

Shepherds of Christ

2007 ISSUE NO. 3 A SPIRITUALITY NEWSLETTER FOR PRIESTS BY REV. JOHN J. PASQUINI

CHIEF SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

Jn. 10: 1-15

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep”
(*New Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday*).



WHAT IS PRAYER?

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God, or the petition of good things from him in accord with his will. It is always the gift of God who comes to encounter man. Christian prayer is the personal and living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is infinitely good, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts” (1). Prayer is expressed in vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplation. It finds its greatest articulation in adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, praise and blessing. It is nourished by the Word, the Sacraments, the liturgy, the gifts of the Spirit, and the

example of Jesus and his cloud of witnesses, the saints (2).” ([1] *Compendium*, #534; [2] cf. CCC 2258-2751).

“Souls without prayer are like people whose bodies or limbs are paralyzed: they possess feet and hands but they cannot control them. In the same way, there are souls so infirm and so accustomed to busying themselves with outside affairs that they seem incapable of entering into themselves at all.”

— St. Teresa of Avila

PRAYER, A SPIRITUAL OFFERING

By Tertullian, Ecclesiastical Writer

“We are true worshipers and true priests. We pray in spirit, and so offer in spirit the sacrifice of prayer. Prayer is an offering that belongs to God and is acceptable to him: it is the offering he has asked for, the offering he planned as his own.

We must dedicate this offering with our whole heart, we must fatten it on faith, tend it by truth, keep it unblemished through innocence and clean through chastity, and crown it with love. We must escort it to the altar of God in a procession of good works to the sound of psalms and hymns. Then it will gain for us all that we ask of God.

...[Prayer] gives the armor of patience to those who suffer, who feel pain, who are distressed.

PRIESTHOOD

By Charles De Foucauld

To a Friend Preparing for Ordination

“The priest... is something transcendent; through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them our Lord’s Body as He Himself did at the Last Supper, and at their death He helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them their final forgiveness and the supreme strength... Every single day of his life, a priest does what Jesus did during his three years of ministry—He teaches men to know, love and serve their good Master. What a vocation!”



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FR. EDWARD CARTER

Founder, Shepherds of Christ

This newsletter is for priests and those who are interested in the spiritual life.

It strengthens the power of grace, so that faith may know what it is gaining from the Lord, and understand what it is suffering for the name of God.... [The] prayer of the just turns aside the whole anger of God, keeps vigil for its enemies, pleads for persecutors.... [Prayer's] only art is to call back the souls of the dead from the very journey into death, to give strength to the weak, to heal the sick, to exorcise the possessed, to open prison cells, to free the innocent from their chains. Prayer cleanses from sin, drives away temptations, stamps out persecutions, comforts the fainthearted, gives new strength to the courageous, brings travelers safely home, calms the waves, confounds robbers, feeds the poor, overrules the rich, lifts up the fallen, supports those who are falling, sustains those who stand firm....

What more need be said on the duty of prayer?" (cf. Cap. 28-29: CCL 1, 273-274).

"[True prayer] is inseparable from life and from the dynamism of life."

— Thomas Merton

PRAYER

By Pope John Paul II

"What is prayer? It is commonly held to be a conversation. In a conversation there is always an 'I' and a 'thou' or 'you.' In this case the 'Thou' is with a capital T. If at first the 'I' seems to be the most important element in prayer, prayer teaches that the situation is actually different. *The 'Thou' is more important, because our prayer begins with God. In prayer...the true protagonist is God.* The protagonist is *Christ*, who constantly frees creation from slavery to corruption and leads it toward



liberty, for the glory of the children of God. The protagonist is the *Holy Spirit*, who 'comes to the aid of our weakness.' We begin to pray, believing that it is our own initiative that compels us to do so. Instead, we learn that it is always God's initiative within us.... *This initiative restores in us our true humanity; it restores in us our unique dignity.* Yes, we are brought into the higher dignity of the children of God, the children of God who are the hope of all creation.

Man achieves the *fullness of prayer* not when he expresses himself, but *when he lets God be most fully present in prayer."*

(*Crossing the Threshold of Hope* [New York: Knopf, 1994], 16-18).

"Usually prayer is a question of groaning rather than speaking, tears rather than words. For He sets our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hidden from Him who made all things by His Word and does not ask for words of man."

