

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

March 4, 2018 – Third Sunday of Lent

Spiritual Ponderings Keys to Prayer

During my time in the seminary, I was blest to meet Dr. Nancy Brown. She was an amazing counselor who really helped me learn how to manage and overcome my depression. With her, I went from “surviving life to thriving.” It was also during this time, that my spiritual director gave me a small book on forgiveness written by Fr. Eamon Tobin. The book was titled *How to Forgive Yourself and Other*. At first I dismissed the book because it was not very big or very thick but it turned out to be one of the most helpful books that I have ever read and so I began to look for other books written by Fr. Tobin. Sadly, I never found another book until last year. Dynamic Catholic sent me a free copy of Fr. Eamon Tobin's new book *13 Powerful Ways to Pray*. I immediately devoured it. I found it to be just what I needed to renew my prayer life. In the beginning of the book Fr. Tobin talks about the Four Keys to Prayer and I thought this would be a great topic to reflect on for the month of March since we find ourselves in the middle of Lent. As usual quotes from the book will be in bold and my thoughts will be a normal font.

Key 1: Developing a Positive Self Image of God and Self
Few factors have the potential to affect the quality of our prayer life as much as our

image of God and self. On a human level, the image and feeling we have for another person and how we perceive the other person to feel about us will usually have a tremendous effect on how we relate to that person. For example, we will approach and relate to a person whom we love and whom we love and whom we perceive loves us in a different way than we will to a person for whom we have little or no feeling and whom we think does not particularly care for us. Our own self-image also will affect the way we approach and relate to people. If we have a positive image of ourselves, we will go out to people and relate to them with confidence, assuming they will like us. If we think we are not very lovable, we will approach people with self-doubt, fearful that they may reject us and not find us lovable. And if we believe that people will only accept us when we behave in certain ways, we will be inclined to be unreal with them, behaving only in ways we perceive to be acceptable to them.

I think a universal fact in regard to human nature is that we all want to be liked and included but we also do not want to feel the pain of being excluded. I also know that my image of myself often affects the way I think others will view me. When I feel like I have a very positive self-image of myself I have more courage to introduce myself to others. When my self-esteem is



low, I find it harder to go up to someone and introduce myself (even if I already know that person).

After reading Fr. Tobin's book, I can see how this applies to my spiritual life also. When I think of God as a judge and me as a criminal, I find it hard to talk to God. When I think of myself as a child of God and God as my Father, I find it much easier to talk to God.

We need to check the images of God and self from which we operate and become aware of some of the consequences of these images. For example, if we perceive God to be a police-type person who imposes numerous rules and demands strict adherence to them, our relationship with him will be characterized by fear, distance, and perhaps resentment. If we are overly scrupulous, we will believe consciously—or more likely unconsciously—that God is a tyrant who is impossible to please and who is ready to pounce on us for our failures. If we experience God as withholding himself from us, we will be reluctant to petition him for our needs. If we experience him as a loving Father, we will approach him with trust, relaxation, and love. If we

experience God as merciful, we will not hesitate to talk to him about our failures, knowing that his love for us is not based on our good performance.

Reading the above quote made me think to the story of

the Prodigal Son in Luke's Gospel. It is amazing that both sons did not know how loving their father was and each of them had a negative image of their father. The young son saw the father as an obstacle to freedom and the older son saw

the father as a slave master. Each son related to the father in an unhealthy way.

What helps or hinders us in our attempts to relate to other people will also help or hinder us in our relationship with God.

Breaking Open the Word

March 4, 2018 - Year B Third Sunday of Lent Lectionary: 29 Gospel JN 2:13-25

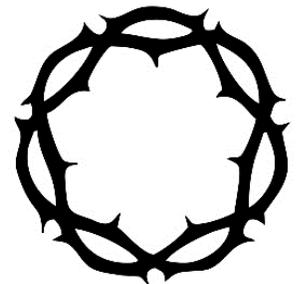
Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Spiritual Reflection:

The Evangelist John places the story of cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and not at the end. John could be emphasizing the need to understand the role of liturgy in our lives. We don't come to Church to bargain with God but rather to be transformed by Him.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why do you go to Church?
2. What do you get out of Mass?
3. How can you grow in your appreciation of Church liturgies?
4. What other liturgies have you participated in?
5. What do you need to clean out your heart so that you may worship God appropriately?



Prayers for the Week

LENTEN PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

God, heavenly Father, look upon me and hear my prayer during this holy Season of Lent. By the good works You inspire, help me to discipline my body and to be renewed in spirit.

Without You I can do nothing. By Your Spirit help me to know what is right and to be eager in doing Your will. Teach me to find new life through penance. Keep me from sin, and help me live by Your commandment of love. God of love, bring me back to You.

