

Continuing the Journey:
The Spiritual Formation Guide

A Resource Tool

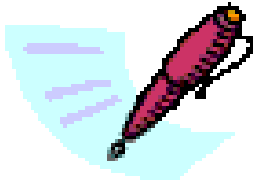


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Introduction

The philosophy behind *Continuing the Journey: The Spiritual Formation Guide* is a celebration of life in God through prayer, study, and discernment. By looking at who we really are and then putting the truth of ourselves into the view of God, we grow closer to Him. By seeking and being touched by the Holy God in quiet daily prayer and resting in God's presence, our spirit soars. By searching for Him first through reflection on Scripture, then entering into the holy silence of waiting and experiencing the pull of God into His presence, we become more grounded in our faith. We can seek, but only He can draw us to Himself at His bidding.

The material in *Continuing the Journey: The Spiritual Formation Guide* has been approved by the National Council on November 12th, 2010 as an official course to help members in deepening their spiritual life in The Order of the Daughters of the King[®]. All materials contained in the National Spiritual Formation Guide belong to the Order. To use this material for any other purpose, please contact the National Office for permission. Please use the form at the end of this guide to report corrections and suggestions to the National Office.

You are encouraged to use this material as presented or as a supplement to chapter meetings or quiet days. A Bible would be useful during the study. We believe the Lord is calling you to deepen your spiritual lives and respond to His call in your daily lives.

Mother Teresa's Daily Prayer



*Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with your spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus.
Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. Amen.*

(From the video *Everyone, Everywhere*.)

<http://www.americancatholic.org/features/teresa/prayer.asp>



***“The Object of our Order is the extension of Christ’s Kingdom
and the strengthening of the Church's spiritual Life.”***

THE PRAYER OF THE ORDER

O eternal Father, you have sent us your Son to teach us things pertaining to your heavenly Kingdom; give your blessing to our Order wherever it may be throughout the world. Grant that we, your Daughters, ever may discern your truth and bear the cross through the battles of our earthly life. Give us strength to overcome temptation and the grace to work to spread your Kingdom and to gather your scattered sheep within your fold. Pour out upon us the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit that we may always remember it is your work we are called to do, that all we think, do, or say may be pleasing in your sight. We ask it all For His Sake, our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. *National Handbook, p 2*

THE MOTTO OF THE ORDER

For His Sake...I am but one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
What I can do, I ought to do.
What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.
Lord, what will you have me do?

National Handbook, p 2

Chapter One

Daughters: Where are we now?

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Ephesians 2:10



Dear God,

**Open our hearts to Your grace and love
that we may realize that where we are
is where You planned for us to be.**

Amen.

Where Are We Now?

As Daughters of the King, we have taken a reverent vow before God to follow a Rule of Life, which includes daily prayer, service, and evangelism; and to support the rector of our parish in the spiritual upbuilding of the church. This is a calling which Daughters, chosen by God, fulfill in the life of the Body of Christ.

The Order is ordained by God. It is His Order and we, His children, are called, gifted, equipped, and chosen to minister to the Body of Christ through the Order. The spiritual building up of the church is a crucial ministry today. Like Esther, the Order was called for a time such as this. Like Esther, we must be spiritually built up, fully equipped by the power of God's Holy Spirit, thoroughly informed, and abounding in unshakable, courageous faith to respond to His call. Our hearts must be aligned with the heart of Almighty God and we, in complete surrender and obedience to Him, must believe in Him for things beyond our human understanding or explanation. Like the Virgin Mary, we must have a ready heart to say, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Spiritual formation is the process of becoming more like Christ, an inward transformation resulting in an outward life of holiness and godliness. It is characterized by knowing and obeying God and being sanctified, experiencing the presence of God in our everyday lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The chapters of *The Spiritual Formation Guide* are intended to be tools for personal and chapter assessment of where we are in our Rule of Life and discernment of where God is calling Daughters and the Order to be today. We pray that this entire guide will inspire Daughters to an exciting personal pursuit of a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ that strengthens and equips us to have a more effective, fulfilling ministry through the Order, to have a deep passion for Christ, and to have a sweet compassion for people. Your sincere, prayerful responses to the questions will strengthen your progress toward making a difference that glorifies, honors, and lifts up Christ wherever you are each day.

Scripture leads us to the answers to the following questions:

- What is a Christian?
Read John 3:3-8, 16; John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-10, 13-22; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6-7, Acts 11:26.

This name is given to the followers of Jesus Christ. It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians. When the Christian movement reached Antioch in Syria, the gospel was preached to Gentiles as well as Jews. Such evangelism marked the sect as a new religion. The Gentiles in Antioch invented a name for the new group to enable the members of the community to stand out clearly from the Jewish population. Since members of the group constantly talked

about Christ, they were called Christians, meaning the “household” or “partisans” of Christ.

- What is God’s Spirit?
The Spirit of God is God working among his people.
- Where is God’s Spirit?
God’s Spirit is present wherever God is working, especially in the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ, His Son.
- Who first received the Spirit of God?
The Old Testament prophets received the Spirit, as did Jesus, the apostles, and eventually all believers.
- When did God send His Spirit?
The Spirit was present at the creation of the world through the time of the prophets. The Spirit lived in Jesus and was given to believers at Pentecost as God promised.



Veni, Sancte Spiritus

*Come from the four winds, O Spirit, Come breath of God;
disperse the shadows over us; renew the strength of Your people.*

Savior of the poor, come to our poverty.

Shower upon us the seven gifts of Your grace. Be the light of our lives, oh come.

*You are our only Comforter, Peace of the soul. In the heat You shade us;
in our labor You refresh us, and in trouble You are our strength.*

*Kindle in our hearts the flame of Your love that in the darkness of the world
it may glow and reach to all forever.*

Chapter One Questions

1. Is your spiritual life as a Daughter today different from your spiritual life when you first became a Daughter? How is it different, and to what do you ascribe these differences?
2. Have you ever experienced a tangible awareness or witness of the presence of the Holy Spirit? Is this something you are aware of or desire?
3. How have you encountered God in your prayer life? Have there been times that God's presence is stronger than at other times? Explain.
4. How would you define a 'Christian'?
5. During your prayer time this month, review the Rule of Life in the *National Handbook* and the Examen in the For Your Enrichment section at the end of this chapter. Using the passages in this chapter and your answers to the questions above, write or revise your Rule of Life. Offer this Rule before the Lord in your daily devotions during the next month and continue to revise it as He directs.

 **FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT**



EXAMEN



Based upon the Rule of Life of the Daughters of the King.

Written by Julia Smead, Past President, Province VII.

- † *Have I worn my cross daily as my “habit” to show that I cannot live a day without Christ?*
- † *Have I attended all chapter, diocesan, and provincial meetings, as I am physically able?*



Rule of Prayer



- † *Have I sought to grow daily in the life of prayer?*
- † *Have I asked God’s blessing upon all members?*
- † *Have I prayed daily for the spread of Christ’s Kingdom, especially among women?*
- † *Have I prayed the intercession list daily?*
- † *Have I made a Corporate Communion on All Saints Day with intention for the Order?*
- † *Have I attended church each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation?*
- † *Have I read some portion of the Holy Scripture each day and spent at least five minutes in simple meditation upon what has been read?*
- † *Have I listened for and received God’s guidance and blessings for me each day?*
- † *Have I prepared for my Communion by diligent prayer and self-examination?*
- † *Have I prayed daily for the spiritual growth of the parish?*



Rule of Service



- † *Do I minister to God's people wherever I am?*
- † *Do I invite and/or offer a ride to people to come to church or to a DOK meeting?*
- † *Do I offer loyal aid to my priest for the up-building of the parish?*
- † *Do I participate in whatever service my chapter undertakes?*
- † *Have I been supportive of my chapter, diocesan, and provincial officers?*
- † *Am I involved in a Scripture study?*
- † *Have I interested myself in all efforts to spread the faith, especially among women and girls?*
- † *Do I pay my annual dues on time and do I participate in the funds of the Order?*



Spirit of the Rule



- † *Have I been a good example?*
- † *Am I able to tell someone what the "Magnanimiter Crucem Sustine" means on my cross?*
- † *Have I given a ready, complete answer concerning my faith?*
- † *Have I tried to grow in Christ-like love for God and for the salvation of all?*
- † *Have I exercised charity in regard to other Daughters?*
- † *Have I given thanks to God each evening for at least five things?*
- † *Have I silenced all gossip concerning the clergy?*
- † *Have I been open to new ideas or do I insist on doing things "the way we've always done them"?*
- † *Do I walk hand in hand with our Lord and accept His blessings and crosses with equal grace?*
- † *Has my work been with the love of God its one motive and the winning of souls to Christ its one aim?*

Chapter Two

Daughters: Reaffirming Your Baptism

*Since we live by the Spirit,
let us keep in step with the Spirit.*
Galatians 5:25



**Holy Spirit,
Wash over me that I might live daily in Your truth
and understanding
and be born anew in the Kingdom of God.
Amen.**

Reaffirming Your Baptism

“Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body, the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble” (BCP 298).

We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then at confirmation we confirm our baptism, and at that time we are empowered with the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit. In *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), it states as part of Holy Baptism, that “you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever” (308).

Furthermore, at the laying on of hands by the Bishop during confirmation, *The Book of Common Prayer* states, “Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit; empower her for your service and sustain her all the days of her life. Amen” (418). *The National Handbook* states that as Daughters of the King, “we are a group of Christian women striving to fulfill the promises of our Baptismal Covenant through the adoption of a Rule of Life...At Confirmation, we promise to pray, work, and give for the spread of Christ’s Kingdom” (5). In our service of admission found in *The National Handbook*, the priest prays that we may “daily increase in Your Holy Spirit” and in our Prayer of the Order, we ask our eternal Father to “Pour out upon us the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit...” (44 - 45). So let’s explore what all of this means.

What is baptism?

The English word ‘baptism’ is ‘baptisma’ in Greek. ‘To baptize’ is ‘baptizo’, which means to immerse, to be dipped, to submerge, to overwhelm. For the Christian, baptism by water is a public declaration of an internal change, a repentance characterized by recognition of the wrong of past actions with deep regret, resulting in a change of ways, habits, attitude, and lifestyle. Baptism is a public declaration of the death of the old way of life, old nature, habits, and lifestyle, and the beginning of a new life, of righteousness in Christ given by the grace of God.

The church today teaches and practices the doctrine of baptism by water as a vital ritual in the Christian life, the public profession of faith and discipleship of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the initiation, a gateway into the family of God. In Matthew 28:19, “Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The practice of baptism with water appears in the Bible first with the appearance of John the Baptist. “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4-5). Baptism in John’s day was understood to be a rite of initiation into something brand new. To be baptized with water was a sign of adherence to the teachings of the respective teacher. John taught repentance for the remission of sins. “Those who received his teaching had to repent, turn from their sin, confess their sins” (Mark 1:5) and “bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8).

The early church practiced two baptisms, following the pattern set by John the Baptist. John told those whom he baptized to expect to receive Jesus' baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus would come and baptize with the Spirit and with fire. Read Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33.

In Acts 1:5, "Jesus recalled John's words, and told His followers that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The events on the day of Pentecost were the fulfillment of Jesus' words. Read Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost, Peter appealed to a multitude of Jews to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

The Book of Common Prayer provides a service for the baptism of infants. Infants are baptized because they are part of the community and are initiated into the Church through their baptism. The parents and Godparents pledge to help the child grow "into the full stature of Christ" (BCP 302). At Confirmation, those previously baptized as infants make their own commitment.

What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

In John 6:63. Jesus states, "The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life."

Baptism in the Holy Spirit can be defined as: the Holy Spirit places a believer into permanent union with Christ and with other believers in the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation. Every believer in the Jesus has experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is why Paul could state, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body... we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13)."

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was foretold in the Old Testament: "Throughout the ages, prophets predicted that the day would come when God would give his Spirit freely to men. Those who turned to him and received His Spirit would be changed. They would be new men with a new life." (Servant Books, 25). Read Ezekiel 36:25-27, Jeremiah 31:31-33.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus. "Jesus promised before he died that He would give His followers the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit will live in you and give you new life." The promise of Jesus is for everyone." (Servant Books, 26). Read John 14: 15-18.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is through Jesus Christ: "On the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were gathered together in one room in prayer and the Holy Spirit came upon them. From that moment on, they were changed men" (Servant Books, 27). Read Acts 2: 1-4, Titus 3:4-6, Matthew 3:11, John 1:33.

Our soul awaits the Lord, He is our help and shield;

Our hearts rejoice in Him, we trust in His Holy Name.

Lord, let Your love rest on us as our hope has rested in You. (Servant Books, 33)

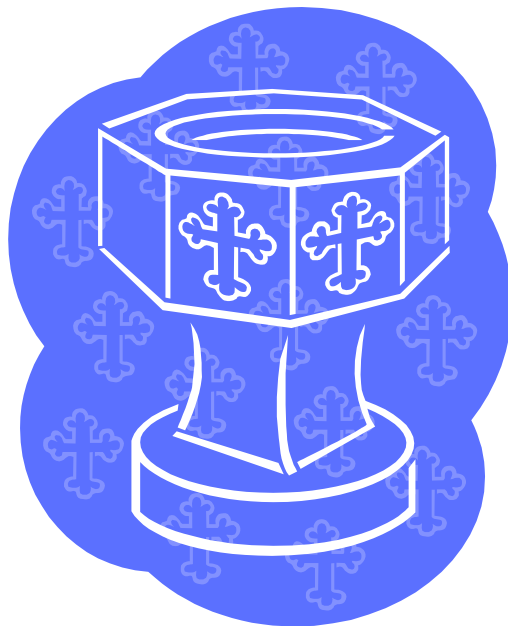
The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14)

The Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son, are One, in an eternal, loving and wholly complete Unity. Through the Trinity, you can know the One True Living God, understand the things of God, and live in fellowship with Him and His son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the means through which God breathes new life into you and the larger community of the faithful (the church). The Spirit helps the faithful interpret spiritual truths and brings the Scriptures to life.

The Holy Spirit, with God, the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son, brings about the work of conversion. As Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” And as part of this wonderful work of conversion, the Bible also teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Read Romans 8:1-13.