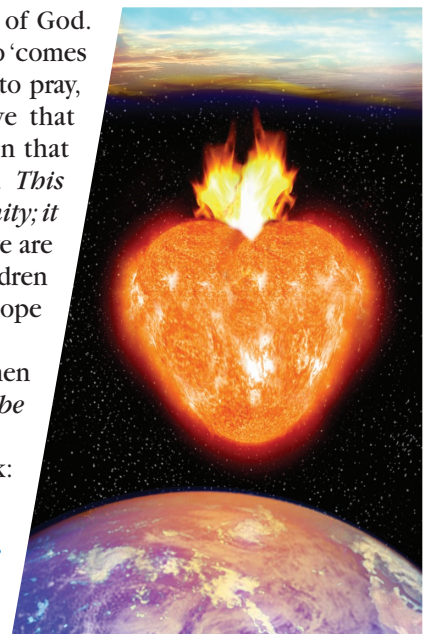
— St. Augustine of Hippo

HEART OF PRAYER

By Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"[If] we really want to pray we must first learn to listen, for in the silence of the heart God speaks. And to be able to hear that silence, to be able to hear God we need a clean heart; for a clean heart can see God, can hear God, can listen to God; and then only from the fullness of our heart can we speak to God. But we cannot speak to [God] unless we have listened, unless we have made the connection with God in the silence of our heart.... And when times come when we can't pray, let me allow Him to pray in me, to talk to His Father in the silence of my heart. Since I cannot speak—He will speak; since I cannot pray—He will pray.... When we cannot pray—let us give that inability to Him. There is one more reason to let Him pray in us to the Father. Let us ask Him to pray in us, for no one knows the Father better than He. No one can pray better than Jesus. And if my heart is pure, if in my heart Jesus is alive, if my heart is a tabernacle of the living God to sanctify in grace: Jesus and I are one. He prays in me, He thinks in me, He works with me and through me, He uses my tongue to speak, He uses my brain to think, He uses my hands to touch Him in the broken body." (At *Prayer with Mother Teresa*, compiled and edited by Judy Bauer [Liguori: Liguori, 1999], 27-29).

"I would rather say five words devoutly with my heart than five



thousand which my soul does not relish with affection and understanding."

— St. Edmund the Martyr

LIGHT FOR THE SOUL

By St. John Chrysostom

"There is nothing more worthwhile than to pray to God and to converse with him, for prayer unites us with God as his companions. As our bodily eyes are illuminated by seeing the light, so in contemplating God our soul is illuminated by him. Of course the prayer I have in mind is no matter of routine, it is deliberate and earnest. It is not tied down to a fixed timetable; rather it is a state which endures by night and day. Our soul should be directed in God, not merely when we suddenly think of prayer, but even when we are concerned with something else. If we are looking after the poor, if we are busy in some other way, or if we are doing any type of good work, we should season our actions with the desire and the remembrance of God. Through this salt of the love of God we can all become a sweet dish for the Lord. If we are generous in giving time to prayer, we will experience its benefits throughout our life. Prayer is the light of the soul, giving us true knowledge of God. It is a link mediating between God and man. By prayer the soul is borne up to heaven and in a marvelous way embraces the Lord. This meeting is like that of an infant crying on its mother, and seeking the best of milk. The soul longs for its own needs and what it receives is better than anything to be seen in the world. Prayer is a precious way of communicating with God; it gladdens the soul and gives repose to its affections. You should not think of prayer as being a matter of words. It is a desire for God, an indescribable devotion, not of human origin, but the gift of God's grace. As Saint Paul says: we do



the inward language of prayer and praise, of humble confession and joyful trust.” (Parochial and Plain Sermons [London: Longman, Green, and Co. 1964], VII, 204).

“No matter how much our interior progress is ordered, nothing will come of it unless by divine aid. Divine aid is available to those who seek it from their hearts, humbly and devoutly; and this means to sigh for it, in this valley of tears, through fervent prayer.”

—St. Bonaventure

BEYOND THE GRANDEUR

By Abraham Heschel

“The true source of prayer is not an emotion but an insight. It is the insight into the mystery of reality, the sense of the ineffable that enables us to pray. As long as we refuse to take notice of what is beyond our sight, beyond our reason; as long as we are blind to the mystery of being, the way to prayer is closed to us” (1).

[Through prayer there] is a higher form of seeing. We must learn how to lift up our eyes on high in order to see that the world is more a question than an answer. The world’s beauty and power are as naught compared to Him. The grandeur of nature is only the beginning. *Beyond the grandeur* is God” (2). [Only prayer can bring us there].

Prayer is our attachment to the utmost. Without God in sight we are like the scattered rungs of a broken ladder. To pray is to become a ladder on which thoughts mount to God to join the movement toward Him which surges unnoticed throughout the entire universe. We do not step out of the world when we pray; we merely see the world in a different setting. The self is not the hub, but the spoke of the revolving wheel. In prayer we shift the center of living from self-consciousness to self-surrender. God is the center toward which all forces tend. He is the source, and we are the flowing of His force, the ebb and flow of His tides (3).

