

His Son, His Beloved. What better advice could they possibly give us? Do whatever he tells you to do and listen to Him.

If we are going to do whatever he tells us to do, we are indeed going to have to listen and that requires, from each of us daily, some quiet time alone with our Lord. Many of us use the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me, a sinner,” to do what the Quakers call *center down*. Become a quiet listener with your mind and heart as well as your ears. Keep repeating the prayer to replace the distractions, which will inevitably come. Sometimes, more often than not, we feel as if nothing profound has happened during our quiet time. There are other times when we know a deep peace and joy that Paul once called “the peace which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Best of all there are times when we are reassured that our Lord’s love, presence, and guidance are and will always be with us.

Numbers 3:1-13; Psalms 75, 76; Galatians 6:11-18

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Sunday, June 7

Luke 12:32-40 “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” (v.34 NRSV)

A Jesuit once wrote that we have been given the same Word, graced by the same Holy Spirit, and nourished at the same table as any of the great saints of the ages. Here are the wondrous gifts God has given us: His Word, His only Son, His Scriptures, His Church, and His Holy Spirit within it inspiring, guiding, urging us on. Also, His Sacraments feeding, sustaining, and strengthening us on our journey home.

If you watch the news on TV every evening and you see all the ads for fancy cars, good food, and endless remedies for indigestion, you might think that we believe material things are our greatest treasure. But you would be wrong. Years ago, during the dark days of September 2001, we read many stories of heroic courage, endurance, and love. Goodness, greatness, and love became far more visible in NYC and in our whole country than ever before. Kindness, gentleness, and service are flourishing today.

Our Lord Christ has indeed gifted us with the very same treasure he has given any of the saints.

Ecclesiastes 6:1-12; Psalms 24, 29; Acts 10:9-23

Monday, June 8

Matthew 15:21-28 “*Lord, help me.*” (v.25b)

It has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes, which simply means that when we find ourselves in a desperate, ghastly, fearful situation, we return to God and cry for help. Most of us during our teens and 20’s decide that we can get along quite well without God. We may even decide, as I temporarily did, that there is no God.

C. S. Lewis once wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world.” God is not the cause of our sorrows. Our misuse of His greatest gift, free will, is usually the root cause of the pain in a hurting world.

When we viewed the absolute horrifying spectacle of the two World Trade Towers crumbling into dust because of the evil action of others, millions returned to God and to prayer. He was there with everyone who died. He was there with every fireman and policeman who rushed into the buildings, at the cost of their own lives, to try to save others. He has been with every person who has tried to comfort the bereaved. God grant us the wisdom and courage to respond wholeheartedly to His great love, forgiveness, and acceptance.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-14; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Galatians 4:12-20

Tuesday, June 9

Matthew 15:29-39 *And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.* (v.37)

Jesus' feeding of the four or five thousand men (besides women and children) is such an important story that each of the Evangelists tells it at least once and Mark shares the miracle twice. However, the verse that always deeply troubles me in the story is found in each of the Synoptic Gospels: "You give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37). Our Lord expected his disciples then, and he expects his followers today, to share the abundance of the blessings he has poured upon us. He doesn't want any of us to be hungry, homeless, or destitute. In John's version of the gospel, Philip talks about how much money it would take to feed such a crowd, but Andrew turns to the people for help. "There is a lad here who has five loaves of bread and two fish," Andrew says. Our Lord then prays and everyone is fed. Money alone won't solve our problems. People listening to guidance from our Heavenly Father can, with His help, change, renew, and transform His world into what God has always intended it to be—Heaven on earth.

Ecclesiastes 8:14—9:10; Psalms 61, 62; Galatians 4:21-31

Wednesday, June 10

Galatians 5:1-15 *The whole law is summed up in a single commandment, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (v.14)

In today's epistle, Paul tells us that the whole law is summed up in a single commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus, when speaking of his way, urges us again and again to love God with all our heart, with all our mind, strength, and will, and then to love others as we love ourselves. Jesus asks even more of us. The night before he died, he urged us to love others the way he loves us.

How can we possibly love others the way Jesus loves us? Thomas Merton, the famous Trappist monk, once wrote that learning to love others is the most creative and difficult work any of us can ever attempt. Perhaps our first successful step in this journey from self-centeredness to self-giving love comes as we realize our need and ask for God's help. He never asks anything of us that He is not more than willing to help us do. So, "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you" (Luke 11:9).

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18; Psalm 72; Matthew 16:1-12

Thursday, June 11

Matthew 16:13-20 *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* (v.16)

My most frequent and fervent prayer during these troubled times is, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy upon all of us sinners and teach us to love the way You do." When he answers my prayer, we will be rid of all the evil Paul writes about in today's epistle: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissension, factions, envy, and drunkenness. We will be showing forth the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We will be able to answer our Lord's question to Peter in today's gospel: "Who do you say that I am?" (v.15b). We will be able to give the best possible answer that anyone could ever give: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." God's kingdom will have come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Lord Jesus Christ, hear our prayer. Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, oh Lord.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-8; Psalms 70, 71; Galatians 5:16-24

Friday, June 12

Matthew 16:21-28 *"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."* (v.24)

Whenever I read this verse, I think of a prayer by Karl Rahner, a great theologian quoted in a small book of prayers by Jesuits, *Hearts on Fire*. In his prayer he implores our Heavenly Father; "O God, give me the courage and strength to be worthy of being called a Christian." Who among us has become so mature, so unselfish, that they think of others before himself? Who is so mature that he has grown beyond self-centeredness? Who among us is willing not just to wear a beautiful, jeweled cross, but to carry a large, rough, heavy one?

Our hope centers in God's promise: "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5), and in His Holy Spirit abiding within us. Nourished and empowered by His Word and His table, we joy in His love and continue to pray earnestly: "O God, give me the courage and strength to be worthy of being called a Christian."

Ecclesiastes 11:9—12:14; Psalm 69; Galatians 5:25—6:10

Saturday, June 13

Matthew 17:1-13 *"This is my Son, the loved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him."* (v.5)

In the gospel story of the wedding in Cana of Galilee, the mother of Jesus commands the servants to do whatever her son tells them to do (John 2:5). In today's passage God, our heavenly Father, commands us to listen to