

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

September 3, 2017 – 22nd Sunday Ordinary Time

Spiritual Ponderings Seven Steps to Bring Your Child Home to the Faith Part I

I cannot think of anything more important for Catholics today than the issue of fallen away Catholics. I believe all of us know at least one person who has drifted away from the Church during our lifetime. Sadly the people we know are close family members. Sadly many of these people leave the Church because they have had a negative experience with someone (or someone's) or they never received the faith in its fullest form. I know for a fact that if I had not gone onto the seminary, I would not be Catholic today because the information I received in religious education classes were simply inadequate. (Nothing against my teachers for they were good people, who strived to do their best). I would like therefore this month to devote my spiritual ponderings to reflecting on how to invite people to give the Catholic Church another chance to be their spiritual home. In order to provide a structure for these reflections, I will be referring to a 2015 article from Our Sunday Visitor entitled "Seven Steps to Bring Your Child Home To the Faith" by Brandon Vogt. Quotes from Brandon's article will be in bold and my commentary will be in the normal font.

Whenever I talk to parents facing this problem, they often use the words "helpless" and "hopeless." They feel helpless

because their children tune them out or ignore them whenever they bring up religious topics, and they feel hopeless because they think it's impossible their children would ever come back. These parents are desperate to do something — they just don't know what to do. I'm convinced what they most need is a plan, for as the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said, "A goal without a plan is just a wish." It's not enough to just sit back and hope our children will return. We need a proven road map.

When I know that I am going into a meeting and I want a certain outcome from it, I always find that I do better when I go into the meeting with a plan. For example, when I present an idea to a group, I can explain to the group how the pro's outweigh the cons. Doing this shows to others people how serious I am about the subject matter and helps me to avoid pitfalls that would jeopardize my intended outcome. In a similar way having a plan to engage a fallen away Catholic allows you to see and best use the opportunities that lay before you and to avoid pitfalls that would make it harder to achieve your goals.

**1. Pray, fast and sacrifice
If you aren't doing these three things, the other steps won't matter. Commit right now to praying 5-10 minutes each day for your child's return. Jesus' parable of the persistent widow (Lk 18:1-8) confirms that God**

loves tireless prayer — even if you pray for the same need every day. Don't give up, and don't think your prayer is unheeded or pointless. Look at what St. Monica's prayers did for St. Augustine. Also, fast and sacrifice for your child. Skip a meal, give up Facebook or Netflix for a week or willingly bear a small pain. Then offer your sufferings to God on behalf of your child. Unite them to the cross and ask that he send new grace into your child's life.

It is important to pray because prayer is conversing with the God. The better your prayer life is the more joyous you will be, the better you will be able to handle difficult situations in life, and the more you will be able to be yourself (because you know God's love for you.) These are three things that all people look for in life. Everyone wants more joyful, to face difficult situations without fear, and to be authentically themselves (and be loved for being their true-selves).

Fasting reminds us that there the first sin (or sign of distrust of God's love) was a fast. Fasting allows us to demonstrate in a real way that God is the most important thing in our life and that we trust him to take care of our needs. It also shows that we are willing to give things up because being relationship with God is more important than physical pleasures (probably at least one of the reasons why the person left the faith).

Sacrificing for something shows how much we want something. Parents for example sacrifice their time, sleep, and even their own wellbeing in order to help their children succeed. In the

same way sacrifices are a visible sign of showing others what we are willing to give up to have God in our lives. Part of the reason why I have such a love for the Mass was because my

mother made many sacrifices to make sure all six (children) went each week especially when we were on vacation. The sacrifices she made demonstrated to me how important Mass was.

Breaking Open the Word

September 3, 2017 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 124 Gospel MT 16:21-27

Spiritual Reflection: You cannot enter into a relationship and expect it to last unless you are also willing to be with the person in good times and in bad. The same is true with God. If you only want to practice your faith when you feel like it, then your faith will never grow.

Spiritual Questions

1. What must have been going through Peter's mind when Jesus rebuked him?
2. What amount of courage did Peter have to remain a part of the group despite being publicly rebuked by Jesus?
3. How can we think more like God and less like ourselves?
4. What role does suffering play in Jesus' mission?
5. What role does suffering play in your own life?



Prayers for the Week

Monday September 4th is Labor Day. So here is a prayer called Litany of Labor.

Litany of Labor

Leader: Let us pray to the Lord of all creation, from who come life, work and purpose.

Almighty God, when you lovingly formed us out of the dust of the earth, you breathed into us the breath of life and gave us work and purpose for living.

C. You placed Adam in the garden of Eden to fill and keep it.

L: Through our work, you make us co-creators with you, shaping the world in which we live.