To pray is to pull ourselves together, to pour our perception, volition, memory, thought, hope, feeling, dreams, all that is moving in us, into one tone. Not the words we utter, the service of the lips, but the way in which the devotion of the heart corresponds to what the words contain, the consciousness of speaking under His eyes, is the pith of prayer” (4). ([1] *God in Search of Man* [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966], 43; [2] *Man’s Quest for God* [New York: Scribner’s, 1954], 62-63; [3] *Ibid.*, 7; [4] *Ibid.*, 13).

not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. Anyone who receives from the Lord the gift of this type of prayer possesses richness that is not to be taken from him, a heavenly food filling up the soul. Once he has tasted this food, he is set aright by an eternal desire for the Lord, the fiercest of fires lighting up his soul. To set about this prayer, paint the house of your soul with modesty and lowliness and make it splendid with the light of justice. Adorn it with the beaten gold of good works and, for walls and stones, embellish it assiduously with faith and generosity. Above all, place prayer on top of this house as its roof so that the complete building may be ready for the Lord. Thus he will be received in a splendid royal house and by grace his image will already be settled in your soul.”

(*Homilies*, 6, on Prayer//www.vatican.va/spirit).

“Build yourself a cell in your heart and retire there to pray.”

— St. Catherine of Siena

LANGUAGE OF PRAYER

By John Cardinal Henry Newman

“A man who is religious, is religious morning, noon, and night; his religion is [of] a certain character, a mold in which his thoughts, words, and actions are cast, all forming parts of one and the same whole. He sees God in all things; every course of action he directs towards those spiritual objects which God has revealed to him; every occurrence of the day, every event, every person met with, all news which he hears, he measures by the standard of God’s will. And a person who does this may be said almost literally to pray without ceasing; for knowing himself to be in God’s presence, he is continually led to address Him reverently, whom he sets always before him, in

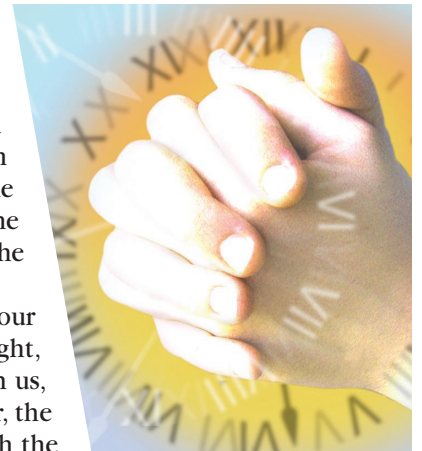
“For perfected souls every place is an oratory, every moment a time for prayer. Their conversation has ascended from earth to heaven.” —St. Catherine of Siena

PRAYER AS LOVE

By Fr. Edward Carter

“Christian prayer is love. It is best understood in terms of love. Everything else we may say about prayer revolves around the fact that prayer is love. We can easily comprehend that Christian prayer is primarily a love by considering the fact that it is a very important exercise or dimension of the Christian life itself. In turn, the Christian life, our life in Christ under the Spirit, is first and foremost a life of love.

[Prayer] is a realization that I am tremendously loved by God. Prayer is also my love for Him. Prayer is a thirsting for God, a seeking for God, a wanting to be with Him, a form of loving companionship, a form of personal presence—God present to me in love, I present to God in love. Prayer is love. It is a love-dialogue during which I in a special way open myself to God’s word, to His speaking to me, and during which I respond with a word of my own. This word of mine is basically a yes, a yes to what God wants of me, a yes which is meant to include all the other words I may authentically utter in prayer. The word I speak in prayer to God may include anything about my person and existence. But ultimately this anything must be connected with my loving yes, my response to the loving word God speaks to me in prayer’s dialogue.



[Prayer is love for our neighbor.] The Christian life relates us to God in Christ. The Christian life also relates us to [our neighbor], to human persons. Our graced persons have a strong thrust prompting us to give ourselves selflessly to others in love. We have a graced dynamism to be for others, to love them, to serve them. We are meant to be this way for a few in a very special manner, and for all in a general sense. The problem is that, whether regarding the special few or the general many, our selfishness can get in the way. The light of prayer shows us what is wrong concerning our relating to others—how we are failing to love them. It also shows what we are doing right. It further shows how we can love still more generously, more tenderly, more completely. Prayer not only illumines the way in all this, but it also fires and strengthens the will to accomplish this vision of prayer.

Prayer as a love for [neighbor] prompts us to love others not only as they are in themselves, but also as they are situated in the temporal and secular order.... We cannot have a proper love for our [fellow human being] unless we have a concern about the many social institutions and other influences which can so dramatically help shape [people's lives]. The light and strength drawn from prayer move us to assume our proper responsibility, according to our various vocations, in the authentic fashioning of the secular city....

