

April 14, 2019 - Palm Sunday

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED  
NOW AND FOREVER!!!

## SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

### Prayer: Our Deepest Longing II

I am excited to share with you some insights that I have gained about prayer from Fr. Ronald Rolheiser's book: *Prayer Our Deepest Longing*. Quotes from his book will be in bold and my reflections will be in the normal font.

We nurse a naïve fantasy both about what constitutes prayer and how we might sustain ourselves in it. What often lies at the center of this misguided notion is the belief that prayer is always meant to be interesting, warm, bringing spiritual insight, and giving the sense that we are actually praying. Classical writers in spiritual assure us that, though this is often true during our early prayer lives when we are in the honeymoon stage of our spiritual growth, it becomes less and less true the deeper we advance in prayer and spirituality. But that doesn't mean we are regressing prayer. It often means the opposite.

# Prayer



I have been blest to have a good friend name Joe who lives out of state. The first time he came to St. Louis to visit me, I felt like I had to entertain him and show him all of St. Louis. Now when he comes in, I don't feel that pressure. Instead often we just enjoy sitting and talking with each other. In the same way, when I first starting praying, I felt like I had to have some sort of mystical experience to validate my prayer experience. Now I don't feel that way. I also think of one marriage counselor who said good married couples "seize the mundane moments" of life in order to show each other love.

**Prayer is the same. If we pray faithfully every day, year in and year out, we can expect little excitement, lots of boredom and regular temptations to look at the clock. But a bond and an intimacy will be growing under the surface: a deep, growing bond with God.**

Prayer should become a daily habit like brushing one's teeth, exercise, etc.

**Why is it so difficult to pray regularly?**

Some reasons are obvious: over-busyness, tiredness, and too many demands on our time. But there are other reasons too, suggested by monks and people we think of as mystics. The problem we have in sustaining prayer, they say, is often grounded in the false notion that prayer needs to be exciting all the time, including prayer and church services, and nobody has the energy to be alert, attentive, intense, and actively engaged every minute.

Like eating, prayer is meant to respect the natural rhythms of our energy. As we know from experience, we don't always want a banquet. If we tried to have a banquet every day, we would soon find coming to the table burdensome and we would look for every excuse to escape, to sneak off with a quick sandwich by ourselves. Eating has a natural balance, banquets alternate with quick snacks, rich dishes with simple sandwiches, meals that take a hole evening with meals we eat on the run. We can have high seasons only if we mostly have ordinary time. Health eating habits respect our natural rhythms our time, energy, tiredness, the season, the hour our taste.

Prayer should be the same, but this isn't generally respected. Too often we are left with the impression that

**all prayer should be high celebration, upbeat with high energy. The more variety, the better than shorter. No wonder we often lack the energy to pray and want to avoid church services!**

We have to be careful that we do not confuse liturgy with entertainment. We don't come to Mass to hear the priest tell us what we want to hear but rather to hear how we can live the Gospel better. Learning to eat better and exercise regularly will help me avoid major illnesses and more in the same way going to Mass and learning to live the Gospel will help remind me of what is important and help me to avoid sin.

It is also important to realize that being in a relationship is hard work. We have to avoid changing prayer styles to often and realize that sometimes being a relationship means simply being with the other person.

**What is needed is a clearly defined prayer form that does not demand of you energy you cannot muster on a given day.**

I call my mother every day. Sometimes we talk for 10 minutes and sometimes we talk for an hour. No matter how long our conversation is on any given day, every day that we talk, our relationship gets better.

## THOUGHT OF THE DAY

### *Sunday*

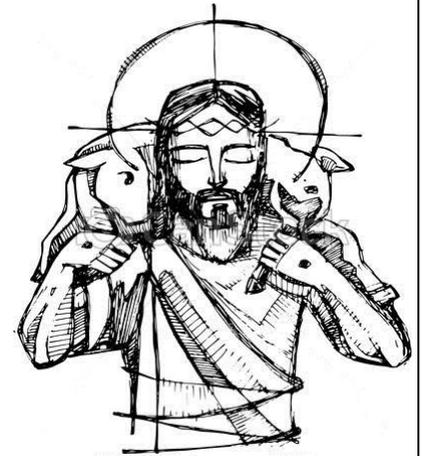
The Master has need of it – All we have is a gift from God.

