

August 05, 2018 – Eighteenth Sunday Ordinary Time



*MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED
NOW AND FOREVER!!!*

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Cardinal Thuận's Ten Rules of Life

One of my spiritual heroes is Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận. He was a Vietnamese bishop that was captured by the communist when they took over the country. He was held in prison for many years with a significant amount of that time being in solitary confinement. In prison he wrote books to inspire Vietnamese Christians on the back of Vietnamese calendars. The Vatican eventually negotiated his release and John Paul II made him the head of the Congregation of Peace and Justice. He became truly famous when John Paul II asked him to lead the Papal Lenten Retreat in the year 2000. After his captivity he spoke of "Ten Rules of Life" that he adopted in prison that helped him survive and remain faithful to the Catholic Faith. Quotes from his "Ten Rules of Life" will be in bold and my commentary will be in the regular font.

I do not wish to speak about the negative aspects of captivity. I offered all that up to Jesus, Mary and Joseph. What will interest you most is sincere, fraternal sharing of my experience - understanding God's liberating power in my day to day existence.

Even in his introduction to his writing, I find Cardinal Thuận to be inspiring. His refusal to focus on the negative aspects of his captivity invites me to focus on the positive things in my life and not on the

negative. He does not deny his past but rather realizes that God has allowed these horrible things to happen to him for a reason and therefore his suffering has not been in vain. His suffering has turned himself into the person that God needed him to be now because he offered his suffering up to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

During those thirteen years I became aware of all my weaknesses, physical as well as mental. There were moments when I could not concentrate at all, when I could not even pray. Jesus then sent me light. "I must live the testament of Christ" - In his testament, just before dying, Jesus left me his word, his body, his mother, his Church, his priesthood, his new commandment, his mission, the duty to make all things one. Several times a day, I repeated to myself, "I must live the testament of Christ" - It's simple, it's inexhaustible.

Our world encourages us to overlook, ignore, and disregard our weaknesses but Cardinal Thuận discovers the strength to survive by acknowledging his weaknesses.

1. I WILL LIVE THE PRESENT MOMENT TO THE FULLEST

From the very first moment of my arrest, the words of Bishop John Walsh, who had been imprisoned for 12 years in Communist China, came to my mind. On the day of his liberation Bishop Walsh said, "I have spent



half my life waiting" It is true. All prisoners, myself included, constantly wait to be let go. I decided then and there that my captivity would not be merely a time of resignation but a turning point in my life. I decided I would not wait. I would live the present moment and fill it with love.

The first thing that struck me about the above quote was how Cardinal Thuận was inspired by the heroic life and death of Bishop John Walsh and now I am inspired by Cardinal Thuận's life and death. This makes me question who my role models are and what do they inspire me to do. What am I willing to die for?

The second thing that inspires me is that Cardinal Thuận made a decision to be an active person and not a passive person. He might not be able to control what was going to happen to him but he was going to control how he responded to it.

Day and night I was obsessed with the thought of my people (the people of his diocese). How was I going to stay in touch with my people? Just at the time when they needed their pastor most. The separation was heart-breaking. One night, light came: "It's simple, imitate the example of Saint Paul when he was in prison. He wrote letters to the various communities. The very next morning, I called to Quang, a little boy who was coming home from Mass. "Go and tell your mother to buy some old calendars".

Cardinal Thuận discovered a small way to love the people. I love the fact that he kept trying till he found away instead of just giving up.

2. I WILL DISCERN BETWEEN GOD AND GOD'S WORKS

Alone in my prison cell, I continued to be tormented by the fact that I was forty-eight years old, in the prime of my life, that I had worked for eight years as a bishop and gained so much pastoral experience and there I was isolated, inactive and far from my people... (1700km). One night, from the depths of my heart I could hear a voice advising me: "Why torment yourself? You must discern between God and the works of God.

Everything you have done and desire to continue to do, pastoral visits, training seminarians, sisters and members of religious orders, building schools, evangelizing non-Christians. All of that is excellent work, the work of God but it is not God! If God wants you to give I all up and put the work into his hands, do it and trust him. God will do the work infinitely better than you; he will entrust the work to others who are more able than you. You have only to choose God and not the works of God!"

I think this is one of the most important lessons that I have learned in life. Doing does not always equal loving. For example, I could do a lot of chores for my mother but I am not really loving her unless I also take time to talk and listen to her.

This light totally changed my way of thinking. When the Communist put me in the hold of the boat, the HAI-PHONG along with 1500 other prisoners and moved us to the north, I said to myself, "here is my cathedral, here are the people God has given me to care for, here is my mission: to ensure the presence of God among these, my despairing, miserable brothers. It is God's will that I am here. I accept his will". And from that minute onwards, a new peace filled my heart and stayed with me for thirteen years.

I have to remember that God places me where he needs me.

