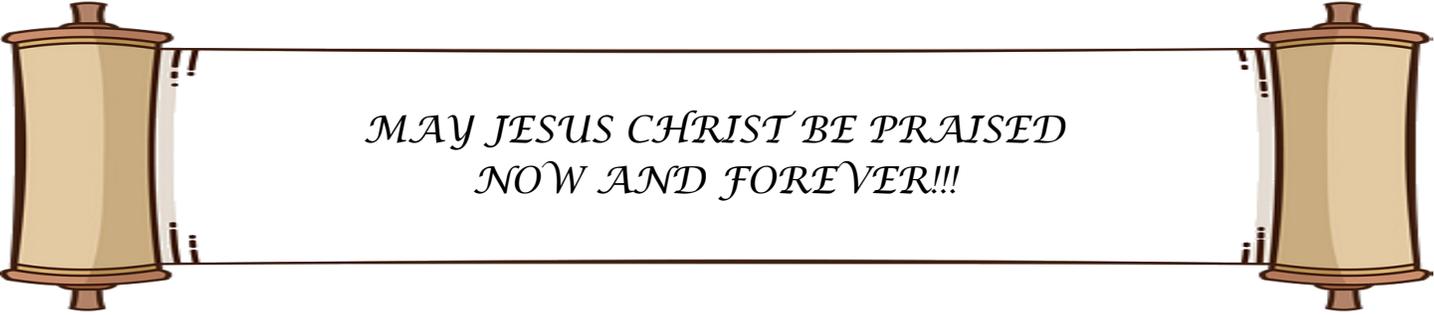


May 5, 2019 – Third Sunday of Easter



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

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS “The Riddles of God” Part I

The inspiration for this month’s ponderings comes from two different ideas merging together. The first idea comes from the idea of Commencement Addresses at High School and College graduations. Commencement speakers try to inspire those graduating to live better lives by offering them wisdom and advice. The second idea comes from a popular television show. On this show, one of the main characters has composed a list of rules that he uses to guide his life. He often shares these “rules for life” with his co-workers. Therefore, during the month of May, I will be sharing with you some of the “rules of my life” as wisdom and advice hoping it will help everyone live better lives. The title for this month’s Spiritual Ponderings comes from the following quote from Catholic writer G.K. Chesterton: “The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man.”

Rule #1: Before the Cross There is No Defense

Every bishop chooses an official motto. Archbishop Carlson’s motto is “Before the Cross There is No Defense.” These simple words come to mind every time; I have to make a decision. These words remind me of what is really important in life. They also remind me that I ultimately do not get to decide what is right or wrong because I am not God. I will therefore have to make an account of myself. I also believe that God has given me many blessings and so therefore he will expect much from me. The moments when I have felt the most shame and emotional pain has been when I realized how much I have hurt my mother in the p

Rule #2: Love is wanting what is best for the other person, even if means a sacrifice on my part.

There are many different meanings for the word “love”. I believe that St. John Paul’s definition is the best. St. John Paul II wrote: “Love is wanting what is best for the other person even if it requires a sacrifice on my part.”

Therefore, when I say I love someone, I am saying that I want what is best for them and I am willing to assist them in becoming their best by putting their needs in front of my own. For example, I love my mother, when I choose to sacrifice my time and talk to her because I know a call from her son will brighten her day. Love is taking the time to sacrifice my need for revenge and offering the other person forgiveness instead.

Rule 3: The Virtue is in the middle of two vices

One moral teaching that changed my life is the idea that the virtue lays between two vices. For example, the virtue of humility lies between the vice of pride and the vice of self-hate (self-contempt). When a person is humble, a person accepts who he or she is before God and others. This means we acknowledge our flaws but also our gifts and talents. Pride makes us to be greater than what we are and self-hate makes us lesser than what we are. Since, I am a visual learner, I like to think of myself shooting at a soccer goal. If I shoot too far to the left, I miss and if I shoot too far to the right I miss. In the same way when I build myself up too much I miss and when I tear myself down too much, I also miss. Another example is courage. Courage is the virtue between the vices of fool-heartiness and cowardliness.

Rule 4: No one ever earns the right to sin.

Jesus Christ suffered and died for me (us). Every time, I sin I show myself to be ungrateful for the gift of salvation. Every time, I sin I realize that I am no better than Adam and Eve who were given everything but still had to do things their way. Sin is also never an option because it harms others and myself. Most sins, I believe in life happen when we say to ourselves, I have done this much for God or I have endured so much that I earned the right to sin. When we think this way, we fail to realize the true nature of sin.

Rule 5: No such thing as a private sin.

I have come to realize that every sin, I commit makes me less of the person God intended me to be and that means

that I when I sin, I am not the best priest I can be, the best brother I can be, or the best friend I can be. When I sin, I can spend a lot of time rationalizing my sin away instead of loving the people around me. When I sin, I am like a watchman who has fallen asleep on the job.



THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Sunday

Both Peter and John remained true to their characters; as John was the first to reach the empty tomb on Easter morn, so Peter was the first to enter it, as John was the first to believe that Christ was risen, so Peter was the first to greet the Risen Christ; as John was the first to see the Lord from the boat, so Peter was the first to rush to the Lord, plunging into the sea to be the first at His feet. Naked as he was in the boat, he cast a coat about him, forgot personal comfort, abandoned human companionship, and eagerly swam the hundred yards to the Master. John had the greater spiritual discernment, Peter the quicker action. – Fulton Sheen

Monday

The early church followed Paul on this. They understood the Eucharist as so real, so physical, and so intimate that they surround it with the same taboos of privacy, reverence, and reticence that we reserve for sexual intimacy. For some centuries the early church had a practice (still partially followed in some present-day church programs) that it called the Discipline Arcani. The discipline tried to guarantee that nobody who was not baptized or fully initiated into the community could participate in the Eucharist (beyond the Liturgy of the Word). As well, Christians who were fully initiated were forbidden to speak to outsiders about the Eucharist. The intent of the discipline was not to create mystique around the Eucharist so as to draw people to it through curiosity. Rather the idea was that the Eucharist is so intimate an act that propriety, respect, and reverence demanded non-exhibitionism: you don't make love in public, and you don't talk to outsiders about this kind of intimacy. – Fr. Rolheiser

Tuesday

The Eucharist is such a prayer of helplessness, a prayer for God to give us a unity we cannot give to ourselves. It is not incidental that Jesus instituted it in the hour of his most intense loneliness, when he realized that all the words, he had spoken hadn't been enough and that he had no more words to give. When he felt most helpless, he gave us the prayer of helplessness, the Eucharist. – Rolheiser

Wednesday

You are not lost. God know where you are.

Thursday

We sometimes forget that Jesus was born in a barn not a church and that the God of the Incarnation is as much about kitchen tables as ecclesial altars. God is as much domestic as monastic. This important to keep in mind as we try to understand the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the body of Christ, a continuation of the Incarnation, and, like Jesus' birth, is meant to bring the divine into concrete everyday life. – Rolheiser

Friday

For a variety of reasons, we have been slow to take this aspect of the Eucharist seriously, perhaps because its other dimension seems more sacred. Our reluctance to accept this is evident in the simple criticism that is made of people who go to church principally because of its social aspect: "She doesn't go to church to pray! She just goes for the socializing, for the chance to talk with others!" That is always voiced as a negative when, in fact, it is a good reason, among others, to go the Eucharist. The ritual of the Eucharist was given to us because we are social in our very makeup. To go to church to socialize is reason enough to be there. – For a variety of reasons, we have been slow to take this aspect of the Eucharist seriously, perhaps because its other dimension seems more sacred. Our reluctance to accept this is evident in the simple criticism that is made of people who go to church principally because of its social aspect: "She doesn't go to church to pray! She just goes for the socializing, for the chance to talk with others!" That is always voiced as a negative when, in fact, it is a good reason, among others, to go the Eucharist. The ritual of the Eucharist was given to us because we are social in our very makeup. To go to church to socialize is reason enough to be there. – Rolheiser

Saturday

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

3rd Sunday of Easter Lectionary: 48 Gospel JN 21:1-19

At that time, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way.

Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

Spiritual Reflection: "Many people mistake our work for our vocation. Our vocation is the love of Jesus." - Mother Teresa. Peter is no longer telling Jesus what to do but is instead answering Jesus' invitation to "follow" Him.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How does loving Jesus guide us to our vocation and not vice versa?
2. Notice how Peter interacts with Jesus now verses when he wanted to walk on water?
3. How do you keep focused on Jesus within the demands of your vocation?
4. Where does Jesus want you to follow him?
5. Who do you need to stop comparing yourself to?



PRAYER FOR STRENGTH AND WISDOM

Lord, give me strength and wisdom to live this day as I ought.

Give me strength... to overcome every temptation which may come to me, to do well every task which is assigned to me, to shoulder every responsibility which is laid upon my shoulders.

Give me wisdom... to know when to speak and when to keep silent, to know when to act and when to refrain from action, to know when to speak my mind and when to hold my peace.



So bring me to the end of this day knowing that I have helped build up the culture of life. Amen.



St. Monica Society

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

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH TO FORGIVE.

Faultless Lord, enduring death for me, You have paid the debt of our sins: Your sacrifice of forgiveness was absolute! Grant us the strength to also forgive others, to excuse their transgressions against us. So, we may truly reflect this spiritual fruit, obliterate any persistent feelings of malice. Let each trespass end as a closing chapter, on our continuing on the road of righteousness. Forgive our sins as we aspire to forgive others. In a special way help our fallen away brothers and sisters forgive those who may

have harm them and thus driven them away from the true faith. You are truly archetypical of forgiveness. You are a most forgiving Lord! Amen.

Catholic Prayer

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS BEFORE STUDY

O ineffable Creator, Who, out of the treasure of Thy wisdom, hast ordained three hierarchies of Angels, and placed them in wonderful order above the heavens, and hast most widely distributed the parts of the world; Thou, Who are called the true fountain of light and wisdom, and the highest beginning, vouchsafe to pour upon the darkness of my understanding, in which I was born, the double beam of Thy brightness, removing from me all darkness of sin and ignorance. Thou, Who makest eloquent the tongue of the dumb, instruct my tongue, and pour on my lips the grace of Thy blessing. Give me quickness of understanding, capacity of retaining, subtlety of interpreting, facility in learning, and copious grace of speaking. Guide my going in, direct my going forward, accomplish my going forth; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A STUDENT'S PRAYER By St. Thomas Aquinas)

Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom! Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect, dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance. Grant me a penetrating mind to



understand, a retentive memory, method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend, and abundant grace in expressing myself. Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to successful completion. This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man, living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever. Amen.

Humor

