Adam and Eve broke the fast. 2) For the Christian, fasting is ultimately about fasting from sin. 3) Fasting reveals our dependence on God and not the resources of this world. 4) Fasting is an ancient way of preparing for the Eucharist—the truest of foods. 5) Fasting is preparation for baptism (and all the sacraments)—for the reception of grace. 6) Fasting is a means of saving resources to give to the poor. 7) Fasting is a means of self-discipline, chastity, and the restraining of the appetites.

Spiritual Adoption

Spiritual Adoption 1-2 Month

I am asking you to spiritual adopt a child who is in danger of being aborted by praying the following prayer every day for the child.

“Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of [baby’s name] the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion.” - Prayer of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

You can also keep track of your spiritual baby’s progress by checking out the informational articles below each month.

1 Month since Conception –Developing Baby “My heart is beating!”

Your spiritually adopted baby has been quite active over the past month. Already your baby is 10,000 times bigger than at conception. Your baby has developed the foundations of his brain, spinal cord, and nervous system by the 20th day. His heart began to beat on the 21st day, pumping blood through its own circulatory system and the blood type can be different from his mother’s. Your baby is most vulnerable during the next month of being aborted. Pray that the Lord of Life might move the heart of his mother to give him the most precious gift of all -- the gift of life.

CATHOLIC HUMOR

Catholic Laughs

A Sunday school teacher asked her children on the way to service, "and why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" one little girl replied, "because people are sleeping."

A husband and wife are in church. The preacher notices that the husband has fallen asleep and says to the wife, "Wake your husband up!" The wife answers, "You're the one who made him fall asleep, you wake him up!"

CATHOLIC QUOTES

Following are quotes from Pope Francis in regards to Lent

- 1) "The confessional is not a torture chamber, but the place in which the Lord's mercy motivates us to do better."
- 2) "Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and, as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan, who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him."
- 3) "Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy."



Special Lenten Holy Hour

I am also excited to announce that we will be having a special Holy Hour each Sunday of Lent at Epiphany from 6PM-7PM. These Holy Hours will carry with them a special reflection on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Please see the schedule below.

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Words of Christ</u>	<u>Meditation</u>
March 5th	Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. – Luke 23:34	Fr. Michael Rennie
March 12th	Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. – Luke 23:43	Fr. Bill Kempf
March 19th	Woman, behold your son, Son behold your mother. - John 19:26-27	Msgr. Gregory Mikesch
March 26th	My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? – Matthew 27:46	Fr. Ralph Houlihan S. J.
April 2nd	I thirst -John 19:28	Fr. Tom Miller
April 9th	It is finished. - John 19:30 Father into your hands I commit my spirit -Luke 23:46	Msgr. John Borcic