Quotes of the Week

"To put it simply: the Holy Spirit bothers us. Because he moves us, he makes us walk, he pushes the Church to go forward. And we are like Peter at the Transfiguration: 'Ah, how wonderful it is to be here like this, all together!' ... But don't bother us. We want the Holy Spirit to doze off ... we want to domesticate the Holy Spirit. And that's no good. because he is God, he is that wind which comes and goes and you don't know where. He is the power of God, he is the one who gives us consolation and strength to move forward. But: to move forward! And this bothers us. It's so much nicer to be comfortable." — Pope Francis

The tongue of the scandalmonger is like the worm which gnaws at the good fruit -- that is, the best actions that people do --- and tries to turn them all to bad account. The tongue of the scandalmonger is a grub which taints the most beautiful of the flowers and upon them leaves behind it the disgusting trace of its own slime. - *St. John Vianney*

"Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven." — Pope Francis

"You are what you do, not what you say you'll do." — C.G. Jung

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

August 5, 2018 18 Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 113 Gospel JN 6:24-35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking

for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent." So they said to him, "What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: *He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*" So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Spiritual Reflection:

One of the great things we can do to learn about the Eucharist is to read and reflect on what the saints tell us about the Eucharist. - "When you have received Him, stir up your heart to do Him homage; speak to Him about your spiritual life, gazing upon Him in your soul where He is present for your happiness; welcome Him as warmly as possible, and behave outwardly in such a way that your actions may give proof to all of His Presence." - - St. Francis de Sales

Spiritual Questions:

1. What are some of your favorite quotes about the Eucharist?
2. What is the wisdom behind God's gift of the Eucharist?
3. Why are you looking for Jesus?
4. Do you spend any time in Eucharistic Adoration?
5. How would you explain the Eucharist to others?



PRO-LIFE PRAYER FOR FAMILIES

O dear Jesus, I humbly implore You to grant Your special graces to all families. May all homes be shrines of peace, purity, love, labor and faith. I beg You, dear Jesus, to protect and bless all of us, absent and present, living and dead.

O Mary, loving Mother of Jesus, and our Mother, pray to Jesus for our family, and for all the families of the world, bring into the world all family members that are currently in their mother's womb, guard the cradles of all newborns, and safeguard the schools of our young.

Blessed Saint Joseph, holy guardian of Jesus and Mary, assist us by your prayers in all the necessities of life. Ask of Jesus that special grace which He granted to you, to watch over our homes at the pillow of the sick and the dying, so that with Mary and with you, heaven may find our families unbroken in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Amen.



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

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH FOR OUR LOST BROTHERS AND SISTERS

O glorious St. Joseph, to you God committed the care of His only begotten Son amid the many dangers of this world. We come to you and ask you to take under your special protection those who have fallen away from their faith. Through holy baptism they became children of God and members of His holy Church. We consecrate them to you today, that through this consecration they may become your foster children. Guard them, guide their steps in life, form their hearts after the hearts of Jesus and Mary. St. Joseph, who felt the tribulation and worry of a parent when the child Jesus was lost, protect our dear brothers and sisters who have wandered away now and for time and eternity. May you be their father and counsellor. Let them, like Jesus, grow in age as well as in wisdom and grace before God and men. Preserve them from the corruption of his world and give us the grace to be one day reunited with them around the Lord's table. Amen.



PRAYER(S) OF THE WEEK

A SPIRIT TO KNOW YOU By St. Benedict of Nursia,
 Gracious and Holy Father, please give me: intellect to understand you, reason to discern you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, a spirit to know you, a heart to meditate upon you, ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you, a way of life pleasing to you, patience to wait for you and perseverance to look for you. Grant me a perfect end, your holy presence, a blessed resurrection and life everlasting.

PRAYER OF SELF-ABANDONMENT

Father, I abandon myself into Your hands; Do with me whatever You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You. I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only Your will be done in me, And in all Your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into Your hands I commend my spirit; I offer it to You, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into Your hands, without reserve and with boundless confidence, For You are my Father. Amen.

THE PRAYER ABLAZE WITH THE FIRE OF YOUR SPIRIT

O Lord, You have mercy on all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully set me ablaze with the fire of Your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a human heart, a heart to love and adore You, a heart to delight in You, to follow and enjoy You. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

Absolute and all-knowing God, nothing is hidden from Your sight. In the prescience since the beginning, all knowledge existed within You. Kindly share Your knowledge with me, making me aware of what is meant to be, permitting my soul to understand it, and wisdom to agree with its outcome. Provide me with the gift of discretion, to prudently apply received knowledge, to ensure the fulfillment of Your Will. Your knowledge shines forth forever!

TRIVIA

Last Week's Answers	This Week's Question
1. What name has been shared by the most popes? Answer: John 2. Which two wicked cities were destroyed by God in Genesis? Answer: Sodom and Gomorrah 3. What animal is mentioned most frequently in both the New and Old Testaments? Answer: Sheep 4. According to the Bible, how many pearly gates are there? Answer: 12 (Revelation 21:12-21)	1. Who were the parents of King Solomon? 2. How many books of the Bible are named for women? 3. In the Old Testament, who was Jezebel's husband? 4. According to the Bible, what substance was used to caulk Noah's ark and to seal the basket in which the infant Moses was set adrift on the Nile?



Humor