Through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, God empowers you to live the Christian life and to upbuild the church with the spiritual gifts you have been given. Through His Holy Spirit, God reveals and enables believers to know His thoughts and spiritual truths, makes the mind of Christ known (that is, to obey God), and empowers us with spiritual gifts to fulfill the purpose for which we are created. Read I Corinthians 2:6-16.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, God writes His laws internally, into the hearts of mankind. When God’s laws are written into the hearts of mankind, believers can know God and His will and obey His laws. Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 and II Corinthians 1:21-22.



Chapter Two Questions

1. Reread I Corinthians 2:6-16, noting the specific phrases or words that stir your heart, and cause you to pause and think. What is God's Spirit saying to you? What does it mean? What changes have occurred in your heart, mind, attitude, and/or perception of yourself and your life?
2. How does the Holy Spirit confirm that as believers, we are God's children? Read Romans 8:14-16.
3. How does the Holy Spirit help believers to communicate with God? Read Romans 8:26-28.
4. Share your testimony of coming to believe in Jesus Christ. Did you experience an inner change? Did you experience an overt, tangible, outward change? Explain.

 **FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT**



Renew Your Baptismal Covenant

From *The Book of Common Prayer*, p 304

Bishop: Do you believe in God the Father?

People: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Bishop: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Bishop: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?

People: I will, with God's help.

Bishop: Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People: I will, with God's help.

Bishop: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People: I will, with God's help.

Bishop: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People: I will, with God's help.

Bishop: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being?

People: I will, with God's help.

Chapter Three

Daughters: What are your gifts?

*The gifts He gave were...to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ...*

Ephesians 4:11-12



Dear God,

I am wondrously made. Thank You for my special gifts.

May they be shared a thousand fold

in Your kingdom here on earth, to the honor and

glory of Your Name.

Amen.

Daughters: What are your gifts?

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. (I Cor. 12:1)

The gifts He gave were...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Eph. 4.11-13)

Spiritual gifts are received from the Holy Spirit and are what we should expect as we mature as Daughters and Christians. Our commitment to exercise these gifts is wrapped up in the last line from our motto: “Lord, what would you have me do?”

When Paul discusses spiritual gifts, he makes two main points. First, the gifts of the Spirit are intended for all believers. Second, although there are degrees of gifts, and some will be more gifted than others in an area, each is allotted gifts for one purpose: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (I Cor. 12:7). When we exercise our gifts, we are part of the great work of the Church as a whole.

You do not choose which gift you will acquire: it is given to you. Some may be gifts for a lifetime, such as an ordained ministry; some may be for an occasion, such as a word of encouragement at the right time or the healing of an individual. However, you have a choice whether or not you exercise the gift and participate in God’s plan for you and His Church.

It is part of our vow of service that we apply ourselves to discerning our gifts or listen to others who discern them within us. We may be called to go beyond our comfort zone, even to endure hardships as Paul did when he exercised his gifts as an evangelist. But whatever the gift, in exercising it, we will know the joy of serving the Lord and becoming more Christ like.

We cannot spend our time praying for a particular gift, or expect to receive it, if we are not seeking first the Kingdom of God and living in the unity of love. It is within this great vision that God will show us our gifts and allow us to use them for Him.

The Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit

When we pray the Prayer of The Order, we ask that the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon us. The sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit empowers each of us for special ministry. Read Judges 3:10; Numbers 11:29; Isaiah 11:2-3.

- **The Gift of Understanding** gives us a deeper insight into the divine truths of faith. It discloses to the soul the hidden meaning of Scripture and reveals the mysterious significance of many of the symbols and figures used there.

- **The Gift of Knowledge** allows us to judge correctly concerning the truths of faith in accord with their proper causes. It makes us see the emptiness of created things and the necessity of placing our complete trust in God.
- **The Gift of Wisdom** is given that we may judge and order all things in accord with God's commands. It is the ability to have the Holy Spirit “see in us” as God sees.
- **The Gift of Counsel** (Right Judgment) renders the person docile and open to God’s counsel with regard to the actions that must be done in light of salvation and one’s sanctification. It provides a solution to many difficult and unexpected situations and problems.
- **The Gift of Piety** (Reverence) is given so that one may give filial worship to God as our Father. It places in us a truly filial love for God the Father and it arouses in the soul a filial confidence in Him.
- **The Gift of Fortitude** (Courage/Strength) allows us to overcome great difficulties and gives us a power infused by God to endure pain and suffering with patience and joy. It gives the soul relentless strength in the practice of the virtues and overcomes our lukewarmness in the service of God.
- **The Gift of Fear of the Lord** (Awe In His Presence) is given that we may avoid sin and attachment to creatures out of reverence and love of God. It perfects our hope by preserving us from presumption and it gives us aid against temptations. The gift gives us a lively sentiment of the grandeur and majesty of God and arouses in the soul adoration.

The Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit is ours if we claim it. When we do, it will become a reality in our lives and we will no longer have to depend solely on our human wisdom and strength to carry out our commitments to our Father.

Note: There are two gifts of the “fear of the Lord” in our modern translations. Early translations of the book of Isaiah, the Septuagint (Greek) and the Vulgate (Latin) both read “piety” for the first occurrence of “Fear of the Lord”, thus the seventh gift.

Spiritual Gifts for the Upbuilding of the Church

God created each of us for a special purpose and equips us to accomplish that purpose with additional spiritual gifts that are perfectly adapted to the work He designs for us to do. The purpose of these gifts is to impact the lives of those God sends us to and to edify or build up and strengthen the church to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God clearly intends for believers today to live and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit just as the early church did after Pentecost. Consider what Peter said after receiving the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit in the upper room on the day of Pentecost: “Now, this

is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days’, God says, ‘I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy’” (Acts 2:16-18, referencing Joel 2: 28-29).

Some of the gifts of Holy Spirit were manifested in the Old Testament. For example, prophets gave prophecies by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. After the fullness and overflowing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, many spiritual gifts were manifested in the body of Christ. Read and discuss the gifts found in I Corinthians 12:4-11.

Scripture instructs us that the gifts should always be exercised according to Scripture and administered with love in a dignified manner and not in a boastful way, for the upbuilding of the Church. Read and discuss I Corinthians 14:1-40.

Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5: 22-23a)

Do not confuse the fruit of the Spirit with the gifts of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is produced from a life lived centered in Christ and by exercising our gifts. The manifestation of the fruit in our life is a sign that we are on the right path in our walk with the Lord.

Flowers Leave Their Fragrance on the Hand That Bestows Them

*There’s an old Chinese proverb that, if practiced each day,
Would change the whole world in a wonderful way.
Its truth is so simple, it’s so easy to do,
And it works every time and successfully, too.
For you can’t do a kindness without a reward,
Not in silver nor gold but in joy from the Lord.
You can’t light a candle to show others the way
Without feeling the warmth of that bright little ray.
And you can’t pluck a rose, all fragrant with dew,
Without part of its fragrance remaining with you.*



by Helen Steiner Rice

| <i>Gift</i> | <i>Definition</i> | <i>Scripture Reference</i> |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Teaching | The ability to explain God's truth to others in a way that brings understanding and application. | I Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11; Acts 18:24-28; I Tim. 3:2; Acts 20:20-21 |
| Wisdom | The God-given gift of insight and understanding of life situations, perceiving what to do and how to deal with them. | I Cor. 12:8; Acts 6:3,10; II Pet. 3:15; I Cor. 2:1-13; James 1: 5-6 |
| Knowledge | The ability to handle large amounts of information, analyze, and communicate it in a way that strengthens the body of Christ. | I Cor. 12:8; Acts 5:1-11; Col. 2:2-3 |
| Exhortation | The ability to draw close to others in their time of need to comfort, encourage, or admonish them. | Rom. 12:8; I Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 14:22 |
| Discernment | The ability to perceive and evaluate what is said or done as to whether it is of God or Satan. | I Cor. 12:10; Acts 16:16-18; I John 4:1-6; Eph 6:12 |
| Giving | The gift of sharing an extraordinary proportion of one's material and financial resources with great joy and eagerness to benefit others. | Rom. 12:8; II Cor. 8:1-7; II Cor. 9:6-7 |
| Helps | The ability to sense a need and bring support to someone to relieve this burden and/or to assist them in their ministry. | I Cor. 12:28; Rom. 16:1-2; Rom. 12:8 |
| Mercy | The God-given ability to have compassion for the underprivileged and suffering, and to discover ways of meeting their needs with an attitude of joy. | Rom. 12:8; Acts 16:33-37; Heb. 4:16; Matt. 5:7 |
| Missionary | The gifts God gives to some members of the Body which enable them to minister in a different culture. | I Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 22:21; Acts 13:2-3; Acts 8:4; Acts 10:28 |

| <i>Gift</i> | <i>Definition</i> | <i>Scripture Reference</i> |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Evangelizing | One who proclaims or presents the good news of Jesus Christ with the results that the hearers become disciples. | Eph 4:11; Acts 8:5-6; Acts 8:26-40; II Tim. 4:5; Acts 21:8 |
| Hospitality | The ability to care for those not in the immediate family in the home with joy and effectiveness. | Rom. 12:9-13; Heb. 13:1-2; Acts 16:15 |
| Faith | The ability to discern God's will for the future and to move out courageously, believing His purpose will be accomplished even in seemingly impossible circumstances. | I Cor. 12:9; Acts 27:21-25; Acts 11:22-24; Heb. 11 |
| Leadership | The ability to lead others effectively in various areas of ministry while offering personal concern and care for their growth. | Rom. 12:8; Acts 15:7-12; I Tim. 5:17 |
| Administration | The gift of making plans, decisions, and giving direction on the behalf of others that result in the efficient attainment of goals. | I Cor. 12:28; I Cor. 12:5; Acts 6: 1-7 |
| Miracles | The ability given by God to perform supernatural acts which authenticate the message of salvation to the listener or which help the needy. | I Cor. 12:10, 28; Acts 19:11-20; Rom. 15:18-19; Acts 9:36-42; John 14:12 |
| Healing | The gift given by God to impart His healing power to others through believing prayer. | I Cor. 12:9, 28; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 9:32-35; James 5: 14-16 |
| Tongues | The ability to speak in an unknown language to believers for public edification when accompanied by interpretation, and to God for personal edification. | I Cor. 12:10, 28; I Cor. 14:13-19, 26-28; Acts 2:4 |

| <i>Gift</i> | <i>Definition</i> | <i>Scripture Reference</i> |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Interpreting Tongues | The ability to receive revelations from God which make known in the vernacular the public message of one who speaks in tongues. | I Cor. 12:10, 30; I Cor. 14:13, 26-28 |
| Apostleship | The apostle is sent by God with a special ministry to establish, edify, or have spiritual authority over many churches. | I Cor. 12:8; Eph 4:11; Eph. 3:5; II Cor.12:12 |
| Celibacy | The ability to remain indifferent towards marriage or sexual fulfillment which results in more time/energy for serving the Lord. | Matt. 19:12; I Cor. 7:7-9 |
| Intercession | The extraordinary ability to pray for ministries or the needs of others successfully and continuously. | James 5:14-15; I Tim. 2:1-8 |
| Martyrdom | The ability to disregard personal danger, persecution, or death through faith in Jesus Christ. | I Cor. 13:3; Acts 7:54-60 |
| Serving | The ability to perform tasks which benefit others, meet practical needs, and bring joy to the one serving. | Rom. 12:7; Eph. 6:5-9 |

2. What do you feel are your spiritual gifts? Share your list with your group and allow them to discuss the gifts they have discerned in you.

3. What are some of the ways you can exercise your gifts in today's Church?

4. Are there any gifts you feel you do not have, but desire? Share those, and your reasons for desiring them, with your sisters. Pray for these gifts to be given to you.

5. Does your personal Rule of Life allow for the manifestation of your spiritual gifts? If not, how can you reform it?



*We are many parts. We are all one body.
And the gifts we have, we are given to share.*

*May the Spirit of Love, make us one in deed.
One, the love that we share.
One, our hope in despair.
One, the cross that we bear.*

(Marty Haugen, *We are Many Parts*)

📖 FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

1. Spend time in prayer for one another that God may show you your gifts, or that your gifts in an area may be confirmed. Perhaps consider taking on the task of praying for one another for a period of time on this topic.
2. Consider asking someone from a charismatic tradition to speak to you about her experiences of the manifestation of the gifts of wonder working, such as the gift of healing. Be open to hear the Spirit speak through her.
3. Use one or more of the following online ‘tests’ to help discern your spiritual gifts. However, remember that although they may help give you direction, neither you nor God is bound by the results! The questions themselves may be more helpful than the outcome, as they force you to think through issues of service.
 - <http://archive.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spiritgifts.html>
 - http://www.elmertowns.com/spiritual_gifts_test/
 - <http://www.buildingchurch.net/g2s.htm>

Romans 12: 4-6

Each of us has one body with many parts.

And the parts do not all have the same purpose.

So also we are many persons.

But in Christ we are one body.

And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts.

We all have gifts.

They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us.



 **FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT**

Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit

*O God, Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,
evermore live in us.
You who bestow sevenfold grace,
evermore replenish us.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF TRUE GODLINESS,
claim our hearts and incline them to a true
faith and a holy love toward You.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF WISDOM,
reveal to us the mysteries of heavenly things.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING,
enlighten our minds.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF COUNSEL,
Guide us in all our ways.*

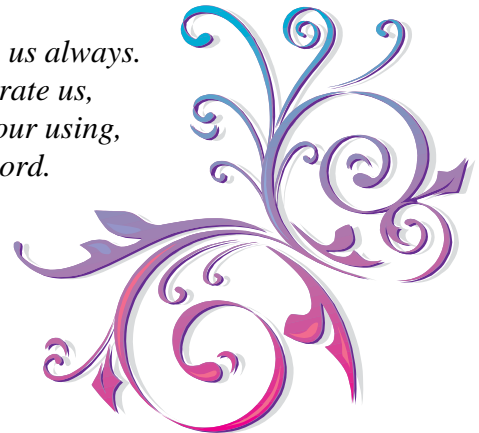
*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF GODLY STRENGTH,
strengthen our weaknesses.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE,
help us to know the will of the Father.*

*As the Blessed SPIRIT OF HOLY FEAR,
incline our hearts to keep Your laws and empower
us with a continuing sense of Your Holy Presence.*

*Come Holy Comforter, abide with us always.
Convict us, convert us, consecrate us,
until we are wholly Yours, for Your using,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

AMEN



A LITANY TO CHRIST

Jesus, model of all virtue; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Jesus, the compassion of God; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Jesus, word of God; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ Crucified; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Body of Christ; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Liberator Christ; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, my beloved; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, teacher of faith; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, promise of hope; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, living charity; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, counselor of prudence; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Christ, the just one; **I want nothing but you, O Lord.**

Amen.