Send Your Spirit to make me strong in faith and active in good works. May my acts of penance bring me Your forgiveness, open my heart to Your love, and prepare me for the coming feast of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Lord, during this Lenten Season, nourish me with Your Word of life and make me one with You in love and prayer.

Fill my heart with Your love and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ. Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness. Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the Mass.

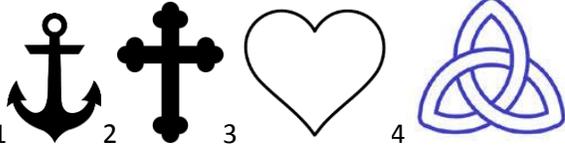
Father, our source of life, I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand; let me walk more readily in Your ways. Guide me in Your gentle mercy, for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.

Father of love, source of all blessings, help me to pass from my old life of sin to the new life of grace. Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom. I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR A GENEROUS HEART

Father in Heaven, You have blessed us with many gifts. You chose us before the world began, To be Your adopted sons and daughters, And to live through love in Your presence. Give us wisdom and insight to know Your purpose; Give us courage to follow where Your Spirit leads us, Give us generosity to serve You in our brothers and sisters. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Catholic Trivia

 <p style="font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">Last Week's Answers</p>	 <p style="font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">This Week's Questions</p>
<p>1. In the gospel of John what is Jesus' first miracle: A: Turning water into wine.</p> <p>2. The Summa Theologica was written by: A: St. Thomas Aquinas</p> <p>3. What is the name given to the series of 129 Wednesday Audiences delivered by JP II on the meaning of human embodiment: A: Theology of Body</p> <p>4. Who administers the sacrament of holy matrimony? A: Bride and Groom</p>	 <p style="margin-top: 10px;">1. Faith</p> <p>2. Hope</p> <p>3. Trinity</p> <p>4. Cross</p>

Quotes of the Week

"Between optimism and pessimism, there is confidence in God." — Edmund Campion

"If he had given away anything else, he would have been charged with indecent exposure." — Edmund Campion

"At his funeral the priest's words applied signally to him: 'The Christian Brothers are a body of men who live without luxury, labor without emolument, and die without notice, that they might stamp God's image on the soul of youth. That surely is a splendid vocation.'" — Edmund Campion

"We human beings are story-tellers, we pass on our values through the stories we tell. This is particularly true of Catholics, who get their identity through their histories, which they see as salvation history linking them to the saving actions of Christ. So, for Catholics, doing history – passing on the values by telling stories – is a pastoral imperative. We must look where we have been in order to know where we are going." — Edmund Campion,

"I wish not merely to be called Christian, but also to be Christian." — St. Ignatius of Antioch

"It is better to be a child of God than king of the whole world." — St. Aloysius Gonzaga

"But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment." — St. Paul

Pro-Life Corner

Pro-Life Prayer for February: Prayer for the Unborn

Father in Heaven, ever-living source of all that is good, keep me faithful in serving You by dedicating myself to the protection of all human life. Help me to drink of Christ's Truth, so that I may know that all human life is precious.

And fill my heart with His Love so that I may serve You the culture of life in faith and love. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist You give me the joy of sharing Your Life. Keep me in Your presence. Let me never be separated from You and help me to do Your Will.



Saint Monica Society Prayer For March

PRAYER TO KNOW THE WAY TO PEACE

Father of Heaven and earth, hear my prayer and show those who do not you the way to peace. Guide each effort of their lives so that their faults and sins may not keep them from the peace You promised.

May the new life of grace You desire to give all through the Eucharist and prayer make each person love for You grow and keep us moving toward the joy of Your Kingdom.

St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

Catholic Humor

The following were jokes that were told by Late Night Television Hosts when Pope Francis came to visit the United States.

"While he was in Washington, the Pope gave a major speech to Congress and asked them to accept immigrants as their own children. And Congressmen were like, 'Eh, we've already got enough children our wives don't know about.'" —Jimmy Fallon

"The trip to Washington, D.C., has actually been very educational for the Pope. You know, because he's only ever read about purgatory." —Jimmy Fallon

"I saw that top congressional leaders sent a statement to the House and Senate with guidelines for Pope Francis' visit, including a request to not shake his hand. Apparently, they're worried that if politicians touch the Pope they'll burst into flames." — Jimmy Fallon

"The big story right now is Pope Francis visiting the U.S., and I saw that yesterday, the Pope's plane couldn't land right away because he arrived earlier than planned. That's right, the Pope's flight was early. So I guess he really CAN perform miracles!" –Jimmy Fallon

"Pope Francis is here. He got in yesterday. He didn't do anything last night, they want him to rest for his hectic schedule the next few days. He did get some rest — much of it during his welcoming ceremony on the south lawn of the White House. That's one thing about being Pope — nobody knows when you're sleeping or when you're praying." –Jimmy Kimmel