

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

September 24, 2017 – 25th Sunday Ordinary Time

Spiritual Ponderings

Seven Steps to Bring Your Child Home to the Faith Part IV

St. Monica prayed many years for the conversion of her son Augustine. It is therefore important to remind yourself that God's time is not our time. It is also important that we continue to grow stronger in our own faith life. Here are the last two steps from Brandon Vogt's article in bold and my commentary in normal font.

6. Invite and connect

Once your child expresses curiosity and openness to returning, invite him to a parish event. This might be a weekend retreat, such as Christ Renews His Parish or Cursillo, or perhaps a parish small-group study or community event. Your goal is to usher him into the life of the parish, which will re-establish the communal bonds of faith. If your child is in college, connect him with the local Catholic campus ministry, such as FOCUS or the Newman Center. Leaders there will be thrilled to talk with him and help him on his journey. Don't move too fast, though. Only extend these invitations after he's expressed openness to returning, otherwise you may push him away.

I know that one of the things that keep me Catholic is the example and faith stories of others. Often when I begin to doubt, I stop and think just for a moment about a person I know who has more reasons to stop believing than I do and yet they

believe. My mother lost a child (my older sister when she was four and I was two). I cannot imagine the pain she feels but I can see that she only gets through it (or deals with it) through the power of her faith. If she can continue to believe so can I. Many of my good friends keep me faithful through their selfless service of others in the name of Jesus. It is important that we remind those returning and ourselves that it is alright to be inspired by others holiness but we should never compare ourselves with others.

7. Close the loop

Finally, you need to help your child formally reconcile with the Church. Lots of people get stuck here. A priest once told me about a lady who left the Church as a teenager and stayed away for over 30 years. Her reason? She simply didn't know how to come back. Don't let that happen. Once your child is ready to return, talk with your pastor and determine the right steps to close the loop. Maybe he just needs a good confession, or perhaps the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is more appropriate. A good priest will assess the situation and determine the best next steps.

Formal recognition of someone coming back (even if not public) can help a person connect better with the larger community.

Obviously, we've only scratched the surface of this road map. To

go much deeper, check out the tips and strategies in "RETURN." The key is to never give up hope. Hopelessness is not a word in God's vocabulary. As long as your child still has breath, there is always hope. God loves your child even more than you do. As much as you yearn for your child to come home, God desires his return infinitely more and is continually working to make that happen, even when things appear dire. So trust God, beg him to keep moving in your child's life, and be confident that he will bring your child home.

Prayer For the Return of Lapsed Catholics to the Sacraments

Almighty Father, You desire not the death of the sinner, but that he may be converted and live. Pour out upon us Your mercy and hear the prayers of Your servants. Soften the hearts of Your children who have strayed from the true path which You established for their salvation. They are now forgetful of their duties as Catholics, and pursue the pleasures of the world. Grant that they may quickly return to the practice of every Christian virtue, so that their lives may shine with the integrity of faith, the fervor of piety, and the ardor of charity. Restore them all to Your sacraments and the life of Your grace, through the merits of the most precious blood of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Breaking Open the Word

September 24, 2017 Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 133 Gospel MT 20:1-16A

Spiritual Reflection: This parable is one of the toughest parables in the Gospels because it really challenges our way of thinking. It is so difficult for us to take in because we naturally see others as competition instead of as brothers and sisters in Christ. Other people's successes do not make me less lovable. Let us therefore stop comparing ourselves with others and celebrate God's generosity.

Spiritual Questions

1. How would you feel if you were one of the first ones hired?
2. How would you feel if you were one of the last ones hired?
3. Why is there a difference?
4. Do other people's successes make you less comfortable? Why?
5. How can you learn to celebrate other people's successes?



Prayers for the Week

With all the conflict in the world today, I thought I would offer some different prayers for peace. You may pray the prayer that speaks to you or pray one prayer a day to form your own novena for peace.



PRAYER FOR PEACE # 1

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who said to Your Apostles: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you," regard not my sins but the faith of Your Church, and deign to give her peace and unity according to Your Will: Who live and reign, God, world without end. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 2

Lord Jesus Christ, We praise You: Bring peace into the world By bringing Your peace into the hearts of all. Help us to turn away from sin And to follow You

in love and service. Glory be yours, and honor, For ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 3

Lord, God of peace, who has created man, the object of your kindness, to be close to you in glory, we bless you and we thank you because you have sent us your beloved son, Jesus, making him the mystery of the Easter, the architect of all salvation, the source of all peace, the bond of true brotherhood. We thank you for the desire, the efforts, the realizations which your spirit of peace has roused in our day: to replace hatred with love, diffidence with understanding, unconcern with care. Open yet more our hearts to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, so that we may be better able to build a true peace. Remember, Father of mercy, all who are in pain, who suffer and die in the

cause of a more brotherly world. For the men of every race, of every tongue - may your kingdom come: your kingdom of justice, of peace, of love; and may the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. -By Pope Paul VI.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE # 4