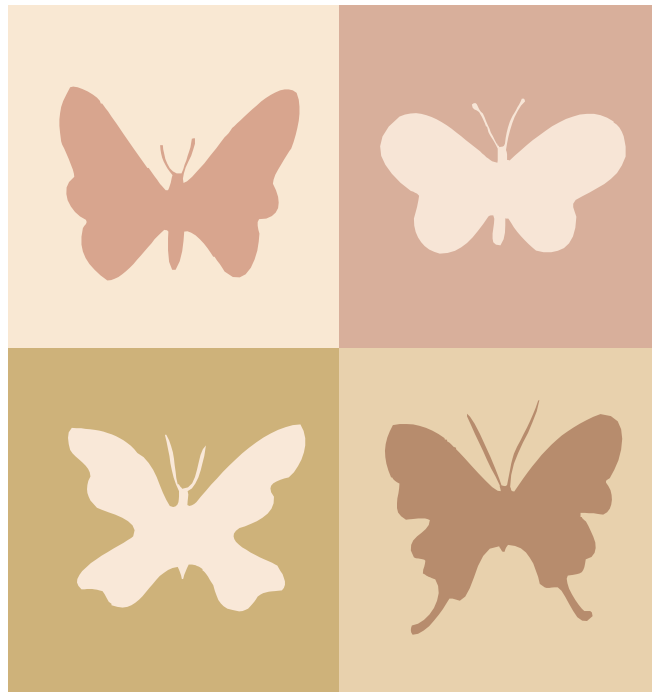


Chapter Four

Forms of Prayer

*Be joyful always; pray continually;
give thanks in all circumstances...*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



**Sweet Jesus,
Let my life be a prayer.**

Amen.

Forms of Prayer

The two rules of the Order are Prayer and Service. Prayer naturally leads to service; a conversation with God will inform a Daughter of His will and what He desires her to do to further His kingdom. Prayer is a lifeline for assistance wherever and whenever necessary. Prayer can be expressed in many ways, depending on the need or stage of life. Prayer may change to fit the person's needs at this time in her life.

Whether we bask quietly in the Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, visit intimately with Jesus wherever we may be, or use one of the forms of prayer which have been handed down through the ages, let us be, as a religious community, especially faithful to pray for one another within our chapter and our Order.

As Daughters of the King, we have a rich heritage of prayer from which to draw, and which will be discussed in this and the following chapters. Prayer brings miracles into our lives. Miracles are a mystery, but "everything is possible with God." Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weakness in order to draw to itself Christ's power. The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith as she praised the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things, and holy is his name" (Luke 1:49).

The Lord's Prayer

We must also remember what Jesus said about how we should pray in Luke 11: 1-4: "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say,

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, [and] the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen. (BCP 429)*

A-C-T-S

Have you ever thought, "I really don't know how to pray?" While we need not stress ourselves about how we communicate with our Father in heaven, we do want to fully express ourselves to God in a way that is meaningful and purposeful. God isn't looking for elaborate prayers from us. He simply wants us to talk to Him and build a relationship with Him. God wants us to "Just Do It!" If you still find it difficult, a simple way to pray is by

using this acronym—ACTS. Praying in this manner may help organize your prayers in a way that makes it easier for you to talk to God.



A – Adoration

Praise God!

C – Contrition

Say you are sorry; ask for forgiveness; repent.

T – Thanksgiving

Thank God for everything!

S – Supplication

*Tell God your needs, prayer requests,
what’s on your heart.*

Adoration and Praise

Praise and worship are an integral part of our daily prayer time. Praise is glorifying God, lifting up His attributes, and thanking Him for what He has done. Worship is our human response to the presence of God. Our heartfelt desire is to honor and revere our Holy God. In worship our spirits ascend to the throne room and we are enveloped in His love. We have been created for worship.

Many have heard it said that singing hymns is praying twice. Many believe that they can’t memorize Scripture, but they know several hymns by heart. Singing hymns of praise, supplication, and adoration can be a sure cure for what ails us and helps us to hold God’s word within our hearts. Is the Lord your shepherd? Does He make you to lie down in green pastures? Does He restore your soul? Then sing the Psalms! Are you allowing God to be your vision—to be the focus of your sights? Then sing “Be Thou My Vision!” Is the Lord the source of your every blessing? Then why not sing, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”? Lifting our voices in song to our Lord is a beautiful thing! Hymns are prayers of the soul set to music. What a melodious tool to use to praise God, encourage and comfort others, and to simply enjoy! The Bible also encourages us to continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God. Read Hebrews 13:15. And even in Revelation we are taught that praise is part of heaven. Read Revelation 5:11-14.

Contrition and Forgiveness

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray: “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us” (Luke 11:4). Contrition for our sins and forgiving others are required for us to receive mercy and forgiveness for our sins. Unforgiveness has been linked to hate, resentment, revenge, anger, and other negative feelings that can literally “eat away” at our body and soul. Please see the For Your Enrichment section for a forgiveness meditation. It is suggested that you pray this meditation for 30 days, slowly and thoughtfully, permitting the Holy Spirit to bring forward memories of people or instances that need to be forgiven.

Thanksgiving

“The ... distinction between these two experiences [praise and thanksgiving] is this: In thanksgiving we give glory to God, for what He has done for us; in praise we give glory to God for who He is in Himself” (Foster, *Prayer* 83). Read I Chronicles 16: 4-36; Psalm 21.

The Bible is full of thanksgiving. Jesus, Paul, and King David, all spent time in praise and thanksgiving. Read Psalms 146:1-2; Psalms 30; Romans 1:8; and Philemon 1:4.

Supplication, Intercession, and Healing

Supplication is when we entreat or plead for someone or something. Intercessory prayer is a form of supplication, where we are moved to pray for others' needs. Quite simply, intercessory prayer is the act of praying on behalf of others. The role of mediator in prayer was prevalent in the Old Testament (as in Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, Hezekiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel). Christ is pictured in the New Testament as the ultimate intercessor. Because of this all Christian prayer becomes intercession since it is offered to God through and by Jesus Christ. Jesus closed the gap between us and God when He died on the cross. He is the greatest mediator (intercessor) of all time. Because of this we can now intercede in prayer on behalf of other Christians, or for the lost, asking God to grant them repentance according to His will. Read I Timothy 2:5 and Romans 8:34.

Healing prayer is a form of intercession used along with other methods of healing such as therapy, healthy living, and medical care. When praying for others, there needs to be compassion and unconditional acceptance of where a person is spiritually at that particular time. Confidential sharing is important and must be respected. Healing prayer should not be harmful, vindictive, or a means to try to convince someone to be just like you. Be careful not to blame or give advice. Read James 5:13-16; II Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 10:1.

Healing prayer is often linked by Jesus to the Kingdom of God and its coming upon us. Read Luke 11. Jesus reminds us that we don't receive what we need because we don't ask. He tells us that an armed house will not fall to its enemies. Through prayer we fortify ourselves against the evil that can penetrate our lives and lead us to sin. Through prayer we are led to our God and the foot of the Cross. It is there we find our salvation. Luke 11:20 reads: “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” Healing prayer and our faith go hand-in-hand. We encounter the Kingdom each and every time we step out in faith to pray for healing. Therefore, let us pray unceasingly!

Chapter Four Questions

1. In your Christian walk, has your prayer life changed over time? If so, how?
2. What does prayer mean to you?
3. How has prayer made a difference in your life?
4. Have any of these prayer forms been meaningful to you? How?
5. During your personal prayer time, what elements can you include that speak to: God's character? Confession of your sins? Thanking God for what He has done? Praising Him? Intercessory Prayer? Supplication? Listening?
6. Study the prayers of praise honoring God by the following women of the Bible: Miriam: Exodus 15:21; Deborah: Judges 5; Hannah: I Samuel 2:1-10; Elizabeth: Luke 1:42-45; Mary: Luke 1:46-55. What can you learn from these prayers?

Forgiveness

What the Bible says on Forgiveness

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ephesians 4:32 | God commands that we forgive each other. |
| Colossians 3:13 | God wants us to forgive others because He forgives us. |
| James 4:17 | God wants us to see unforgiveness as sin. |
| Hebrews 12:15 | God wants us to get rid of unforgiveness before it makes us bitter. |
| Romans 12:21 | God wants us to overcome evil with good. |
| Matthew 5:23-24 | God wants us to be free to worship Him in honesty and in truth. |
| Mark 11:25 | Unforgiveness robs us of God's forgiveness. |
| Hebrews 12:15 | Unforgiveness allows a root of bitterness to grow. |
| I John 2:9-11 | Unforgiveness causes us to walk in darkness. |
| Job 36:13 | Unforgiveness reflects a godless heart. |
| Acts 8:23 | Unforgiveness makes us captive to sin. |
| Ephesians 4:30-32 | Unforgiveness grieves the Spirit of God. |



How Do You Truly Forgive?

1. **Imagine right now** that there is a weight on your back. And imagine all the pain attached to the weight as a result of the wrong that was done to you.
2. **Ask yourself**, do I really want to carry all the pain with me for the rest of my life? The Lord wants you to take the pain from the past and release it into His hands.
3. **Then take the one** who offended you off your emotion “back” and place him into God’s hand. The Lord knows how to deal with your offender. God says, “It is Mine to avenge; I will repay” (Deut. 32:35).



How to Forgive ... Again

Forbid recurring thoughts of the wrongs to enter your mind.

“[Love] keeps no record of wrongs.” I Cor. 13:5



Overcome the temptation to bring up the matter again.

“Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips.” Psalm 141:3

Repeat Scripture in your mind.

“Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all wrongs.” Prov. 10:12

Give the situation to God.

“When they hurled their insults at Him [Jesus], He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.” I Peter 2:23

Intercede on behalf of your offender.

“Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.” I Sam. 12:23



Value what you can give rather than what you can receive.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

Extend God’s grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

“The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.” James 5:11

Forgiveness Prayer

Scripture Readings: Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18:21-22.

Lord Jesus Christ, I ask today to forgive **everyone** in my life. I know that You will give me the strength to forgive. I thank You that You love me more than I love myself and want my happiness more than I desire it for myself.

Father, I forgive **You** for the times death has come into the family, hard times, financial difficulties, or what I thought were punishments sent by You. People said these times were “God’s will”. I became bitter and resentful toward You. Purify my heart and mind today.

Lord, I forgive **myself** for my sins, faults and failings, for all that is bad in myself or that I think is bad, for what I have done or failed to do. I forgive myself, and I accept Your forgiveness.

I further forgive **myself** for not worshipping You by attending church, for hurting my parents, husband, and friends, for sins against purity, adultery, and fornication, for abortion, stealing, lying, and hurting others with gossip. You have forgiven me today and I forgive myself. Thank you, Lord, for your grace at this moment. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit.

I truly forgive my **mother**. I forgive her for all the times she hurt me, she resented me, she was angry with me and for all times she punished me. I forgive her for the times she preferred my brothers or sisters to me. I forgive her for the times she told me I was dumb, ugly, stupid, the worst of the children or that I cost the family a lot of money. For the times she told me I was unwanted, an accident, a mistake or not what she expected, I forgive her. I forgive her for times I felt abandoned.

I forgive my **father**. I forgive him for any non-support, any lack of love, affection, or attention. I forgive him for any lack of time, for not giving me his companionship, for his drinking, arguing, and fighting with my mother or the other children. For his severe punishments, for desertion, for being away from home, for divorcing my mother, or for any running around, I forgive him.

Lord, I extend forgiveness to my **sisters and brothers**. I forgive those who rejected me, lied about me, hated me, resented me, competed for my parents’ love; those who hurt me, or who physically harmed me. For those who were too severe on me, punished me, or made my life unpleasant in any way, I forgive them.

Lord, I forgive my **spouse or significant other** for lack of love, affection, consideration, support, attention, communication; for faults, failings, weaknesses, and those other acts or words that hurt or disturb me.

Jesus, I forgive **my children and other children** for their lack of respect, obedience, love, attention, support, warmth, understanding; for their bad habits, falling away from the church, any bad actions which disturb me.

My God, I forgive **my relatives**, my grandmother and grandfather, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws and other relatives by marriage, who treat my family with a lack of love. For all their words, thoughts, actions or omissions, which injured and cause pain, I forgive them.

Lord, I forgive **my friends** who have let me down, lost contact with me, do not support me, were not available when I needed help, borrowed money or possessions and did not return them, or gossiped about me.

My neighbors need to be forgiven, Lord. For all their noise, letting their property run down, not tying up their dogs who run through my yard, not taking in their trash barrels, being prejudiced and running down the neighborhood, I do forgive them.

I now forgive **my priest, deacon, and church** for their lack of support, affirmation, bad homilies, pettiness, lack of friendliness, not providing me or my family with the inspiration we needed, for any hurts they have inflicted on me or my family, even in the distant past, I forgive them today.

Jesus, help me to forgive **my co-workers and fellow members of groups I belong to, including the Order of the Daughters of the King®**, who are disagreeable or make life miserable for me. For those who push their work off on me, don't show up, gossip about me, won't cooperate with me, try to take my job, I forgive them.

Lord, I forgive **my employer or supervisor** for not paying me enough money, for not appreciating my work, for being unkind and unreasonable with me, for being angry or unfriendly, for not promoting me, and for not complementing me on my work.

Lord, I forgive **my school teachers and instructors** of the past as well as the present. For those who punished me, humiliated me, insulted me, treated me unjustly, made fun of me, called me dumb or stupid, made me stay after school, I truly forgive them today.

Lord, I forgive all those who are of **different persuasions**, those of opposite political views who have attacked me, ridiculed me, discriminated against me, made fun of me, economically hurt me.

