

January 6, 2019 - Epiphany of Our Lord

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

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

Ten Reasons to Go to Mass

I was extremely blest to attend Kenrick-Glennon Seminary for college for many reasons. One of the main reasons, I was blest was that the priests and other faculty members at the college seminary were focused on helping me become the best person I could be and this meant they were concern about more than my academic standing. It was in the seminary that I was given the tools and support necessary to acknowledge and address my depression. I am forever grateful for this.

While learning to address my depression and to develop tools to cope with this illness, I discovered that one of the symptoms of my form of depression was a desire to withdraw from the world and so fun and exciting things like going to the movies with friends sometimes became a chore. From time to time, when I notice myself falling back into this old habit, I stop and remind myself why going to the movies is fun and exciting and then I make myself go to the movies. This helps me take control of my life and it helps me control my mental health. The funny thing is, I have never regretted forcing myself to go out with friends. I share this with you because I think from time to time, we need to remind ourselves why it is important for us to go to Mass.

1. **God wants us to.**

The German philosopher Fredric Nietzsche, who was a great inspiration to Adolph Hitler, developed in his writings what philosophers called the Zero-Sum game. He reasoned that there was a finite amount of material goods in the world therefore if I possessed something you could not possess it. Therefore, if I have more land than you then I am winning and you are losing. If you have more gold than I then I am losing and you are winning. He then applied all of this to God. He theorized that if God got His way that meant God had won and the human being had lost. What Nietzsche did not realize was God is not concern with material possessions but rather God is concern with spiritual things and spiritual things grow when divided. For example, a family who adds another child to their family unit does not see their love for each other diminish but rather it grows to include the new family member. A courageous leader does not become less courageous because he has inspired his soldiers to grow in courage before or during the big battle. God therefore has no need to be in competition with us. In fact, God being totally self-sufficient has no need for anything we have. God desires though what is best for us because He loves us.

In fact, any praise that we receive gives God greater praise. When

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Sunday

A tragic paradox ensues. Instead of producing joy and feasting, the news of the birth of the King causes anguish and agitation in Jerusalem. Not only Herod but the entire city is disturbed. The account dramatically anticipates the story of the passion. – Elena Bosetti

Monday

Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means undergoing a kind of death. In fact, it needs a good man to repent. And here's the catch. Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent perfectly. The worse you are the more you need it and the less you can do it. The only person who could do it perfectly would be a perfect person - and he would not need it. - C. S. Lewis

Tuesday

If He had given money, no one would have had his fill. Nature was to go as far as it could, the God supplied the rest. He ordered that the fragments be gathered up; they filled twelve baskets. In the reckoning of men there is always a deficit; in the arithmetic of God, there is always a surplus. – Fulton Sheen

we praise a painting, we are actually praising the artist. In the same way when someone praises us, they praise the God who created us in His image. St. Irenaeus of Lyon said the "Glory of God is a person fully alive." There can be no real competition between God and me just like there can be no competition between the beautiful artwork on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Michelangelo. The more we praise the artwork of the Sistine Chapel the more praise Michelangelo receives.

If God is not against me and God is for me then what God wants for me is my best. God is like a good coach who wants what is best for the athlete under his tutelage. Another way of looking at this is that God is the engineer who designed a car and knows what type of gas is best for the car for it to reach peak performance. God has informed us through His Church that taking time to attend Mass on Sunday is one of the most important things we can do to help ourselves reach peak performance in this life and in the life to come.

2. **Mass is Our Chance to Show God We Love Him.**

As Catholics, we believe that our faith is about developing a relationship with God. One of the ways that we can do this is by simply spending time with God. Many of our relationships in the world today are falling apart because people do not take the time to spend time with each other. Most of my friendships that have come to an end did so not out of malice or of a refusal to forgive a hurt but rather out of neglect. We simply stop spending time together.

Each and every time I have been transferred from one parish to another, I hear from many of the parishioners that I have been serving the past years of their great intention of staying in touch. Some promise me that we will go out to dinner soon or they will come see me at the new parish. Sadly, most of these people I never see or hear from again. I truly believe that they are sincere at the time they make commitments to get together and that they truly do want to stay in touch. Time just slides by and gets away from them. From time to time though one or two parishioners will keep their word and come to visit me at the new parish or they will call and invite me out to dinner once a year. My relationship with these individuals is much stronger. In the same way making a commitment to go to Mass each Sunday will help strengthen our relationship with God. God has invited us to this deeper relationship every Sunday, will you seize this opportunity to hang out with Him or will you let it go by the wayside?