C. You gave dignity to our labor by sending your Son to labor with us.

L. By our labor, the world is enriched.

C. By our labor, we enjoy the fruits of creation.

L. For providing varieties of work and for blessing us by our labor:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who plow the field; for farmers and farm workers, for those who work with their hands and those who move the earth, for all who provide food for others:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who tend the sick and those who seek new cures; for doctors and nurses, for scientists and technicians; for all who work to care for the sick:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who design and create; for inventors and

explorers, for artists and musicians; for those who write books and those who entertain; for all who open windows on their world through art and music:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who work in offices and those who work in warehouses; for secretaries and receptionists, for stockers and bookkeepers; for those who market products and for those who move them; for all who serve others through administration:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who inspire our minds and those who motivate us; for teachers and preachers, for public servants and religious servants; those who help the poor and those who work with

our children; for all who encourage us to learn:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those whose labor is tidiness and cleanliness; for janitors and sanitary workers, for drycleaners and maids; for those who produce cleaning products and those who use them; for all those who add beauty and cleanliness to your world:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who sail the waves and those who fly the skies; for captains and attendants, for astronauts and deep sea divers;

for those who chart and those who navigate:

C. We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. For those who serve in the armed forces; for soldiers and airmen; sailors and marines; for all those who put themselves in harms way to protect others:

C: We give you thanks, O Lord.

L. You bless us all with skills and gifts for labor.

C. You provide us opportunities to use them, for the benefit of others as well as ourselves and the growth of your Kingdom on earth.

L. Guard and protect those who labor in the world.

C. Bless the work of our hands, O Lord.

L. Send your special favor on the unemployed, the under-employed and the disabled, that they may find work that enriches their lives and provides for their families.

C. Give health to the sick, hope to the bereaved.

L. Keep us from laboring for ourselves alone.

C. Make us loving and responsible in all that we do.

Catholic Trivia



Last Week's Answers

1. What is a rectory?

A rectory normally refers to the house of the parish priest.

2. What is a rector?

A rectory normally refers to a person who helps the bishop lead a particular institution because the bishop cannot be everywhere. For example the bishop is in charge of the seminary but he cannot be there all the time so he appoints a priest to be rector.

3. What is a papal legate?

A papal legate was a person before modern day communication who literally stood in for the pope because the pope could not travel everywhere.

4. Who legalized Christianity?

Emperor Constantine.



This Week's Questions

Which of the following does not belong

1. Ambo Pulpit Lectern Boom

2. Priest Religious Married Lawyer

3. Chalice Monstrance Paten Ciborium

4. Censer Boat Thurible Aspergillum



Quotes of the Week – Random Catholic Quotes

"Teach us to give and not count the cost." - St. Ignatius de Loyola

"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us?" - Dorothy Day

"To convert somebody go and take them by the hand and guide them." - St. Thomas Aquinas

"We must have charity towards ourselves. We must prove our love by fidelity to prayer." - Edel Quinn

"You must ask God to give you power to fight against the sin of pride which is your greatest enemy - the root of all that is evil, and the failure of all that is

good. For God resists the proud." - St. Vincent de Paul

"Prayer immediately turns us into something greater than ourselves." - Archbishop Timothy Dolan

"Love God, serve God; everything is in that." - St. Clare of Assisi

Catholic Humor

Mom: What did you do at school today?

Mark: We did a guessing game.

Mom: But I thought you were having a math exam.

Mark: That's right!

Teacher: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

Donald: H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said it was H to O.

Teacher: Daniel, I've had to send you to the principal every day this week. What do you have to say for yourself?

Daniel: I'm glad it's Friday!

Phil: What makes a Cyclops such an effective teacher?

Cheryl: I don't know.

Phil: He has only one pupil.

Teacher: Where are the Great Plains located?

Tommy: At the great airports!



Saint Monica Society Prayer For September

The feast of St. Monica is August 27th. St. Monica is probably best well known for praying for the conversion of her family especially her son Augustine when he was living a very sinful life. Eventually one by one all her family became believers and Augustine excelled in faith to the point that he became a bishop and was later recognized as a saint.

I know many of us know people, especially family members who have fallen away from the faith. I would therefore like to invite you to pray with me for these people that they may once again find God. Each month therefore I will present to you a new prayer to pray.

Dear Saint Monica, you were once the mournful mother of a prodigal son. Your faithfulness to prayer brought you and your son so close to God that you are now with him in eternity. By your intercession and God's grace, your son St. Augustine became a great and venerable Saint of the Church. Please take my request to God with the

same fervor and persistence with which you prayed for your own son. Please guide back to the Holy Church the following people (names) and all who have wandered away from your truth. With your needs,

worries and anxieties, you threw yourself on the mercy and providence of God. Through sorrow and pain, you constantly devoted yourself to God. Pray for me that I might join you in such a deep faith in God's

goodness and mercy. Above all, dear Saint Monica, pray for me that I may, like your son, turn from my sin and become a great saint for the glory of God.

Spiritual Adoption

Spiritual Adoption Prayer



"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

MONTH 8 – Developing Baby -- "I like to listen to my Mommy's voice!" Spiritual Adoption Program

Now your spiritually adopted baby is finished developing and is concentrating on gaining weight; she might be making her mother uncomfortable with her size. She will need a layer of fat to help her stay warm after she leaves the perfect temperature inside her mother's womb. For some weeks now she has recognized her mother's voice. In a short time, her baby will be born. Your baby's mother appreciated the prayers you have said for her and her baby throughout the pregnancy. It has not been easy, but your prayers have given her the grace she needed to bring her baby to term.