I forgive those of **different religious denominations and beliefs**, who have harassed me, attacked me, argued with me, and forced their view on my family and me.

Those who have harmed me **ethnically**, have discriminated against me, mocked me, made jokes about my race or nationality, hurt my family physically, emotionally, or economically, I forgive them today.

Lord, I forgive all **professional people** who have hurt me in any way: doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, politicians, and civil servants. I forgive all service people: policemen, firemen, bus drivers, hospital workers, and especially repairmen who have taken advantage of me in their work.

Lord Jesus, I especially pray for the grace of forgiveness for the **one person** in life who has **hurt me the most**. I ask to forgive anyone whom I consider my greatest enemy, the one who is the hardest to forgive or the one who I said I would never forgive.

Lord, I beg pardon of all these people for the hurt I have inflicted on them, for things I have done to them, or not done for them, for the times I was unkind, unloving, controlling, demanding, rude, or distracted.

Thank You, Jesus, that I am being freed of the evil of unforgiveness. Let Your Holy Spirit fill me with light and let every dark area of my mind be enlightened. Amen.

Adapted from *Forgiveness & Inner Healing* by Betty Tapscott and Father Robert DeGrandis, SSJ.



Chapter Five

Tools in Prayer

The LORD said to Moses...: “Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel... so you will remember all the commands of the LORD...”

Numbers 15: 37-39



Dear God,

Help me to graciously accept those things that lead me to prayer;

be they objects, sights, sounds, scents, emotions,

a touch, human companionship; they guide me to You.

Amen.

Tools in Prayer

As Daughters we know that prayer is essential to our being. Nothing brings us closer to God than the time we take to come before our Father in prayer. Many times we find that certain tools help us in focusing on our prayers. Prayer is simple, but our lives can be complicated. Consider what tools you might use to bring you into a period of unbroken concentration so that you might pray more fully. Some tools we know to be traditional. Others are more contemporary. The important thing is to find a tool in prayer that works best for you and use it as part of your Rule of Life.

Merriam Webster's Elementary Dictionary defines “tool” as “something that helps to gain an end”. A spiritual tool therefore would be something that helps to gain a spiritual end or goal. It assists us in our ongoing process of conversion—of becoming more like Christ. God invites us into relationship with Him and gives us the tools we need to go deeper in our life in Him. The following is not an inclusive list, but suggestions for you to use in your spiritual walk.

Literary Tools

The Book of Common Prayer

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is a useful tool and source of prayers to use in your prayer life. This beautiful book includes the Daily Office, which consists of morning, noonday, and evening prayers, Proper Liturgies for Special Days, The Holy Eucharist, Psalms, Prayers of Thanksgiving, and the Lectionary and historical documents of the Church. Here are some beautiful prayers from *The Book of Common Prayer*:

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out Your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. Amen. (1979 BCP 107)

O gracious Light, pure brightness of the ever living Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing Your praises O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of life, and to be glorified through all the worlds. (1979 BCP 112)

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace. (1979 BCP 134)

In addition to *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Lutheran Prayer Book may be used as well as the Roman Catholic prayer book known as a Breviary.

Liturgy of the Hours (Fixed Hours Prayers)

The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as Divine Hours or Fixed Hours Prayers, is an ancient cycle of prayer that set the monastics' day. It has been discovered and used by lay persons as another powerful tool in prayer, helping keep us focused on the liturgical seasons and feast days. Some DOK chapters have begun using an abbreviated version of this ancient prayer form, *Shorter Christian Prayer*, which seems to fit more readily into our busy schedules.

The Divine Hours, with the Eucharist, is the oldest surviving form of Christian spirituality, and actually has its origins in Judaism. Centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Hebrew psalmist wrote "Seven times a day do I praise you" (Ps. 119:164). The early Church Fathers carried on this spiritual discipline of keeping what they came to call "the divine hours". While we don't know the particular details of their practice, we do know that they normally observed prayers in the early morning (prime), at 9 a.m. (terce), noon (sext), 3 p.m. (none), 6 p.m. (vespers), and before bed (compline).

Catholic Novenas are another tool of religious devotion. They may be prayed in public or in private for a period of nine days to gain special graces. Praying novenas derived from wanting to pray as the Apostles prayed when they gathered together in prayer for nine days from the time of Our Lord's Ascension to Heaven until Pentecost Sunday and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible

Do you use the Bible as a tool for prayer? Perhaps it is the most useful prayer tool. Within the pages of the Bible we find God's words—His instructions for our lives and all that concerns us. Daily reading enhances our lives and reinforces our prayers. Its truths are the basis of our faith. The Bible contains the answers to all we face. It is our sacred gift to share with the world. There are many versions from which to choose. Perhaps you have a number of different versions in your home. It's important to recognize the fact that some of the more contemporary versions may be easier to read, but are paraphrased rather than being literal translations. No matter the version, seeking Scripture to direct our paths and to heal our wounds is a daily affirmation of God's word and promises. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9).

Literal Translation Versions

King James (KJV)

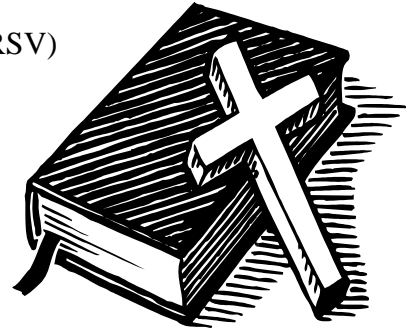
New King James (NKJV)

English Standard (ESV)

New American Standard (NASB)

Dynamic Equivalent Translation Versions*

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Revised Standard (RSV) | New Revised Standard (NRSV) |
| Updated New American Standard (NASB) | |
| New American Bible | New International (NIV) |
| New English Bible | Amplified Bible |



Paraphrased Translation Versions

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Good News Bible | Phillips Modern English |
| Living Bible (LB) | New Living Bible (NLT) |
| Jerusalem Bible | Contemporary English (CEV, “The Promise”) |
| Today’s English | Worldwide English |
| The Message | |

*This type of translation takes into account the context and apparent intent of the original. When providing a dynamic equivalent translation, the translator considers the culture of the original document, understands the nuances of the original language, and takes into account idiomatic expressions. The result is a finished product that comes alive to the reader with the actual intent of the original.

Visit <http://www.biblegateway.com> to view Bible versions which best suit your needs.

Spiritual Media

Books, periodicals, music, CDs, and DVDs are a wealth of spiritual media that can be used as tools to grow in our relationship with God. Articles, books and podcasts, even Scripture, may be found online. Resources abound from Christian ministries and in bookstores. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you search them out. As you use these tools to go deeper in the spiritual life, remember the goal is not perfection but progress!



Physical Tools

Rosaries

Rosaries have been a part of many religious traditions. As Christians, many of us use rosaries to follow Jesus’ example of praying to our Heavenly Father. We have found the use of beads and repetition in prayer to be a helpful and necessary tool in our daily lives. Praying the rosary is centering prayer. Whether we meditate on the Holy Mysteries of the Rosary or another meditation, darkness and doubt flee from our souls. An opening for our Lord is enlarged, allowing the prayer of the Holy Spirit to enter into our hearts. As it says in Scripture, “in the same way, the Spirit, too, comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the One who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will” (Rom. 8:26-27).

Rosaries may be made from strung beads, pebbles, or even knotted rope. They can be extremely ornate or beautifully simplistic. The rosary is helpful to us, as humans, to have something tangible in our hands as we focus on prayer, and makes prayer a sensory experience. Whether one says the prayer aloud or not, the feel of the beads is a calming influence. If led to, you can write your own prayers to use on rosaries based on Scripture or your needs at the time.

The Anglican Rosary

The Anglican rosary, which is also known as Anglican/Episcopalian prayer beads, uses elements of both the Orthodox and Catholic traditions. Anglican rosaries are made up of thirty-three beads. These beads represent Jesus' thirty-three years on Earth. There are four sets of seven "weeks." Weeks remind us of the Jewish/Christian symbolic importance of the number seven. There are the seven days of creation, the seven days of the week, the seven seasons of the church year, and the seven sacraments of the church. There are four larger beads which are usually different colors. They are called "cruciforms" and they separate the four weeks. Cruciforms are equally spaced in the circle of the rosary. Attached to the last cruciform is an "invitatory." This is the bead from which a cross hangs.

There is no set prayer for the Anglican rosary, although there are several traditional and contemporary prayers that are frequently used. One way to pray the rosary is to pray a beginning prayer on the Cross, and recite the first and last prayers on it. Move to the invitatory bead which invites us into the presence of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Move to the cruciform beads to offer petitions, and then to the four groups of seven beads or weeks to pray for specific intentions. Praying the cycle three times, including the beginning and exiting prayers will total the 100 beads used to pray what is called the Orthodox rosary.

Find a Bible verse, psalm, or a prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Use your rosary to pray your own set of prayers, or pray traditional prayers. Making your own rosary can also be a meaningful prayer exercise.

The Catholic Rosary

Catholic rosaries have more beads and have set prayers, which differs from the Anglican rosary. When praying the Catholic rosary you will find that it is divided into five decades. Each decade represents an event in the life of Jesus or a mystery. The rosary has four sets of Holy Mysteries, which are the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, each consisting of 5 mysteries for a total of 20 mysteries. When praying privately and reciting the rosary, one is to meditate devoutly on each mystery. If done in public, with two or more people praying the rosary, the leader announces each mystery before each decade of prayer.

Beginning at the Crucifix, the Apostles' Creed is said; the Our Father is said on each of the large beads; the Hail Mary is said on each of the small beads; the Glory Be is recited after the three Hail Mary's at the beginning of the rosary, and after each decade of small beads. An additional prayer can be said added after each decade of the rosary asking for forgiveness and is said following the Glory Be.

The Cycle of the Rosary: The Joyful Mysteries are usually said on Mondays and Saturdays. The Sorrowful Mysteries are usually said on Tuesdays and Fridays. The Glorious Mysteries are usually said on Wednesdays and Sundays. The Luminous Mysteries are usually said on Thursdays. The Mystery for Sunday may optionally vary depending upon the seasons of the liturgical year. The Joyful Mysteries may be said on Sundays during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. During the season of Lent, the Sorrowful Mysteries may be said on Sundays.

Prayer After the Rosary: O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that, by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

For more information on How to recite the Holy Rosary, see www.newadvent.org.

Labyrinth

Make me to know your ways, O God; teach me your paths. (Ps. 25:4)

Dr. Lauren Artress in her book *Walking a Sacred Path* states that the labyrinth:

...is a tool to guide healing, deepen self-knowledge, and empower creativity. Walking the labyrinth clears the mind and gives insight into the spiritual journey. It urges action. It calms people in the throes of life transitions. It helps them see their lives in the context of a path, a pilgrimage. The experience is different for everyone because each of us brings different raw material to the labyrinth and each of us are on our own unique spiritual journey. (20-21).

The earliest Christian labyrinth inlaid in the floor is most likely the one found in the fourth-century basilica of Reparatus, Orleansville, in Algeria. The earliest finger Labyrinth appearing on a wall is believed to be at St. Lucca Cathedral in Italy, and dates back to the ninth century. It was designed for people to trace with their fingers prior to entering the cathedral as a way of quieting the mind before entering the sacred space. (52-53)

Usually early in life, Christians in the Middle Ages made a vow to make a pilgrimage to the city of Jerusalem. However, in the 12th century the trip had become too dangerous and expensive. Sound familiar? The Roman Catholic Church appointed seven cathedrals to

become “Jerusalem” for pilgrims. The walk into the Labyrinth’s center became the ritualistic end of the journey across the countryside and entry into the spiritual realms of the Celestial City. Images of the Celestial City of Jerusalem from the book of Revelation were reflected in the wondrous Gothic Cathedrals. The bright colors of the walls and stained glass windows created a dancing mosaic of color. The holy atmosphere of beauty set the tone for the awesome mystery of the City of God.

The path into the center has been called the path to Jerusalem and the center of the labyrinth, the New Jerusalem. The Gothic cathedrals of Europe, including the Cathedral in Chartres, France were created according to methods of applied sacred geometry (Artress 48). The Chartres Labyrinth, the replica which many modern day labyrinths are designed after, was laid into the floor of the Cathedral between 1194 and 1220.



Icons

Icons are the traditional art form of the Early Church. During the early years of the Christian Church, this new art form was created to help reveal this new faith to the world. This art’s chief goal was to express the view of the world held by the Church. God’s interaction with man, man’s calling to be a new creation, the breath of God, and the look of holiness. An icon at its very root is a portrayal of Christ’s image and imprint on the world, thus helping us better understand who God is and what He is like. Icons can be small paintings on a wood panel, an illumination on paper no bigger than a penny, or painted on a large wall with the figures larger than life. It is not the size or medium that makes an icon an “icon”, but the subject matter (its content) and how it is portrayed.

The icon is steeped in tradition. We can all imagine the ancient scribe carefully copying letter by letter the ancient religious texts. In a similar way, the iconographer follows that which was created before him. In fact, the act of painting an icon is often referred to as “writing”. The artist’s creativity comes into play through the freedom to manipulate line, color, and form for a directed purpose: the expression of the truth and vision of the Church.

The aim of this art is to capture through the choice of color, facial expression, and

composition not the natural look of the person or things depicted, but their spiritual essence. Saints are portrayed in an icon because Christ is portrayed in the saint. Through his or her actions (the example of piously responding to life's challenges as Christ himself would), the Christian faith is fleshed out. This is an art with a vision. A quiet, peaceful, otherworldly view of God's grace at work... a heavenly vision.

Place the icon where you pray regularly or a special spot that can be a retreat from the busyness of your day. Some take them on retreat to add a deeper holiness to the time and help them focus more deeply on Christ. Arrange the icon with a candle or soft light. The soft light brings out the beauty of the icon. During prayer, you may just gaze at the icon as you center on Christ or study it to see what God reveals to you about Christ through its beauty and holy design. Scripture supports gazing on the glory of Christ revealed in icons in II Corinthians 3:18 which states: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding (gazing) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

Prayer Shawls

The wearing of the "tallit" (pronounced tal-eet) or "prayer shawl," has a deep history. It is a religious symbol. The prayer shawl is used as a garment, shroud, canopy, or cloak which historically was used to wrap oneself physically and spiritually, in prayer and celebration, as well as in joy and sorrow. It is still used in orthodox synagogues today (HopeofIsrael.net). The wearing of the "tallit" was commanded by God. Read Deuteronomy 22:12 and Numbers 15:37-40.