Prayer is...a love for non-rational creation. It is a love for snow-capped mountains, for the rugged beauty of canyons and

gorges, for rolling meadows and springtime greenness. It is a love for the warm June sun, the nourishing rain, the bright-colored leaves of October's trees. Prayer is a love for all this because prayerful contemplation allows us to consider these and other gifts of God's creation, to love them, to enjoy them, to be thankful, and to promise Him that we will strive to use them all according to His design.

Prayer is love." (*Prayer is Love* [Indiana: Abbey Press, 1974], 3-7).

"For me, prayer means launching out of the heart towards God; it means lifting up one's eyes, quite simply, to Heaven, a cry of grateful love from the crest of joy or trough of despair; it is a vast supernatural force which opens out my heart, and binds me close to Jesus."

— St. Therese of Lisieux

IRREPLACEABILITY OF PRAYER

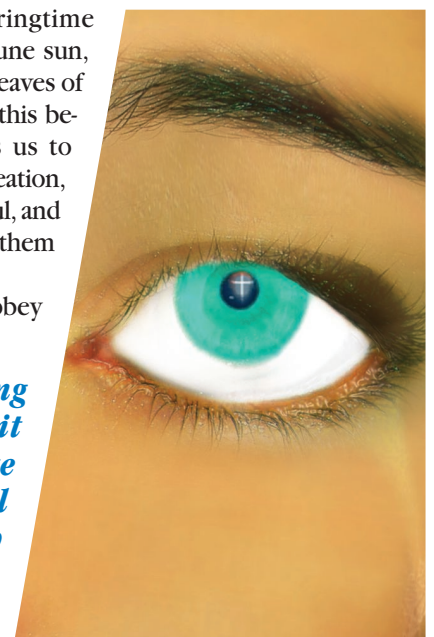
By Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar

"The Christian stands and falls with prayer; faith has only one content: that God has loved and continues to love him, her, and everyone—not just everyone anonymously but also him or her as a particular individual....

[Christian prayer is necessary for effective Christian work, liturgy, and solidarity].

Christian action must, if it wants to deserve this name and be distinguished from secular action, come from much more than simply human compassion; it must come from the knowledge of and gratitude for God's compassion on the cross, and it must be prepared to go even farther: to the point of suffering, of participating in the cross. Christian action is a mediating link between the offering of oneself in prayer and the giving of oneself to be disposed of entirely according to God's will.... Enough of saying 'Lord, Lord': the time has come to do the will of God, to put one's hand to the plough. Enough of walking past the beaten and bleeding person, piously saying one's rosary and breviary; the time has come to get down from one's saddle like the Samaritan—to do for the least of the brothers and sisters in the underdeveloped countries that which Christ reckoned as being done to him.

The clergy, whether old or young, should make no mistake about it: no matter how far the sermon has been prepared by the standards of modern exegesis and of pastoral sociology...if it has not been achieved in personal prayer the congregation is fed stones instead of bread. And the faithful have a very fine sense for whether the preacher's words come from the depths of personal prayer or ultimately are as flat and as vain

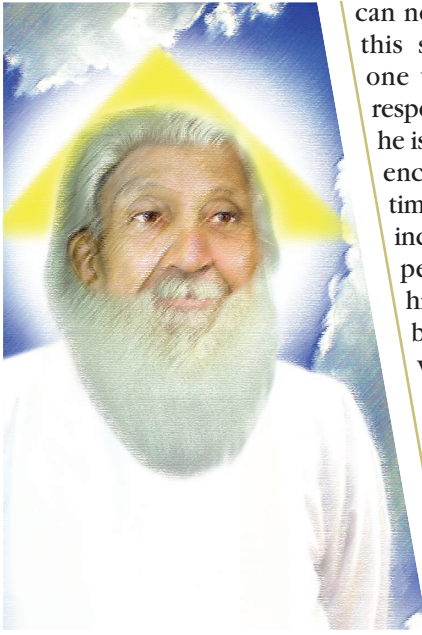


as anything they might read in a newspaper.... Liturgical prayer [and service] that is Christian must be grounded in personal prayer and find its originating source there. At the core of the liturgical event Christ prays, the communion of the true saints pray...[and we pray].