### *Monday*

Judas knew the value of things but not people

### *Tuesday*

The same mercy extended to the one who denied Him would be extended to those who nail Him to the Cross and to the penitent thief who would ask for forgiveness. Peter really did not deny that Christ was the Son of God. He denied that he knew "the man" or that he was one of His disciples. But he failed the Master. And yet, knowing all, the Son of God made Peter, who knew sin, and not John, the Rock upon which He built His Church that sinners and the weak might never despair. – Fulton Sheen



### *Wednesday*

As jealousy has been described as the tribute that mediocrity pays to genius, so critics may be described as men who have failed. Judas was too materialistic to be concerned with the beauty of the deed. He failed to see that some offerings are so sacred that a price cannot be put upon them. Intimate indeed is the relationship existing between acquisitiveness and the betrayal of Christ. The latter is often the consequence of the former. Judas knew only that his betrayal of the Master was near; Mary knew that the death of the master was near. Putting on the mask of charity, Judas simulated anger that such precious perfume should be wasted, but John gave the reason for his statement: He said this, not out of any care for the poor, but because he was a thief; he used to pilfer the money put into the common purse, which was in his charge. – John 12:6 – Fulton Sheen

### *Thursday*

Salvation lies in remembrance

### *Friday*

It should have been me.

### *Saturday*

O Death where is your victory?



# BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

**April 14 2019//Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion//Lectionary: 37/38//At the Procession with Palms – Gospel LK 19:28-40**

Jesus proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem. As he drew near to Bethpage and Bethany at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples. He said, "Go into the village opposite you, and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will answer, 'The Master has need of it.'" So those who had been sent went off and found everything just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying this colt?" They answered, "The Master has need of it." So they brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the colt, and helped Jesus to mount. As he rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road; and now as he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen. They proclaimed: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He said in reply, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"

**Spiritual Reflection:** There may be no greater paradox in the life of Christ than the sovereignty of the Lord. After all He is the one who could cast out demons, the seas and winds obeyed, and could multiply food to feed thousand and on the other hand, our Lord's "neediness" as also shown throughout the Gospel. He borrows Peter's Boat as a pulpit, Loaves and Fishes to feed the multitude, Donkey to Enter into Jerusalem, Upper Room in which to celebrate the Passover and Finally, a Grace to rise from.

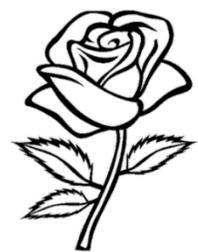
### Spiritual Questions:

1. Why does God borrow things?
2. Why does he do small things?
3. What does he desire you to give him?
4. What would have happened in each of the cases mentioned above if Jesus was not allowed to use the items.
5. What would you like to give God?



### PRAYER FOR RESPECT OF LIFE

Heavenly Father, the beauty and dignity of human life was the crowning of your creation. You further ennobled that life when your Son became one with us in his incarnation. Help us to realize the sacredness of human life and to respect it from the moment of conception until the last moment at death. Give us courage to speak with truth and love and with conviction in defense of life. Help us to extend the gentle hand of mercy and forgiveness to those who do not reverence your gift of life. To all, grant pardon for the times we have failed to be grateful for your precious gift of life or to respect it in others. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

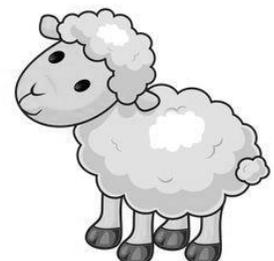


## St. Monica Society

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

### THE PRAYER, SPIRITUAL ARMOR OF PRAYER.

Heavenly Father, we ask bless those who have fallen away and us who have remained of You today for Your truth, As a belt tight around our waists. We put on the zeal, to announce Your good news of peace, As shoes for our feet. We put on Your righteousness, O Christ, as our breastplate. And the hope of salvation, As a helmet for our head. Father we take up faith, as a shield which is able to put out, All the fiery darts of the enemy. And the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word, O Lord. Father may the love, with which You have loved



Jesus, be in us and may Jesus be in us. We ask You for the grace, Of a servant heart. Amen.

# CATHOLIC PRAYER:

## PRAYER FOR PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK

(This prayer is designed to be said within the family before a Crucifix on Palm Sunday and during Holy Week.)

Mother or a child: Dearly beloved, in Holy Week, when the most bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ are put before us by the liturgy, the Church invites us to come to Calvary and follow in the blood-stained footsteps of the Divine Redeemer, to carry the Cross willingly with Him, to reproduce in our hearts His spirit of expiation and atonement, together with Him.

Father: We ought to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

Family: In whom is our salvation, life and resurrection.

Father: Let us pray.

All-powerful, eternal God, You have chosen to give mankind a model of humility; our Savior took on our flesh, and subjected Himself to the Cross. Grant us the grace to preserve faithfully the lessons He has given us in his Passion and to have a share in His resurrection. This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

Family: Amen. Favor this dwelling, Lord, with Your presence. Far from it repulse all the wiles of Satan. Your holy angels, let them live here, to keep us in peace. And may your blessing remain always upon us. This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

Father: Let us bless the Lord.

Family: Thanks be to God.

Father: May the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless and keep us.

Family: Amen.