"Tallit" is comprised of two Hebrew words that mean "little tent". In Old Testament times, the number of Jews was too great to fit into the Tent of Meeting. So, each man was given a Tallit or prayer shawl. He would pull it up over his head, forming a tent. The men would chant, sing, and pray. This was a private time with the Lord. This was their prayer closet! Read Matthew 6:5-6.

Prayer shawls may be used symbolically to cut you off from the world. Wrapping yourself within one signifies to others that you should not be disturbed. It indicates your Sabbath time—your time with the Lord. In our busy lives we often need to remind ourselves to turn off our computers, televisions, cell phones, and other distractions. Wrapping ourselves up in our prayer shawls is like being wrapped in the arms of our loving God and allows us to focus solely on Him.

Making prayer shawls or blankets for someone who is ill or in need can also be a tool for deeper prayer. It should be done slowly in a spirit of prayer and silence without any outside interference. This engages all your senses and brings you into a place of quiet communion with God. Praying as you knit, crochet, or sew is another option to help keep your mind focused on prayer.

Journals

Do you recognize God working in your life? Do you see where He has answered your prayers? A journal is the tool one uses to record spiritual growth. Keeping a spiritual journal can provide the time and the structure for exploring our lives: our thoughts, feelings, dreams, relationships with others and with God, our gifts, and beliefs. It can increase our awareness of God's leading and action in our lives. The Christian church has been enriched by spiritual leaders who have left in their journals a record of their lives with God, their spiritual insights, and their reflections on the Scriptures. Journaling is both process (writing) and product (record).

A prayer journal is like a spiritual diary. Entries may be made daily or as a person is inspired to do so. There are at least two major benefits of prayer journals: first, recording your encounters with God fixes them more firmly in your mind, and second, by having it in writing, you can refer to it later. Be sure to date your entries, so that you can chart your growth. Your prayer journal might include: spiritual insights, daily Bible study, devotional study, moments close to Christ, dreams, God's plans, poems, and other items.

Journals also allow you to let your thoughts flow and are where you can pour your soul into the pages. Journals can be shared, but often they are for private thoughts, thoughts between you and God. Record each instance where God has met you on a difficult journey or healed you. List the times God has granted you discernment and enlightened you with Scriptures or affirmations.

Journaling allows us to recognize the many times in our lives where we are able to express our thanks to God for His many blessings. It is so easy for us to forget how many times God has met our needs, but keeping a journal allows us to see His presence in our everyday lives. You might dedicate several pages at the front or back of your journal for a gratitude list. Each day list one thing you are thankful for that day. Revisit your gratitude list often to develop a deep spirit of appreciation for all of God's many blessings.



Chapter Five Questions

1. Which of the prayer tools in this chapter have you used and what was your experience? Is there one you would like to try?
2. Select a Psalm or another Scripture, and use your favorite prayer tool to pray and meditate on the reading. What did God reveal to you?
3. Write a prayer for your journal, rosary, or to use with your prayer shawl.
4. Celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours or another prayer book office in a chapter meeting. Share your feelings after this activity.
5. Together, compose prayers for a rosary or a novena, and pray them in your chapter meeting and for an agreed number of days after.

 **FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT**

A Daughters of the King Meditation on the Anglican Rosary

Cross: With heart, mind, and spirit I uphold the Cross.

Invitatory Bead:

For His Sake
I am but one, but I am one
I cannot do everything, but I can do something
What I can do, I ought to do
What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.

Cruciform Beads:

Holy and Mighty God we pray
For the unity of Christ's Church
For the Spread of Christ's Kingdom on earth
For the salvation of all girls and women
For the spiritual growth of our parish, and,
For Daughters of the King here and everywhere.



Weeks Beads

Jesus, Son of God, give me grace to be a faithful servant of Your Kingdom.
Jesus, Lamb of God, what would you have me do?

Invitatory Bead

O Eternal Father, you have sent us your Son to teach us things pertaining to your heavenly Kingdom.
Give your blessing to our Order wherever it may be throughout the world.
Grant that we, your Daughters, ever may discern your truth and bear the cross through the battles of our earthly life.
Give us strength to overcome temptation and the grace to work to spread your Kingdom and to gather your scattered sheep within your fold.
Pour out upon us the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit that we may always remember it is your work we are called to do, that all we think, do or say may be pleasing in your sight.
We ask it all For His Sake, our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Adapted by Katherine Dooley



Divine Mercy Chaplet Based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska

Prayed on an Anglican Rosary

Cross: In the Name of the Living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Invitatory Bead (the first large bead nearest the cross): Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Cruciform Beads (the four large beads): Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

Weeks Beads (the 28 small beads): For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Invitatory Bead: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

Cross: Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Adapted by Kathryn Wohnoutka

Chapter Six

Practices of Spiritual Growth

*Show me your ways, O Lord,
teach me your paths...*

Psalm 25:4



Dear God

**Like trees planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season,
may our spiritual growth,
nourished by the living water of our Savior,
Jesus Christ, bring us closer to fellowship with You.**

Amen.

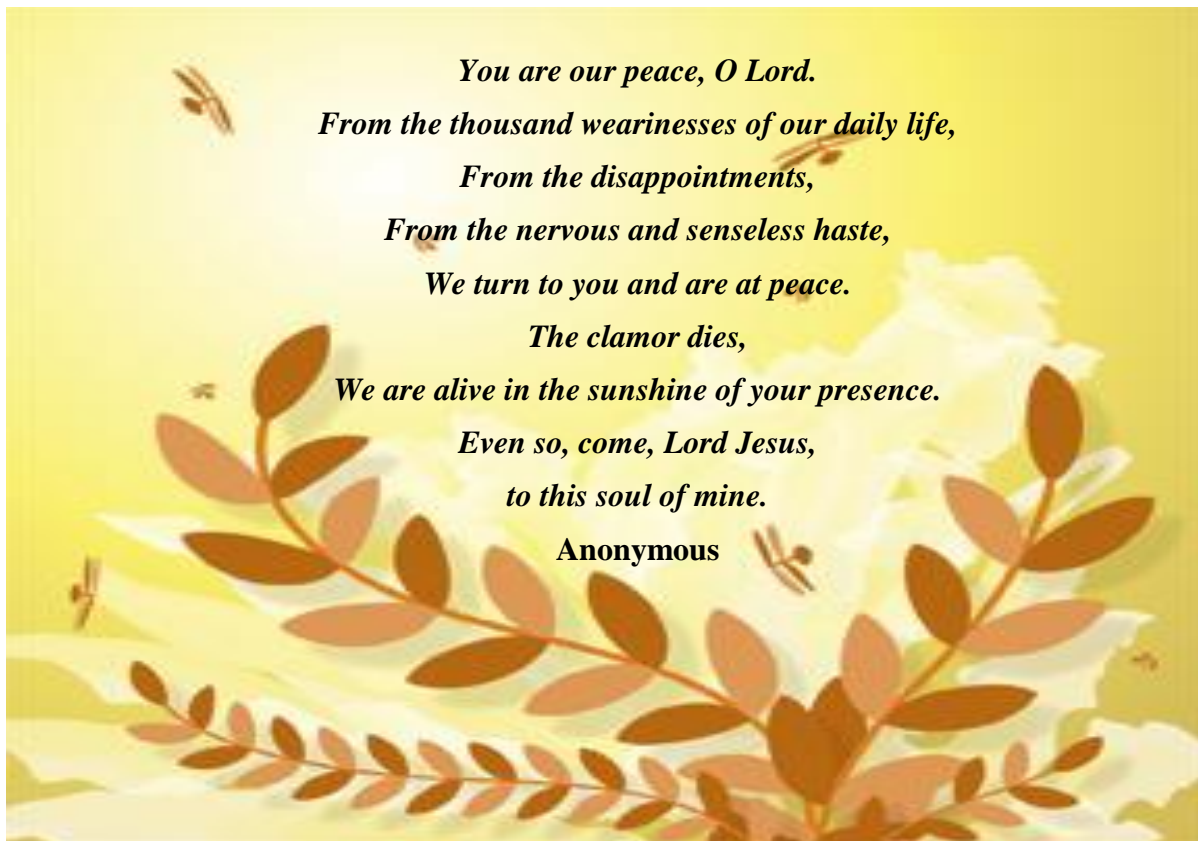
Practices of Spiritual Growth

The definition of a spiritual practice is a spiritual activity. In ancient times it referred to our active cooperation with God's grace in rooting out vices and allowing the virtues to flourish. The direction of spiritual activity was not outward in the sense of an apostolate, but inward, down into the depths of the soul where the Spirit of God is constantly transforming us. What are these spiritual practices? The following list is not exhaustive for there are too many to discuss here but, in exploring these, you will be led to others.

Quiet Time

Quiet time, or devotion time, refers to our daily appointment with God, when we shut out as much outside interference as possible. During our quiet time, we may sing praise songs, pray, read Scripture or daily devotions, meditate on God's Word, or simply be still and listen. Making that appointment is important; keeping it is essential to spiritual growth!

In preparation of building Solomon's temple David told the leaders to "set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God" (1 Chron. 22:19). The Hebrew word that has been translated "set your heart" means to focus your attention on the activity of seeking the Lord. Quiet time is a time of intentionally drawing apart to focus on God without distractions. It is a heart and soul action. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). This is a time to prepare to touch the hem of His garment.



Practicing the Presence of God

Brother Lawrence, a seventeenth century monk, discovered the habit of continuous prayer. His letters are found in the classic, *Practicing the Presence of God*, where he states: “The Practice of the Presence...draws down God’s grace abundantly, and leads the soul insensibly to the ever present vision of God, loving and beloved, which is the most spiritual and most real, the most free and most life-giving manner of prayer” (54).

Prayer is our conversation with God. It softens our hearts and draws us into intimate communion with Him; it prepares us to hear Him speak to us in His Word. When we practice the presence, our prayers may be simple, a few words or a few sentences, entered into continually as we go about our daily activity.

Meditative Prayer

Christian meditation is very different from Eastern meditation (clearing your mind of all thoughts). Christian meditation is filling the mind with holy thoughts, dwelling on the works, ways, purposes, and promises of God. Christian meditation is biblical. Read Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8.

One of the best preparations of the heart in quiet time is to meditate on the word of God. Psalms are a powerful tool to use in meditation. Devotional books are another resource. These books contain the words of committed men and women of God, those with hearts that were open to God and dared to draw near to Him. Christian classics, especially, have stood the test of time and are true to God’s word. Many have found meditating on God’s creation to be a holy experience. The focus of Christian meditation is always on God.

Contemplative Prayer

Open yourself up to God. Open your mind and your heart so that you can truly experience God. Think upon His word. In stillness and in silence, let God speak to you. What is the still, small voice saying to you? Centering prayer is one form of contemplative prayer which focuses on a “sacred prayer word or phrase.” This could come from your devotional reading and some word God places on your heart to reflect on. It is active prayer. Think of a phrase such as “Jesus have mercy on me”, “Come Holy Spirit”, or “Abba Father” as a way to focus.

Prior to prayer, turn off all distractions such as the television, phone, and radio. Sitting quietly and comfortably with eyes closed for twenty minutes, try to rest in Jesus or God the Father with your heart and mind totally centered on the Lord. If your mind begins to wander, you may use that sacred word or phrase to re-focus or return to your intention. It draws your mind back to your point of focus. After twenty minutes, sit for a couple of minutes to slowly refocus and regain your sense of awareness. You might record twenty minutes of silence on a tape with a soft bell or music at the end to signal you have completed your prayer time.

Silence and Solitude

In his book, *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*, Richard Foster tells us: “Simplicity and solitude walk hand in hand” (15). “Silence frees us from the need to control others... Silence is one of the deepest disciplines of the Spirit...” (72). “Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming” (109).

It is within the silence that we allow ourselves to listen and to be receptive to what God has to say to us. Out of all of the tools which may be used, perhaps silence is the most difficult to practice. Read and discuss the following Scriptures:

- Psalm 119:147 speaks to pre-dawn prayer in time of trouble.
- Matthew 6:5-6 speaks to “closet prayer.”
- Luke 6:12 suggests spending the night in prayer.
- Mark 6:31 advises us to seek a quiet place.

The common denominator in these verses is silence. How can we focus ourselves fully on God if we allow the noise of the world to distract us?

Fasting

All the major religions of the world recognize the merits of fasting. Throughout Scripture fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. The purpose of fasting is not to please God or to manipulate Him but to grow closer to Him. Our focus on Him is sharper when we pray and fast. Richard Foster states that “fasting helps us keep our balance in life... Our human cravings and desires are like rivers that tend to overflow their banks; fasting helps keep them in their proper channels” (Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* 56). First, check with the Holy Spirit to see if He is leading you to fast. There are ways one can fast other than abstaining from eating and/or drinking. Ask the Lord what he wants you to fast from—in what area does He want you to “deny yourself?” It might be TV, conversations on the phone, shopping, or other activities. You might be surprised at what God leads you to give up!

Bible Study

One of the greatest practices we have been given is Bible study. What we do with God’s word will determine the depth of our intimacy with Him. Reading God’s word is a valuable daily discipline. Because the Bible is not just words on a page but a living book, it transforms us and makes us adequate for every good work. There are numerous books available on helpful ways to approach Bible study. Hundreds of studies are available on the books of the Bible as well as topical Bible studies. Studying God’s word with a group can be a powerful experience as insights are shared and mutual support for “living in the Word” can be found.

Retreats

Withdrawing from your busy life to focus on your relationship with God may be done privately or with a group. A retreat is a time to clear out the debris of a cluttered lifestyle, to reorder priorities, to listen to God's voice more acutely, or to simply rest in God's Presence. There are retreat centers located throughout the country.