Since Christ prayed and suffered for all, prayer can still only be catholic, universal, can only become a living mouthpiece for all those who are silent before God, can only offer itself to bear the burdens of all those who are a burden to themselves and perhaps also to God.... The only ones who show true solidarity [communion] are those who contribute for the benefit of all that they have (received as gift). Such persons pray out of gratitude to God and from responsibility for their fellow human beings. They will not worry a great deal about what they do or do not feel, or the extent to which they experience God's presence or absence. Perhaps they will be allowed to feel the absent God of those who do not pray, in order that the latter may catch an intimation of the true God who is present. Such things happen in the communion sanctorum which in the widest sense is the community of all those for whom God on the cross has suffered total abandonment. And that indeed includes everyone." (*The von Balthasar Reader*, ed. Kehl, trans. Daly [New York: Crossroad, 1997], 325-329).

"After I enter the chapel I place myself in the presence of God and I say to Him. 'Lord, here I am; give me whatever you wish.' If he gives me something, then I am happy and I thank him. If he does not give me anything, then I thank him nonetheless, knowing, as I do, that I deserve nothing. Then I begin to tell him of all that concerns





me, my joys, my thoughts, my distress, and finally, I listen to him. — St. Catherine Laboure

can nor wants to deny his responsibility for this striving, he is always one who fails, one who always falls short of his task, his responsibility and his real possibilities. Hence he is always a person who recognizes that he is encompassed by God's love, and at the same time he is a sinner in some sense and to some incalculable degree. And to this extent he is a person who is still being led through the history of his existence. He is always moving beyond his refusals and pressing forward to what lies ahead. In the incomprehensibility of his own dark and obscure freedom he knows that he is always encompassed by God's grace, and he knows that he must always take refuge in this grace of God. He is always a person who does not add up his account before God, but rather he leaves to God and to his grace all of his accounts, and all of the moral struggles and moral trials which were imposed upon him and which of course he cannot ultimately 'judge.' As a Christian, then, he is always *simul Justus et peccator*; always both justified and a sinner at the same time. He believes and he hopes that he is made holy by God's Holy Spirit, and, as the Council of Carthage at the time of Augustine said, he prays not only in humility but also in all truth: 'Forgive us our guilt.'" (*Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William Dych [New York: Crossroad, 1994], 410-411).

"The prayer of the mind is not perfect until the person no longer realizes that he is praying."

— St. Anthony of Egypt

PRAYER AND ACTION

By Fr. Thomas Merton

"[True prayer] is inseparable from life and from the dynamism of life—which includes work, creation, production, fruitfulness, and above all love. [Prayer] is not to be thought of as a separate department of life, cut off from all man's other interests and superseding them. It is the very fullness of a fully integrated life. It is the crown of life and of all life's activities" (1).

"Action and [prayer] now grow together into one life and one unity. They become two aspects of the same thing. Action is charity looking outward to other men, and [prayer] is charity drawn inward to its own divine source. Action is the stream and [prayer] is the spring. The spring remains more important than the stream, for the only thing that really matters is for love to spring up inexhaustibly from the infinite abyss of Christ and of God" (2). (*A Thomas Merton Reader* [New York: Image Books, 1974], 400; *No Man is an Island* [New York: Image Books, 1967], 65).

"Aspire to God with short but frequent outpourings of the heart; admire his bounty; invoke his aid; cast yourself in spirit at the foot of His cross; adore his goodness;...give Him your whole soul a thousand times in a day." — St. Francis de Sales

PRAYING IN HUMILITY

By Fr. Karl Rahner

"A Christian person who experiences the struggle of moral striving as an inescapable datum of his own existence always knows, of course, that although basically he neither

authority of our Father himself and the Spirit of his Son had not impelled us to this cry... 'Abba Father!' ...When would a mortal dare call God 'Father,' if man's innermost being were not animated by power from on high?" — St. Peter Chrysologus

OUR FATHER

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

"By saying 'Our Father' we are saying that we are entering a relationship. He is our God and we are his people. We accept the reality that we have also entered a relationship that implies not individualism but a sense of communion, membership. We are members of God's Body, the Church, the community of faith.... Prayer is always therefore a community-oriented experience. Even in what appears to be private prayer, we are in prayer with the unknown and with the angels and saints.