Wednesday

Both storms came at night and both were violent. It must have been a particularly strong tempest to have affected these men whose lives had been spent on that particular sea. Perhaps it was not only the storm at sea that troubled them, but also the fact that their Master had refused to be a King. – Fulton Sheen

Thursday

God's initiative

Friday

How often I failed in my duty to God, because I was not leaning on the strong pillar of prayer. --St. Teresa of Avila

Saturday

The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility. For, as he does not know at all how to employ it, neither does he know how to defend himself from it. --Saint Vincent de Paul



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

January 6 2019 The Epiphany of the Lord Lectionary: 20 Gospel MT 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: *And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.*" Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened

their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Spiritual Reflections: In her book: *A Contemplative Reading of the Gospel Matthew: The Journey Toward Hope*,” Scripture Scholar Elena Bosetti writes the following: *“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? the Magi asked (2:2). And by asking where, they announce that he is born. The Good News comes from afar. A tragic paradox ensues. Instead of producing joy and feasting, the news of the birth of the King causes anguish and agitation in Jerusalem. Not only Herod but the entire city is disturbed. The account dramatically anticipates the story of the passion.”*

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why did the announcement of “the newborn king of the Jews” cause so much anguish and agitation in Jerusalem?
2. Why does the announcement of Jesus cause so much anguish and agitation in our world today?
3. What bothers people most about Jesus?
4. Who are the people in your life, who help you find Jesus in your life?
5. What are some other similarities between the coming of the magi and the passion?



A HEALING PRAYER.

O Jesus, Good Shepherd, You heal the sick and assist the needy. I lift up to you those who are suffering from the sin of abortion. You know what it is like to endure pain. Look kindly on those who have had or have assisted in the sin of abortion today and heal them. Restore them to strength of soul and body.

Give Your gift of wisdom to physicians who have performed abortions or desire to do so May they be guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do and thus repent from their evil ways. Bless the nurses who work in the abortion industry so that their hands will become instruments of peace and caring like they were intended to and not instruments of death. Please touch all who work within the abortion industry in a way that allows them to turn away from the culture of death and that allows them to begin to embrace the culture of life.

Bless, the efforts of everyone who strive to promote the dignity of human life. O Jesus, grant our world Your healing grace of love and peace. Amen.



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

A SPIRIT TO KNOW YOU

Gracious and Holy Father, please give those who do not know you 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 all those who are searching for you a perfect end, in your holy presence, a blessed resurrection and life everlasting.



This Week's Trivia

1. What is “Adam’s Ale”?
2. What great battle is supposed to take place near the mountain area of Megiddo?
3. What book in the Bible do we get the term “The Writing on the Wall”?
4. Who used Jacob’s ladder in the Book of Genesis?

Last Week's Answer

1. How many times does the priest say the “Lord be with you” at Mass? - 4
2. What song sung at Mass is omitted during Lent and Advent? - Gloria
3. When we say a priest has “faculties” what do we mean? – Priest has permission
4. What song sung at Mass comes from the Book of Isaiah? – Holy, Holy, Holy



DUC IN ALTUM:

Put Our Into The Deep: For those Who want to be take their faith level to the next level.

One of the challenges of being a priest is trying to minister to a variety of people who are all at different points of their Spiritual Life. For those who feel like they are a little further advanced in their faith life or want to go deeper in the spiritual life, I will be offering one challenge a week under the title "Duc In Altum" which translated into English means "Put out into the Deep." These are the words that Jesus says in Luke Chapter 5 to St. Peter before St. Peter catches the boat load of fish. Here is this week's challenge (remember only read this if you want to be challenged). Avoid arriving at Mass late and leaving early. If you are handicapped and the parking lot is a problem for you, arrive early and stay late. You can use the extra time at Church to pray. When we leave Mass early or show up late perpetually we are telling God through our actions that we are going to Mass out of an obligation and not because we want to spend time with him. I would never think of going to my grandmother's house and leaving right after dinner. I would stay and socialize with her and others family members. Arriving late is not necessarily a sin if it was not intentional or because the children were misbehaving. I think it can become a sin when it becomes a weekly occurrence.



CATHOLIC PRAYER:

LITURGICAL BLESSING FOR EPIPHANY

Leader: God called you out of darkness, into His wonderful light. May you experience His kindness and blessings, and be strong in faith, in hope, and in love.

R. Amen!

Because you are followers of Christ, who appeared on this day as a light shining in darkness may He make you a light to all your sisters and brothers. R. Amen!

The wise men followed the star, and found Christ who is light from light. May you too find the Lord when your pilgrimage is ended. R. Amen!

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. R. Amen!



Humor