Quiet Days

A quiet day is refreshment to the body, soul, and spirit. Daughters need to give and participate in quiet days. The key word here is "quiet". Nothing we have to say is ever as important as what God has to say to us. He constantly invites us to come to him. Daughters who provide the time and space for such an experience for themselves and others are providing a way of coming into His presence. Think of it as 'hospitality for God.' A quiet day may be held at any time and take any form the leader chooses. It will evoke different emotions and meanings in each person who attends. See Chapter 12 for more resources on Quiet Days.

Spiritual Direction

Christian spiritual direction is listening and sharing by one Christian, the director, to another, the directee, which enables the directee to discern God's will for her. In the process of direction, the directee grows in intimacy with God and walks in the path illuminated for them by the Holy Spirit.

It could be more simply described as "walking the journey with a soul friend". It is not counseling or therapy. However, most spiritual directors receive formal training and are known in your church or diocese. Ask your priest or pastor or call a local retreat house for contact information if you are interested in benefiting from this ancient ministry.

Small groups (DOK Chapters)

Small groups are so important in our spiritual growth. Whether for prayer, study, or facing life issues, they provide support and accountability in our Christian walk. The early church grew through small groups. Early Christians were nurtured and taught the Gospel in small groups as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of Saint Paul.

A characteristic unique to small support groups such as DOK chapters is the mutual support members are able to provide one another. This support and validation from other DOK sisters helps facilitate personal growth and change in a way that does not happen through individual endeavors. Prayer, love, and understanding between DOK sisters results in the powerful experience of sisterhood that sometimes brings life changes.

Chapter Six Questions

1. Are you able to find a regular quiet time in your life? If not, how can you plan for it?
2. Of the spiritual practices listed in this section, which are you using to grow spiritually? Which have been the most helpful?
3. Which spiritual practices would you like to try? How can you plan time for them?
4. Is it possible that some practices are more effective in certain seasons of our spiritual lives than in others? If so, why?

 **FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT**

Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest

By Wayne Muller

Practice 1: Write down one common act during the day to serve as a Sabbath pause - like a telephone ringing, a stoplight, touching a doorknob, or before you eat or drink.

Whenever this act happens, simply stop, take three silent, mindful breaths, and then go on. See how these tiny Sabbath moments every day affect you life. Journal on your results at the end of the week.

Practice 2: Bless strangers quietly, secretly. Offer it to people you notice on the street, in the market, on the bus. Use a blessing like: “God Bless you. May you be at peace.” Feel the blessing move through your body as you offer it. Notice how you both receive some benefit from the blessing. Gently, almost without effort, each and every blessing becomes a Sabbath. Journal on your feelings at the end of the week.

Words from Mother Teresa

To make possible interior silence, we shall practice:

- Silence of the eyes, by seeking always the beauty and goodness of God everywhere, closing them to the faults of others and to all that is sinful and disturbing to the soul;
- Silence of the ears, by listening always to the voice of God and to the cry of the poor and the needy, closing them to all other voices that come from the evil one or from fallen human nature: for example, gossip, tale-bearing, and uncharitable words;
- Silence of the tongue, by praising God and speaking the life-giving Word of God that is Truth that enlightens and inspires, brings peace, hope, and joy, and by refraining from self-defense and every word that causes darkness, turmoil, pain, and death;
- Silence of the mind, by opening it to the truth and knowledge of God in prayer and contemplation, like Mary who pondered the marvels of the Lord in her heart, and by closing it to all untruths, distractions, destructive thoughts, rash judgment, false suspicions of others, revengeful thought and desires;
- Silence of the heart, by loving God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one another as God loves, desiring God alone and avoiding all selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, and greed.

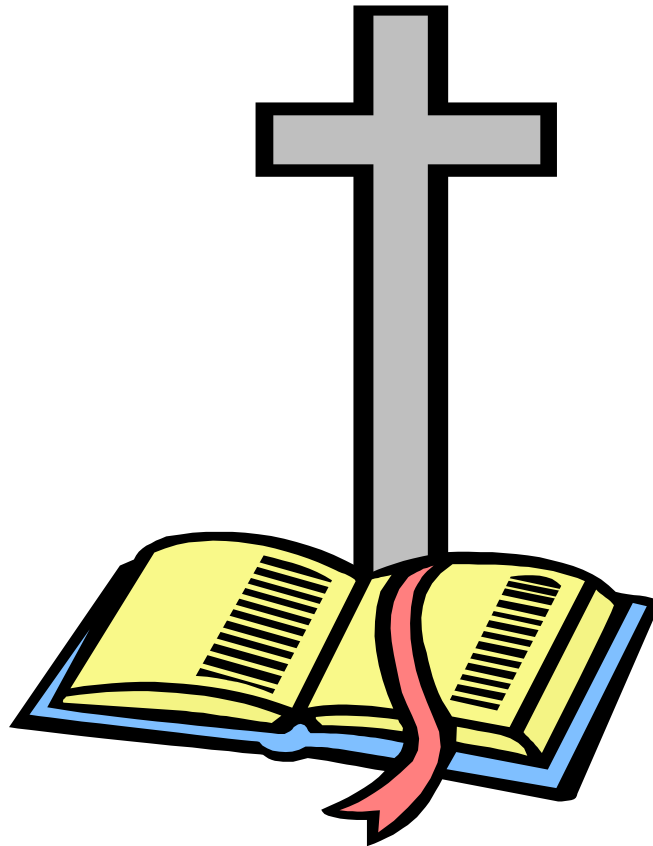
(Jean Maalouf, *Experiencing Jesus with Mother Teresa*, 59)



Chapter Seven

Scripture as a Prayer Tool

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:1*



**Dear God,
Help us to pray Holy Scripture,
opened to us in the power of
Your Holy Spirit,
with grateful hearts and minds.
Amen.**

Scripture as a Prayer Tool

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading of the Scriptures)

Lectio divina is an ancient spiritual art that is being rediscovered in our day. In lectio divina we discover our own underlying spiritual rhythm and that there is no place in our hearts, no interior corner or closet that cannot be opened and offered to God. Lectio divina is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God.

Lectio (Reading/Listening): The practice requires that you first quiet down in order to hear God's word. This first step is appropriately called lectio - reading. Select any Scripture from the daily lectionary, a devotion book, or a short passage directly from the Bible. Lectio is reverential listening; listening both in a spirit of silence and of awe. Read the passage slowly, twice. You are listening for the still, small voice of God that will speak to you personally; not loudly, but intimately.

Meditatio (Meditation): Once you find a word or a passage in the Scriptures which speaks to you, meditate on it like the Virgin Mary did when she was "pondering in her heart" what she saw and heard of Christ (Luke 2:19). Gently repeat it to yourself, and allow it to interact with your thoughts, hopes, memories, and desires. Through meditation you allow God's word to become His word for you, a word that touches you and affects you at your deepest levels.

Oratio (Prayer): The third step in lectio divina is prayer. Prayer is both dialogue with God, that is, a loving conversation with the One who has invited you into His embrace, and a consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of yourself. You allow the word that you have taken in and on which you are pondering to touch and change your deepest self. Just as a priest consecrates the elements of bread and wine at the Eucharist, God invites us through lectio divina to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences, and to gently recite over them the healing word or phrase God has given us. In this prayer, you allow God to touch you and change you through His Word.

Contemplatio (Contemplation): Finally, you simply rest in the presence of the One who has used the Scripture word as a means of inviting you to accept a transforming embrace. No one who has ever been in love needs to be reminded that there are moments in loving relationships when words are unnecessary. It is the same in your relationship with God. Wordless, quiet rest in the presence of the One who loves you has a name in the Christian tradition: contemplation. Once again we practice silence, letting go of our own words, this time, simply enjoying the experience of being in the presence of God.

Praying Through the Psalms

The Book of Psalms is one of the greatest collections of songs, prayers, and poetry. They are used as models of prayer and praise. The Psalms invoke in us feelings of connection. We share with the Psalmist in seeking the heart of the living God.

The Psalms express the deepest passions of humanity. We can hear the Psalmist's desperate cry in the midst of despair. We also hear his emphatic praise for his Provider and Comforter. We can hear him pouring out his soul in confession, but also bubbling over with joy! The Psalms lead us through the valleys and peaks of human experiences, but, in the end, they guide us to the praise of our loving Creator. The following is an example of meditation based on praying the psalms written by a Daughter.

Day One: Stewardship: How to Stay Young and Strong?

He fills my life with good things, so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.
(Psalm 103:5)

What is important and what is not? When I stop and ask my Heavenly Father to put my priorities in order in a way that is not complex, three areas come to mind: spiritual health, physical health, and financial health. All are important to be kept in balance with our Father as chief counselor. It is through prayer that we are guided in all these categories, with Scripture as a reference.

Spiritual Health: Since I can be called home at any time, should I not be prepared this very moment for my departure? Filling my mind and spirit with His promises constantly reinforces all that is good for me and my loved ones now and forever.

As members of the Order of the Daughters of the King[®] we are committed to serve the Lord in many ways that honor him. Our Mission Statement is a commitment to expand God's Kingdom through prayer, service, and evangelism. We believe it is important to be a body of Christian women who pray daily, serve others wherever God leads, and participate in corporate worship. We are willing and equipped to share the truth and blessings of God with others. Daughters have the unique opportunity to be loving, serving women in the workplace, community, and with their families. Daughters are called especially to be examples of Christ's love for children. As witnesses, we will be known as ones who pray, especially for those who need prayer. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we will be gentle and kind, patient and long suffering, slow to anger and quick to love unconditionally. This temperament is a gift and a true witness of His Holy Love.

My Prayer: Father God help me to be a faithful witness to all whom I serve in my daily life. Grant me the grace and fortitude to continue to show Your love and grace to those that cross my path each day and help me to lead them closer to You. Give me the temperament of a true witness to Your Holy Love. Amen.

Chapter Seven Questions

1. Choose a favorite or well known passage of Scripture and practice lectio divina. What new insights did you gain?
2. What part of lectio divina did you find easiest? What part did you find difficult? Why?
3. Draw up a schedule for a week or month of praying through the Psalms. Keep a journal in which you note what comes to you as you meditate on each one.
4. Use the examples in the “For Your Enrichment” section as a guide to writing your own reflection to your Lord.

FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

Lectio Divina as a Group Exercise

These group exercises can be a very useful means of introducing and encouraging the practice of lectio divina, but they should not become a substitute for an encounter and communion with the Living God that can only take place in that privileged solitude where the biblical Word of God becomes transparent to the Very Word Himself - namely private lectio divina.

The method of group lectio divina described here was introduced at St. Andrew's Abbey by oblates Doug and Norvene Vest. It is used as part of the Benedictine Spirituality for Laity workshops conducted at the Abbey each summer.

This form of lectio divina works best in a group of between four and eight people. A group leader coordinates the process and facilitates sharing. The same text from the Scriptures is read out three times, followed each time by a period of silence and an opportunity for each member of the group to share the fruit of her or his lectio.

The first reading (the text is actually read twice on this occasion) is for the purpose of hearing a word or passage that touches the heart. When the word or phrase is found, it is silently taken in, and gently recited and pondered during the silence which follows. After the silence each person shares which word or phrase has touched his or her heart.

The second reading (by another member of the group) is for the purpose of "hearing" or "seeing" Christ in the text. Each ponders the word that has touched the heart and asks where the word or phrase touches her life that day. In other words, how is Christ the Word touching her own experience, her own life? How are the various members of the group seeing or hearing Christ reach out to them through the text? Then, after the silence, each member of the group shares what she has "heard" or "seen."

The third and final reading is for the purpose of experiencing Christ "calling us forth" into doing or being. Members ask themselves what Christ in the text is calling them to do or to become today or this week. After the silence, each shares for the last time; and the exercise concludes with each person praying for the person on the right.

Those who regularly practice this method of praying and sharing the Scriptures find it to be an excellent way of developing trust within a group; it also is an excellent way of consecrating projects and hopes to Christ before more formal group meetings or service projects.

By Father Luke Sysinger, OSD, *Accepting the Embrace of God:
The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, (<http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>)

FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

A Month of Meditations with the Psalms

By Beverly Allison

Day Two: Wonderfully Made

You created every part of me; You put me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because You are to be feared; all You do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart. (Psalm 139:13-14)

Physical Health: Because God created our bodies to be temples for His spirit to perform good works in his name, we are called to practice good health habits to honor His gift of life. Sometimes our lives are full of health related challenges. However, our Creator does provide a way that promotes healing and well being. Healing may be in an unexpected form, not always actually in the physical sense. Through prayer and good counsel in seeking solutions for physical healing of the body, God will heal broken relationships, unforgiveness, and secrets of the heart that transform the person and bring peace of mind.

One example is how God can change a bitter, angry, selfish person who is ill into a tender, loving soul still with physical afflictions but a completely new person in every other way. However, it is always our responsibility to practice good health habits and in obedience avoid things known to be harmful to the body. In all things pray; does not our Creator Father God intervene for His purpose and for our good?

My Prayer: God Almighty, thank You for Your love that flows into my existence. Your goodness, mercy, and grace toward me always fill my spirit with an abundance of praise and thankfulness that You made me to be Your own. Amen.

Day Three: Rescued From Financial Ruin

I rely on your constant love; I will be glad, because You will rescue me. I will sing to You, O Lord, because You have been good to me. (Psalm 13:5-6)

Financial Health: Overhanging debt, not having enough money to take care of family needs, or not having enough to make us feel secure, are the kinds of anxiety most of us have experienced some time during our life. Most serious is how to climb out of debt when the horizon seems doubtful and planning has not been part of the plan.

I used to hear my grandmother say with a twinkle in her eye, "When my ship comes in, I will buy you..." (fill in the gap; it could be whatever was wanted at the time). She was a woman ahead of her time. Born in 1875, she left home at age 20 to seek her fortune in New York City. She was a successful business woman, married well, and at the beginning of the 1929 crash she and her husband started a successful dress shop business that survived, serving an affluent clientele. Even in her seventies she was planning a new business until

her eyesight failed. I can still hear her pecking away at her little portable typewriter, writing letters to prospective clients.

Seeking wealth through God's way ensures true security and can be a good thing. It is God that develops and allows us to be stewards with overwhelming success. God is the master Steward. There is balance in knowing how to plan prayerfully for daily provisions, share with others in need generously, save wisely, and give sacrificially.