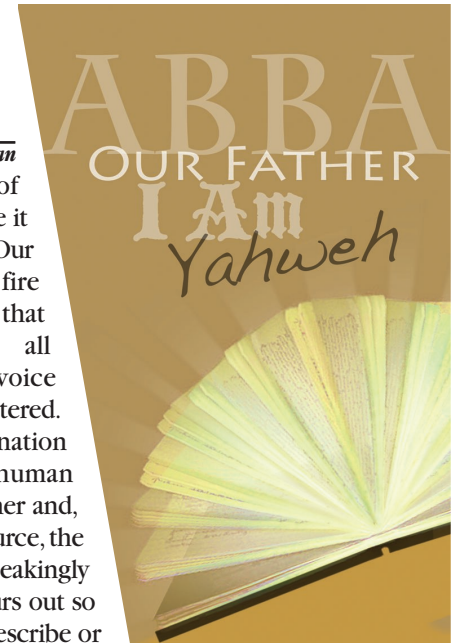
The phrase 'who art in heaven' is not primarily a reference to a place because heaven is not a 'place' as commonly understood.... Heaven is another dimension of reality. Consequently, the phrase, used in the context of this prayer, is primarily a reference to God's majesty and his presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, 'the Father's house, is the true homeland toward which we are heading and to which, already, we belong' (CCC 2802). The phrase 'hallowed be thy name' is a

THE OUR FATHER

By St. John Cassian

"[The] Our Father...contains the fullness of perfection. It was the Lord Himself who gave it to us as both an example and a rule.... [The Our Father lifts people] up...to that prayer of fire known to so few. It lifts...[people] up to that ineffable prayer which rises above all human conscientiousness, with no voice sounding, no tongue moving, no words uttered. The soul lights up with heavenly illumination and no longer employs constricted human speech. All sensibility is gathered together and, as though from some very abundant source, the soul breaks forth rich, bursts out unspeakingly to God, and in the tiniest instant it pours out so much more than the soul can either describe or remember when it returns again to itself." (*Conferences*, trans. Colm Luibheid [Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985], 116).

"Our awareness of our status as slaves would make us sink into the ground and our earthly condition would dissolve into dust, if the



phrase that conjures up the holiness, preciousness, and majesty of God. It reminds us that God is worthy of all praise and thanksgiving. God's kingdom became present in the first coming and will find its fulfillment in the second coming. As followers of Christ we are called to help bring about the fulfillment of this kingdom. We are called upon to help build up the kingdom of God here on earth, a kingdom of love—'thy kingdom come.' The phrase 'thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' is an affirmation that we are called to be saved and come to the truth, that we must love one another, that we must do all things according to God's will, and that we are called to imitate Christ in his obedience and surrendering to the Father's will. The statement 'give us this day our daily bread' is an expression of God's goodness, a goodness that transcends all other goodness. The 'our' reminds us that we are members of a community, a community built upon the foundation of solidarity. It is a call in trust and in a spirit of surrender to God. It is a call to meet our personal and our community's material and spiritual needs. It is a call to responsibility and justice.

Another aspect of this phrase reminds us of the most important food of all, the Word of God and the Eucharist, the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. Without this food, this medicine of immortality, Christian life is impossible.

The phrase 'and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us' empowers us to love God and neighbor. Love of God and love of neighbor are one reality. Any authentic love of God implies the love of neighbor, and any authentic love of neighbor implies an authentic love of God. How can we ask for God's forgiveness if we are not willing to forgive those whom God loves?



The petition 'and lead us not into temptation' is a call to be set free from the snares of evil. The spirit of discernment and strength become intrinsic to this petition. The Spirit guides us to discern between temptations, trials and tribulations that are for our personal growth in the life of God and those temptations, trials and tribulations that lead to sin and death. We discern the difference between being tempted and consenting to temptation. The Spirit helps us discern and unmask the lies behind the temptations and helps us to persevere through them to become strong in God.

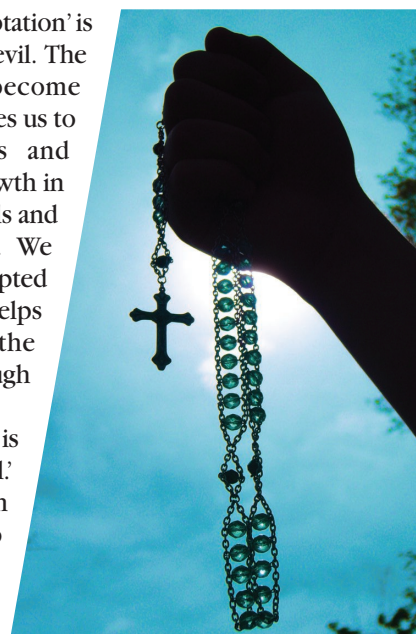
The final petition and end to the 'Our Father' is finished by the phrase 'but deliver us from evil.' This is a petition that asks for protection from the cunning of the devil. The devil seeks to distort God's providential plan and seeks to destroy people in the process under the guise of doing good for them. The devil makes the good appear evil and the evil appear good! We find confidence in this petition in that just as we have been delivered from evil in the past, we will be delivered from the evil one in the present and in the future if we persevere in the spiritual battle." (*Light, Happiness, and Peace* [China: S of C Publications, 2007], 127-132).