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom those who make decisions for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. - From the Roman Missal

A PRAYER FOR PEACE # 5

Lead me from death to life, from lies to truth Lead me from

despair to hope from fear to trust
Lead me from hatred to love from war to peace
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe, peace, peace, peace.
Give peace, o Lord, in our days because there is no one else Who will fight for us
If not You, our God.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE # 6

Almighty God, in whose hands lies the destiny of men and nations, Let not the hopes of men perish, nor the sacrifices of men be in vain. O holy and life-giving Spirit, enable us by thy grace to root out from our common life the bitterness of ancient wrongs and the thirst to avenge the betrayals of long ago. Save us from the tyranny of history and set us free in a new obedience to serve each other in the present hour. Accepting the redemption wrought for us, we believe that all our sins of yesterday are covered by thy mercy; Grant us therefore grace and courage to give and to receive the forgiveness which alone can heal today's wounds. Draw us, O Lord,

towards loving kindness and guide us into the way of peace.

PRAYER FOR PEACE # 7

Give peace in our times, O Lord, because there is none other that can fight for us. O God, from whom all holy desires, all right counsels and all just works do proceed; give unto Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that both our hearts may be set to obey Thy commandments, and also that we, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time, under Thy protection, in rest and quietness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE #8

Merciful Jesus, during Your life on earth You showed great concern for the sick and the infirm. Have compassion now on all those who are sick or in pain. Grant them a healing of mind and body and restore their strength and spirit. Comfort them with the knowledge that we are praying for them, and give them peace with a sense of Your

presence. May they know that in the special way they are united with You, their suffering Christ. May they contribute to the welfare of the whole People of God by associating themselves freely with Your passion and death for the salvation of the world. Bless, too, those who take care of the sick. In their own time of need, bestow on them a hundred fold the blessings they have given to others. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE #9

Almighty and eternal God. May your grace enkindle in all of us a love for the many unfortunate people whom poverty and misery reduce to a condition of life unworthy of human beings. Arouse in the hearts of those who call you Father a hunger and thirst for social justice and for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth. Grant, O Lord, peace in our days, peace to souls, peace to families, peace to our country, and peace among nations. Amen.

Quotes of the Week – Nelson Mandela

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return.

Fools multiply when wise men are silent.

If you want the cooperation of humans around you, you must make them feel they are important - and you do that by being genuine and humble.

Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon.



Catholic Trivia



Last Week's Answers

Which of the Following Does Not Belong:

1. **Jeremiah** – Gideon – Samson – Samuel
Jeremiah was a prophet and the other three were judges.
2. Zebulun -- Judah – Dan -- **Philistia**
Philistia was not one of the 12 tribes of Israel
3. Elijah – Nathan – Elisha -- **Hosea**
All are prophets mentioned in the Bible but only Hosea has a book named after him.
4. Moses – Isaiah -- **Joshua** – Elijah
Joshua did not have a direct vision of God like the other three.



This Week's Questions

Match the Saint with his or her quote

1. *"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."*
2. *"No one should follow what he considers to be good for himself, but rather what seems good for another. Let them put Christ before all else; and may he lead us all to everlasting life."*
3. *"Men do not fear a powerful hostile army as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary."*
4. *"Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind."*

- A. ___ St. Catherine of Siena B. ___ St. Benedict
C. ___ St. Augustine D. ___ St. Bonaventure

Catholic Humor

The Dumbest Police Calls in America...

From the police blotter, or, what a beat cop deals with every day:

- A deputy responded to a report of a vehicle stopping at mailboxes. It was the mail carrier.
- A woman said her son was attacked by a cat, and the cat would not allow her to take her son to the hospital.

- A resident said someone had entered his home at night and taken five pounds of bacon. Upon further investigation, police discovered his wife had gotten up for a late-night snack.
- A man reported that a squirrel was running in circles on Davis Drive, and he wasn't sure if it was sick or had been hit by a car. An officer responded, and as he drove on the street, he ran over the squirrel

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



"Here I am!" HAPPY BIRTHDAY SPIRITUALLY ADOPTED BABY!

Your spiritually adopted baby was born this month - - nine months after her mother conceived her. The only change at birth is a change in the external life support system of the baby. She is no different now than she before birth except that she breathes and eats differently. She is truly a miracle. She began as a 46-chromosome cell and has grown over the past nine months into this unique human baby we now can see. Never before in history, nor ever again, will anyone exist who is exactly like your spiritually adopted baby. Your prayers saved her life. Thank you on behalf of all of the little babies and their parents for your loving prayers that helped to bring them to birth "so that they might have life and have it to the full!"