My Prayer: God Almighty, You are my all in all. I am only complete when in Your promises, when in Your protection and in Your will for my life, both now and throughout all of eternity. Thank You for loving me Father, thank You, in Christ's name. Amen.

Day Four: Fill Me with Joy

You will show me the path that leads to life; Your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever. (Psalm 16:11)

During a severe earthquake in Costa Rica that caused major destruction and loss of many lives, a friend of mine heard a terrifying sound coming from a part of the house where her son was sleeping. Rushing to that area and climbing over fallen rubble, she saw his legs sticking out of the dust and debris. Frantically, she grabbed his legs and pulled him out. Praise God, he was alive and not seriously hurt. She claimed a miracle; the weight of the building could have crushed her six year-old son.

When any of us have been delivered from a life threatening experience and our life on earth continues, a feeling of gratitude and joy fills our mind and spirit, for it is our God Who has the last word on our existence.

My Prayer: Father God, my pathway to you is through the Lord Jesus Christ. You continue to fill me with courage, wisdom, and knowledge that You alone are the source of my true joy. Amen.

Day Five: True Love Is a Constant

I rely on Your constant love; I will be glad, because You will rescue me. I will sing to You, O Lord, because You have been good to me. (Psalm 13:5-6)

In our lifetime we will face many challenges. The one that may impede us the most in this physical body may be sickness, an unexpected disease, legs or arms that don't function, blindness, or words from our doctor that say: "Sorry, there is no hope for your recovery." But we know that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

A colleague shared that it was the worst experience in her life when her son was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) at the age of 32. Surrounded by love of family, friends, and the church, and fortified by prayer, this mother said that day by day she sees God's love at

work in all their lives. Her son's health is controlled by good medical care. He is happily married with lively four year-old twin boys, holds a good job and "every day is a blessing." He is a witness to others where he works by his sweet spirit. He encourages others and is dependable in all areas of his life, setting a faithful example for his children.

When confronted with life's blows let us be reminded of our Lord's promise. Wake up my spirit, Almighty God. Your Son, Our Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, inspired this promise: "We know that in all things God works for good with those who love Him, those whom He has called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

My Prayer: My Creator God, your constant love will rescue me from self pity to live according to Your purpose. Your goodness has lessened my stress and raised my spirit higher than eagles fly. Your eternal loving arms carry me to victories beyond my dreams and expectations. Thank You, Father God, thank You. Amen.

Day Six: The Last Word

Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.
(Psalm 37:4)

My desires are many, but which ones are truly unselfish, which ones will glorify my Creator God, which ones are for the good of all in the realm of my influence? How do I act as to delight my Creator Father? "God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us His children---this was His pleasure and purpose" (Ephesians 1:5).

With this in mind, God Himself will determine what desires of mine fit His purpose for my good. I am relieved that He has the last word, for only then will I be satisfied during this earthly journey. Recently, I was asked by a young friend, "Why is it that nothing seems to work for me in relationships?" I was reminded of what my father told me, "Examine your wishes and ask God that His desire for you becomes your own desire."

My Prayer: Jesus Christ my Savior, Lord, and Advocate, I have found great pleasure in knowing Your words are true, for my faith rings an honest tone and its reverberation returns to me by Your Holy Spirit, fostering the realities of my heart's desires. Thank You, Jesus, and may God my Father be praised. Amen.

Day Seven: Who Can Be Trusted?

The promises of the Lord can be trusted; they are as genuine as silver refined seven times in the furnace. (Psalms 12:6)

From the moment a child comes into the world she searches for a face to trust. Helpless on her own, her dependency is her lifeline. A baby that cannot bond with a caretaker suffers greatly. Pray for the millions of babies whose lifeline is broken because of disease, war, and poverty, that God will provide help for these little ones.

Do you remember as a child how hard it was to wait for Christmas and the presents you asked for and hoped Santa would bring? We believed that Santa would fulfill all our wishes. As children we had to learn to trust and wait; as parents it was our job to decide what gifts were appropriate. God promises to give us good things according to His purpose and timing. My, how we want all that we desire, much that might not be good for us. Our Heavenly Father's response: "You need to be patient, in order to do the will of God and receive what He promises" (Hebrews 10:36).

My Prayer: Father God, please grant the ability to understand Your will for my purpose. For in You and You alone is trust manifested. You spoke, and the promised resurrection from death into life everlasting was a reality by way of the Cross. No power in all of creation can void Your promise. My spirit soars beyond myself full of joy, for as I am refined into Your will, all is well with my soul, both now and forever, in Christ's name. Amen.

Day Eight: Humility and Wisdom

The Lord is righteous and loves good deeds; those who do them will live in His presence. (Psalm 11:7)

Have you heard what "to die to self" is? It is a painful process because pride is like a cloak that protects who we truly are and hides our selfish secrets. The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord, who knows all about who we are. Humility comes by confessing our prideful ways, trusting in His perfect love, and asking for forgiveness, especially when we feel slighted or unappreciated.

Often in my immaturity I expected to be rewarded for something I did that is classified as a "good deed." Now I know that selfish pride must give way to what is right without expectations of reward or praise. My Aunt Bee often said, "no one may notice, but you may be earning a jewel in your crown in Heaven." I was never sure what that meant, but I liked the way it sounded. Maybe we can say that we strive to do good in the hope it pleases and honors God. Then God Himself who is righteous will ensure our reward in the quietness of a moment of His choice. "Are there any of you who are wise and understanding? You are to prove it by your good life, by your good deeds performed with humility and wisdom" (James 3:13).

My Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, I am running to you with a request. Grant me the wisdom to be humble in spirit in all I do, say, and think. You have transformed me into your eternal child; my mind is beyond itself with this promise. Any deed performed is only a stepping stone to your embrace, for to live forever in your presence is my heart's desire. Amen.

Day Nine: Beyond the Walls of Self

But You do see; You take notice of trouble and suffering and are always ready to help. The helpless commit themselves to You; You have always helped the needy. (Psalm 10:14)

Let your mind travel beyond the walls of self and imagine what you might see: others struggling for bread and water, bullets flying defending our freedoms, no shelter from life threatening circumstances, abused and abandoned children, and lives out of control. Do we turn from these scenes because we are overwhelmed or because we believe that as one person we can't make a difference?

Twenty years ago I found myself in partnership with Diana Frade, Founder and President of Our Little Roses Ministries in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. We were committed to begin a new ministry for abused and abandoned girls. Only in the Spirit of Christ could God have put together this ministry. It is transforming the lives of the girls He gave us to love, nurture, and educate. At present, fourteen of these once destitute girls are studying in universities. Sixty-five more of their "sisters" are being prepared to meet the challenges of adult living with hope for themselves and the ability to live productive lives. Forty girls have passed through Our Little Roses ministry, being educated, renewed, and prepared for successful adult life. In the Spirit of Christ I can serve beyond myself. It will honor God and demonstrate His love for all people.

My Prayer: Lord God Almighty, it is Your righteousness alone that fuels my service to others far from my door of ease. I am assured that Your eye is on my motive and intent and You will refine my heart. May I always strive for what is just and good in Your sight. Thank you Father, in Christ's name. Amen

Day Ten: Saved From Ourselves

When I look at the sky, which You have made, at the moon and the stars, which You set in their places—what are human beings that You think of them; mere mortals that you care for them? Yet You made them inferior only to Yourself; You crowned them with glory and honor. You appointed them rulers over everything You made; You placed them over all creation. (Psalm 8:3-6)

In this age, we are dumbfounded by the current sad state of the world. We have more access to information than at any other time in human history. Yet, millions of people go to bed hungry, wars and conflict claim lives every day, and families are being destroyed. Children are neglected, abused, and abandoned, babies are born to uncommitted couples, and we are yet to solve the problems of preventable diseases.

In the midst of this world, we are called to be intercessors. To pray for those who have no one to pray for them, to serve those that no one serves. As Mother Teresa said: "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." Start... just start.

My Prayer: Father God, guide me to Your ways. Open my eyes of understanding, that as Your steward on earth, I am filled with wisdom that only You can give. May humility pierce the pride of knowledge, so that Your thoughts may guide my actions. O Father God, may I praise Your Name forever and ever. Amen.

Day Eleven: A Baby's Cry

He listens to my cry for help and will answer my prayer. (Psalm 6:9)

Many of us have heard others shed tears, perhaps in sorrow or joy. An adult's sobs are particularly heart wrenching. They seem desperate, coming from the depth of emotion. Remember, Jesus wept when he entered Jerusalem before His last days and upon hearing of Lazarus's death from His friend's sisters. He shared their pain.

A baby's cry is the most demanding because of the interdependent nature of the baby's newness and inability to function on his own. It is a sound few parents can ignore. Our Creator Father formed us from the dust of the earth, making us His children. Would He not listen to every whimper, measure every breath, and instruct every heart beat to keep life in motion? Yes, of course. "He hears us whenever we ask Him; and since we know this is true, we know also that He gives us what we ask from Him" (I John 5:15).

Scripture tells us that Jesus shared His feelings with the Father and consulted Him daily through prayer as we are called to do. It is clear that the Father heard Jesus and hears us. He will respond. "We receive from Him whatever we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him. What He commands is that we believe in His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as Christ commanded us. Those who obey God's commands live in union with God and God lives in union with them" (I John 3:22-24).

My Prayer: Father God, I know that Your timing is correct, for my answers to petitions have not gone unnoticed. A purposeful response for my good and Your glory has already been formed. Each request was offered in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day Twelve: Because of You

But all who find safety in You will rejoice; they can always sing for joy. Protect those who love You; because of You they are truly happy. Lord, Your love protects them like a shield. You bless those who obey You. (Psalm 5:11-12)

"Storms are coming," my husband would warn as we rushed out to bring our farm animals into the safety of the barn. However, it always seemed that they did not want to leave what they were doing at the time, making it harder to drive them to safe shelter. The sheep especially were the dumbest creatures of all. Sometimes they would stubbornly roll over

on their backs, refusing our efforts to get them to safety. I wondered, “Don’t they know we are only trying to keep them from harm?”

When we read God’s desire about love, do we really comply with the word, “obey”? His command does not change: to believe in Him and love one another. “What He commands is that we believe in His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as Christ commanded us” (I John 3: 23).

My Prayer: Lord God, only you can awaken my spirit to the depths of Your love to rescue me from self will and poor choices. When I keep myself from singing for joy and from the happiness that awaits me in Your saving arms, I, too, am like those stubborn sheep. Thank You for Your grace and mercy and unfailing love. May Your love draw me to the security of Your eternal sanctuary, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Thirteen: When Are We Perfectly Safe?

When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace; You alone, O Lord, keep me perfectly safe.
(Psalm 4:8)

Most news outlets today feed on the negative to the point that the world around us looks bleak. Many people support leaders that urge us to make ungodly choices that are bound to destroy all that is good. Our Creator God sees nothing new under the sun. Time after time “God has been ready to forgive, been gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and did not forsake us” (Nehemiah 9:16-20). Since the beginning, man has longed for assurance that life will be a safe journey. For we have proved that in our own power, we are doomed; we cannot save ourselves.

As Christians we have assurance of hope in the resurrection. This is the good news on which we can depend. Why do so many ignore the hope in Christ, promised by our Creator, and continually sigh, “Woe is me?”

Paul tells us in Romans, “For I am certain that nothing can separate us from His love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

My Prayer: Loving Father God, thank You for Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Holy Spirit lives within me, confirming my born again existence. Your promises are my pillow supporting a peaceful rest; Your inspired Word covers me as a protective shield, encouraging the regeneration of my hopes and expectations. Thank You, Father, thank You. Amen.

Day Fourteen: Is There A Plan for My Life?

Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders You have done. The things You planned for us no one can recount to You; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare. (Psalm 40:5)

Prayer and planning is a must, and self-discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments. This is a good guideline, however: “We may make our plans, but God has the last word” (Proverbs 16:1).

My mother used to repeat the Aesop fable regarding the ant and the grasshopper. Grasshopper flittered away time all summer while Ant worked diligently in preparation for winter. As it happened, Grasshopper did not survive a hard winter without vegetation. When spring came, Ant and his family emerged having spent winter safe in their well stocked home under ground. When our Creator has the last word we can be assured that the results will be for our good and His glory. But why do we go through such hard times?

Many young children, when they have learned to walk, would go the other way when called, full of themselves and feeling the power of independence. However, when trouble comes, that same independent-thinking child calls out, “Mama, Poppa—Help me!”

In the past I chose to make important decisions, choosing my way without seeking God’s guidance or asking for His blessing for the outcome. What a mess I created by taking charge of my life, without praying through the circumstances to seek the right direction for good. The result can be disastrous. Allowing our free will, God steps back and waits until we seek His help to point us in the right direction for our good.

My Prayer: Thank You, Father God, for having the last word, all for my good and Your glory. Help me to understand Your will, allowing me to be in step with Your plan for my life, both now and throughout all of eternity. Amen.

Day Fifteen: Fear of Being Abandoned

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a place of safety in times of trouble. Those who know You, Lord, will trust You; You do not abandon anyone who comes to You. (Psalm 9:9-10)

Worry and anxiety are virtually interchangeable terms. In fact, one dictionary defines worry as “to feel anxious.” That same dictionary defines anxiety as “a concern that causes worry.” Worry and anxiety tend to be related to things we think about, imagine, or perceive. “The Lord will not abandon His people; He will not desert those who belong to Him” (Psalm 94:14).

My grandson who attends a Christian school learned that prayer is the cloak of confidence we can wear when confronted with problems. Many of his fellow students come from

families with serious concerns, some tragic. James brings home prayer requests that we all pray about, believing that God hears and cares. “Don’t worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God’s peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

My Prayer: Lord God, redeemer of my soul, knowing that I will never be abandoned and that help is only a prayer request away, I come to Your word to chase worry and anxiety out of the doorway of my mind. My anxieties flee and Your peace rules my thoughts, my weakened countenance is restored beyond my abilities and I find comfort beyond human reasoning. Thank You Father God for loving me, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Sixteen: Do I Have a Choice?

Why am I so sad? Why am I so troubled? I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise Him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 43:5)

The light is red, I stop, it turns green, I continue; making a poor choice may affect more than my safety and well being. When I am sad and troubled it always affects more than just me, everyone in the sphere of my influence may feel the negative trauma.