"God is the Father in a special way only to Christ, but he is the common Father of us all, because while he has begotten only Christ, he has created us. Then also say by his grace, 'Our Father,' so that you may merit being his son." — St. Ambrose

PRAYER'S SOURCE AND SUMMIT

By Fr. John J. Pasquini

"O Lord, you have given us your efficacious sacraments to help us on the journey of life. Help them to fully produce in me what they signify. In baptism you give me strength for the beginning of my earthly journey. In baptism I am marked and born again as a new creation, as a child of God, as a partaker of the divine nature, as a temple of the Holy Spirit, as a member of your communion, the Church. In baptism I am cleansed from original sin, personal sin, and the punishment due for sin. As I grow I need nourishment for the journey and so I am fed with the food of immortality, the antidote to death, the source and summit of my faith, the Eucharist. In the Eucharist I am made present at the one and only one sacrifice of you, O Lord, on the cross at Calvary. In the Eucharist my venial sins are forgiven and I am strengthened to conquer the mortal sins. In the Eucharist I strengthen the unity of the Church as a member of the mystical body.



When I am in need of further strength I am given the gift that perfects baptismal grace, confirmation. I become strengthened and marked by the Holy Spirit to be a powerful witness of Christ's self-communicating love to the world. When my weaknesses overcome the gifts given me, I have recourse to your never ending mercy, your gift of reconciliation. I find reconciliation through you, O Christ, for the damage I have done to my relationship with God, my community, and my own self. I restore the love of God and neighbor. I find peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual strength for the Christian battle. In the sacrament of matrimony, I learn what it means to give of oneself completely, without doubt, without reservation, and fully to another. I learn what Christ's love is for me and his people. In the sacrament of holy orders I see the beauty of matrimony just as I see the beauty of holy orders in the gift of matrimony. In the sacrament of holy orders I learn what authentic healing, loving, and forgiving are all about. And when I am ill, or old, or preparing for my eternal destiny I am nourished by your anointing. I learn to unify my sufferings with your passion. I am healed spiritually, physically and emotionally. In this anointing you give me what is best for my salvation. O Lord, you have given us your efficacious sacraments to help us on the journey of life. Help them fully produce in me what they signify." (*Authenticity* [China: S of C Publications, 2006], 49-50).

"However great may be the temptation, if we know how to use the weapon of prayer well, we shall come off conquerors at last, for prayer is more powerful than all the devils."

— St. Bernard of Clairvaux



myself, my unspoken prayers were answered; I am, among all men, most richly blessed.”

“It is an old custom of the servants of God to have some little prayer ready and to be frequently darting them up to Heaven during the day, lifting their minds to God out of the mire of this world. He who adopts this plan will get great fruits with little pains.”

— St. Philip Neri

EXPRESSION AND ASPECTS

— By Fr. John J. Pasquini

Jesus, Son of the Living God, make my prayer an experience of my heart’s interaction with you. Put flesh to my prayer. O Lord, in prayer engage my thoughts, imagination, emotions, and desires so as to bring me into the mystery which is you. And when I reach this door of mystery, help me to enter through it into the sphere of purity, poverty, quiet, surrender and transformation, into the sphere where you mold me beyond anything I can hear, see touch, smell, imagine. Jesus, Son of the Living God, may I quest for that which my soul longs for. Speak to me in the silence of my heart. O Lord, may my heart be a blessing to you, the source of all blessing. May I adore you for being what I am, for being a new creation. May I praise you for simply being you. O Lord, may I bless you, adore you, thank you, and praise you for your gifts of life, redemption, salvation, newness of life, and immortality. When I pray, O Lord, Son of the Living God, I affirm my relationship with you. In my asking, beseeching, pleading, invoking, entreating, and crying I show my need and love for you. In my petition I recognize I am needy of love, of forgiveness, and of salvation. When I pray, O Lord, I affirm my need for you, a Savior. Thank you, O Lord, for the gift of sharing in your intercessory power. Teach me to intercede with you, in you, and through you for the good of my soul, my neighbors, my enemies, the souls in purgatory, and the world. Jesus, Son of the Living God, make my prayer an experience of my heart’s interaction with you. Put flesh to my prayer. Engage every part of my being and make me anew!

WILL YOU PRAY FOR ME?

— By Rita Ring, *Shepherds of Christ*

“There are so many souls to pray for: souls who are sinning and need to turn to Jesus..., souls in purgatory that are suffering [and] have no one to pray for them..., [souls] who do not know Jesus and Mary and their love..., [souls] who do not hear about Jesus and His love or close their hearts and do not hear. These are only a few people [we] need to pray for.”

LOVE YOUR PRIESTS! START A PRAYER CHAPTER START A CATECHISM CHAPTER

If you would like to start a parish prayer chapter dedicated to praying for priests, the Church and the world please contact us and we will gladly provide the necessary materials to begin: (toll free USA) 1-888-211-3041 or 1-812-273-8405.

EDITOR’S CORNER

Fr. John J. Pasquini is a columnist, author of more than a dozen books, guest speaker, lecturer on topics of systematic, moral and spiritual theology, a retreat leader, and a parish priest in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida. He feels blessed to serve the *Shepherds of Christ* as the editor of their newsletter. The newsletter is dedicated to renewal, fraternity, and the building of the Kingdom of God. It is a spirituality newsletter particularly dedicated to priests, religious, and all interested in the spiritual life. Comments and insights are always welcome.

“I give my heart to Jesus and Mary with you in love.”

— *Shepherds of Christ*



PRAYER’S GOAL, THE VISION OF GOD

— By Pope Benedict XVI

“The design of God does not annul but demands the action of man. Thus the glory of God shines forth in a new and special way in man, created in his image, precisely when man becomes an active collaborator with Providence and, by means of his liberty, enters to bring to perfection the design of God, through his actions. Above all, man is called to promote life, making of his action an expression of that gift of self, a realization of that charity, which shines forth fully in the face of Christ, perfect image of the Father and mode for every man... [The] life of man consists in the vision of God. Yes, because only when man recognizes his true purpose in his relationship with God, only then is his dignity safe, only then is his freedom rightly directed, only then is his action constructive.” (*Let God’s Light Shine Forth*, ed. Moynihan [New York: Image, 2005], 174-175).

“The life of man consists in the vision of God.”

— Pope Benedict XVI

PROVIDENCE & PRAYER

— By Unknown Civil War Soldier

“I asked for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn to obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need for God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing that I asked for, but everything that I had hoped for. Almost despite

“The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service.”

— Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Titles for the passages have been chosen by Fr. John Pasquini. The individual quotes, in blue, were obtained from Jill Adels’ *Wisdom of the Saints*, New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1987.

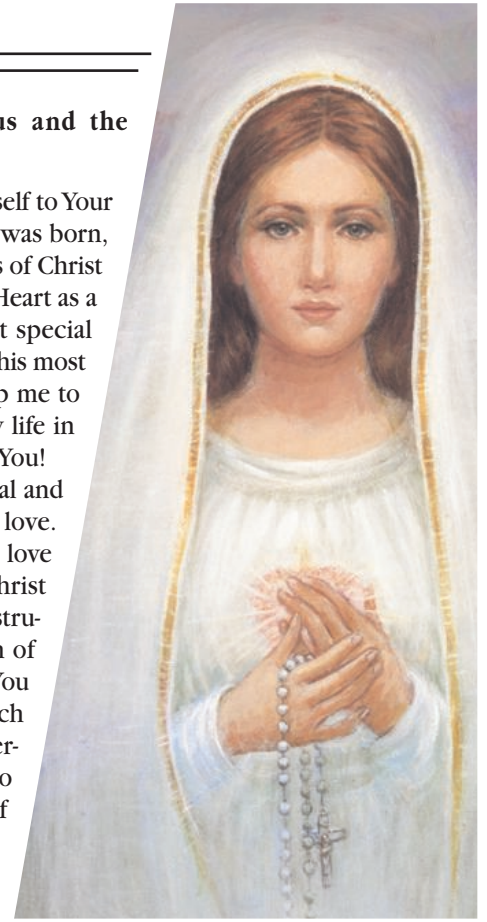


ACT OF CONSECRATION



Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“Lord Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock, I consecrate myself to Your most Sacred Heart. From Your pierced Heart the Church was born, the Church You have called me, as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, to serve in a most special way. You reveal Your Heart as a symbol of Your love in all its aspects, including Your most special love for me, whom You have chosen as Your companion in this most important work. Help me to always love You in return. Help me to give myself entirely to You. Help me always to pour out my life in love of God and neighbor! Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in You! Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, I consecrate myself to your maternal and Immaculate Heart, this heart which is symbol of your life of love. You are the Mother of my Savior. You are also my Mother. You love me with a most special love as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, a movement created by your Son as a powerful instrument for the renewal of the Church and the world. In a return of love, I give myself entirely to your motherly love and protection. You followed Jesus perfectly. You are His first and perfect disciple. Teach me to imitate you in the putting on of Christ. Be my motherly intercessor so that, through your Immaculate Heart, I may be guided to an ever closer union with the pierced Heart of Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock” (Rita Ring, *Mass Book: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus*, El Paso, Texas: [Shepherds of Christ Publications, Second Printing, May 2000], pp. 204f).



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