In talking to my mind I shout, wake up! You have a choice; does not a child run to a caring parent or caregiver and seek comfort and a release from clouds of distress? “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). Always confident, always faithful, He did not give up even on the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for Him, He thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and He is now seated at the right side of God’s throne. He is our hope.

I think of a colleague and his wife who were missionaries with the South American Missionary Society (SAMS), working with the Matacho Indians in the Choco area of Paraguay. After retirement, Betty and The Reverend Derek Hawksbee came to North Carolina in 1979 to open up the U.S. SAMS headquarters to train missionaries headed for areas in South America. We had little money to run the operation and every morning we would pray that envelopes with money would come in the mail to buy food and other necessities. Truly, we depended on the Lord and He was always faithful. Many of those missionaries are still serving Christ in Latin America.

Think of what Jesus went through; how He put up with so much hatred from sinners! “Do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up” (Hebrews 12:3).

My Prayer: Lord God my Savior, thank You for forgiving my spirit of self-pity, for You alone provide my escape from despair when I seek Your healing embrace. Entrenched in

Your promises, my sadness and troubles flee and the Power of Your Holy Spirit fills my heart and mind to overflowing with great expectations. In Christ's name. Amen.

Day Seventeen: Is My Pathway Safe?

The Lord alone is God; God alone is our defense. He is the God who makes me strong, who makes my pathway safe. (Psalm 18:31-32)

When I, a city girl, married, I moved and raised my children on a small Virginia farm. It was a great life with many challenges. My first born son was a wanderer, an escape artist, and unafraid, would take off with his dog, Belinda. One minute he was here and the next he was gone across the fields to his grandparents or into the woods exploring. When found he would say, "I am not lost. I am finding where I am." I said, "But you must tell me when you go out to play," "Stay on the pathway and you will avoid danger." Did he listen? Not always, and sometimes he suffered the consequences.

My Prayer: Creator Father God, thank You for coming to my rescue. Your love for me is strong, Your defense wards off evil and my life's pathway is designed by Your will for my good and Your glory. Amen.

Day Eighteen: Show Me the Path

You will show me the path that leads to life; Your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever. (Psalm 16:11)

How busy are you? Are you overwhelmed with tasks and commitments and tired trying to make it all come out right? At times, I even have to plan carefully to include daily prayer. What a shame our lives are so full. Sometimes I am so busy with my current lifestyle that it takes God's intervention to stop me in my tracks and say to me, are you on the right path, is running yourself ragged helping you achieve what brings honor to Me, or only to yourself?

Thank you Lord, show me the path that fills me with joy and fulfillment. "Trust in the Lord, with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and He will show you the right way" (Proverbs 3: 5-6).

My Prayer: Creator Father, thank You for giving me life and allowing me to find a way through any challenge, through any harassing persecution, through any overwhelming human condition, finding the life You would have me live. For the joys and pleasures that You alone would bring, Father, thank You. In Christ's name. Amen.

Day Nineteen: So Answer Me!

I pray to You, O God, because You answer me; so turn to me and listen to my words. Reveal Your wonderful love and save me; at Your side I am safe from my enemies.

Protect me as You would Your very eyes; hide me in the shadow of Your wings.
(Psalm 17:6-7)

We have access to the Father through scripture that we believe to be His inspired word and our basic instructions for life. In our daily prayer time and meditation He listens to us and will reveal Himself in many surprising ways. Yes, our loving Father listens to His children. He watches over us and guards us awake and asleep for He has the watch of the night. We will be perfectly safe, recharging every part of our earthly body in preparation for the coming day. “You, Lord, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

My Prayer: Creator Father God, thank You for allowing me to talk directly to You through Jesus Christ my Savior and Redeemer. My request is that You will grant me an understanding of Your will for my life and grant wisdom of choice for the well being of all that I touch, all that I say, and all that I do. May Yours be the glory, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Twenty: Assurance Revealed in Relationship

Keep me as the apple of the eye, and hide me in the shadow of Your wings. From the wicked who despoils and who surround me. (Psalm 17:8-9)

Think of it, I can talk directly to the Creator God of all that exists or will ever be as a son or daughter, knowing my voice is heard, all because of God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He keeps me safe and protects me from the wicked. “We have courage in God’s presence, because we are sure that He hears us if we ask Him for anything that is according to his will” (I John 5:14).

An example of God’s care and his provision: Last week I told God that I would really like a nice dog to replace the two who recently died, leaving Lucy, my old white-muzzled black Lab lonely and depressed. Two days later a former B & B guest called to ask if I would like a dog. Her situation had changed and she needed to find a home for Jack her two year-old Lab. Jack is a perfect companion for Lucy and me. He is well mannered, has a lovely disposition, does not bark, and is friendly but not obnoxious. What a gift.

My Prayer: Abba Father, thank You for hearing my prayer and providing for my every need. Thank You for protecting me and loving me as the apple of Your eye. I give You praise and glory, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Twenty One: How Can I Be Safe?

How I love you, Lord! You are my defender. The Lord is my protector; He is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with Him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; He defends me and keeps me safe. (Psalm 18:1-2)

I am convinced that if I am to be defended, I must also defend, protect, and become a shield to those in need, not as a vapor soon gone, but by prayer and support according to my ability. Then assurance is mine that I am safe in His Arms now and forever.

I am blessed to have children; fortunate that they live close by and I see them regularly. They love me and they know that I loved them even before they were born. I love them by my nurturing, my patience, my discipline, and yes, because they are a part of me. Truly God has favored me, but what about “at risk children”? Are they not ours as well? “And this is His command to believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ and to love one another as he commands us” (I John 3:23). “This is how we know that we are to love God’s children: it is by loving God and obeying His commands” (I John 5:2).

Scripture describes that God not only holds children dear to His heart, He used them as his messengers. He called Samuel by name as a small boy, instead of Eli his guardian, to give warnings to the people. The list of children used by God is impressive. There was Moses and his teenage sister Miriam, whom God saved and placed in Pharaoh’s household to grow up and deliver His people from bondage. David was chosen as a boy to be the first earthly King of God’s people. John the Baptist in his mother’s womb recognized baby Jesus in Mary’s womb. The boy with two fishes and five loaves of bread reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus. The feeding of the five thousand is a metaphor for the bread and wine of communion and everlasting life through Christ Jesus. And there is His mother, Mary, who as a teenager was visited by an angel who announced the impending birth of Our Lord.

Jesus admonished the disciples, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mathew 19:14).

My Prayer: Lord, I was in the wilderness of life seeking my own way, and I heard Your voice. I answered and You took me, Your precious child, in. Guide my steps that I may be used by You as Your children of old. Your Grace and Mercy is beyond my comprehension, how great You are beyond all that exists, Lord God, Father of my Soul. Thank You, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Twenty Two: My Thoughts Can be Heard

May my words and my thoughts be acceptable to You, O Lord, my Refuge and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

We long for acceptance and relationship, but do we want to reveal our innermost thoughts? Praise God that no matter what overshadows our lives: difficulties, stress, sadness, illness, failures, or any other painful experience, our Creator Father God knows us. He loves us and has not allowed these human circumstances to set us back if we are willing to trust Him to prepare us for the successes that lie ahead.

We have a purpose in this life because we belong to Him through Jesus Christ. All things are working for our good. God’s purpose is the development of our souls. We are urged to

give up the secrets we cannot hide, to be cleansed of self deceit. My mother, who seemed to know all, when we asked, "But how did you know?" would answer, "It's my third eye." "Where, let me see," I pleaded. "That's my secret," she said. "Does God know?" Her smile was the answer.

Our earthly journey is very short, our second journey is forever. Does that fact not help put our conduct and values in perspective, in what we say, do, and think? When we put our trust in Him, our hope in Him, and our lives in His hands, all things we desire are possible and the storms of life are shortened for our good and His Glory.

My Prayer: Lord God, may my words and thoughts be acceptable each and every day of my earthly journey. For me alone this is impossible, but through the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, I can do all things. Thank You, Father God, in Christ's name. Amen.

Day Twenty Three: Standing Firm

Some trust in their war chariots and others in their horses, but we trust in the power of the Lord our God. Such people will stumble and fall, but we will rise and stand firm. (Psalm 20:7-8)

Every morning when I awake is a very special day, a day where my Creator Father God is watching my conduct toward others as if it were my last day on this planet before facing the next life. Eye to eye, standing before my Creator as His Child, I begin each day with a clean slate.

Why do I complain about anything? How do I seek a positive attitude when trying to work through a problem? Is it my trust in His promises that cause me to walk with confidence, standing firm in what I know to be true?

To make myself feel better, I must not give over to judging others and their actions. I am not God, I don't know all the facts, and besides, this is very dangerous. For when I judge half knowing, God will judge me for this foolish unknowing act. Rocked with this truth, I must resist this folly as a waste of time and seek God's approval by endeavoring to be obedient to His command to love one another.

My Prayer: God Almighty, thank You for strengthening my resolve to conduct my life in the power of Your Holy Spirit, allowing me to stand for what is good, for what is just, for whatever pleases You, all through the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son and my Comforter. In His name. Amen.

Day Twenty Four: Always Awake

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from? My help will come from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not let you fall; your Protector is always awake. (Psalm 121: 1-3)

What was said could not be accomplished, was accomplished. When we take the “I Alone” thinking out of the equation and add the “We” factor, unmovable mountains are moved by the grace, mercy, and almighty power of our living God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a formula for each day when facing life’s issues or the impossible:

1. The “I” in me becomes a “We” factor.
2. The “We” factor is linked to God, through the acceptance into my life of His Son, Jesus, the Christ.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ, then, is my advocate, and the “I” in me has become linked to the All Powerful.
4. My faith in this connection is the key link that keeps me powered to accomplish the impossible.
5. My faith grows by knowing that in the “We” factor His embrace is assured; by knowing His promises are true.
6. He sends others into my life to strengthen the “We” factor, and the “I” in me retreats.
7. Me + Jesus Christ + God + The Holy Spirit + Others Sent = The All Powerful “We” component,

All this is possible when we believe; mountains move to make way for my successes and I am filled with His peace through any and all of life’s storms.

My Prayer: Heavenly Father God, thank You for granting me the strength to place my pride and arrogance under the Blood of Christ, allowing me to see the wisdom and strength in being interdependent with a humble spirit. Only then can I see clearly my true course embraced always with Your safety net about me, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Twenty Five: Leaving Troubles Behind

Leave your troubles with the Lord, and He will defend you; He never lets honest people be defeated. (Psalm 55: 22)

Failure doesn’t mean you have been abandoned. It could mean that God has a better idea and is waiting to be consulted. Often He has an original idea and is waiting for you to take on a special project. Maybe not a Bill Gates size idea, but something that could help transform a life, even your own. Perhaps someone needs your encouragement to brighten their day and what you were trying to make work is just what that person needed. Pray about it, and you might be surprised just what that very thing to help someone else is.

During a particular down time in my life, God used the circumstance where I was to redirect me to where I should be and where I found purpose and happiness. God did not give up on me. I am alive and well and the desire remains to help others along my

pathway. This is not an effort but something I do in assurance of God's favor for an unselfish act.

It is clear in God's word about the importance of giving of ourselves to help others. "Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you" (Luke 6:38). God our Father Almighty does not give up in helping us to be successful and full of peace and joy. Our success is never certain, and our failures are never final, so let us seek God's will for us as we embrace others along our pathway.

My Prayer: Dear Father God, thank You for granting me the wisdom to leave my troubles behind and be about what matters most for the day. Your Holy Spirit gives me the assurance that all things will work for my good and Your Glory. O Father God, Your love is beyond measure, for in Christ I am eternal. In His name, Amen.

Day Twenty Six: Ready to Learn

I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you. (Psalm 32:8)

In my many years of seeking to help others God has sent the perfect person at the right time to do or say just the right thing necessary to clear the way to move forward. There have been many messengers, angels of sorts, people that were ready to go the extra mile, present a confidence, and walk beside me seeking solutions. Perhaps most of all, people ready and willing without complaint to do whatever it took to reach the objective. All this in step with Jesus, in step with His instructions as found in Scripture, our basic instructions for living.

Great people have great dreams, a clear vision of their objectives, and a confidence that with God's help we will succeed, no matter the circumstances. For our Creator God has said, "I am the Lord your God; I strengthen you and tell you, 'Do not be afraid; I will help you'" (Isaiah 41).

But what about the poor that we do not see or respond to? Poverty is the scourge of the world that affects children dying at a rate of about 27,000 each day, according to World Vision. What can we do? First, we are called to pray to the One Who knows all. There are organizations prepared and committed to help: Save the Children, The Salvation Army, Food for the Poor, and World Vision are but a few among many organizations dedicated to alleviating these kinds of suffering. There are many large and small foundations, churches, and individuals who do see and are responding to the needs of the poor in the world. Help us, Lord, to seek Your solutions to try to cure the ills that oppress and destroy Your creation.

My Prayer: Lord God, thank You for the years You have granted me, all in the Power of Your Holy Spirit. May Your strength and assurances fill me with the determination to understand Your will for my life, for this life is only a vapor, but my next life beyond this world is assured because of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank You for this saving knowledge. In Christ's name. Amen.

Day Twenty Seven: Always Prosper?

Those who have reverence for the Lord will learn from Him the path they should follow. They will always be prosperous, and their children will possess the land. (Psalm 25:12-13)

Let us decide to give up accepting failures as final and see each setback as an opportunity to rethink or to see a disappointment in a new way. With each new day comes a new way out of the old ways that may have brought us down. Our respect for God Almighty and His Son fills us with a pure direction for our life on this planet and beyond.

When we set goals we have a powerful support team in heaven that is always willing and ready to assist us with all we say, do, and think: God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Now that is the team to be on and associated with, for this ensures us success and prosperity in the here and now, and in the everlasting.

We are never alone, unless we choose to be! I only lack good instructions when I fail to rightly discern and take to heart His Word of instructions, all for my own good.

My Prayer: Creator Father God, my actions speak of my reverence for You. But I alone cannot say these words, it is the Power of Your Holy Spirit within me that gives me cause, for I was only dust, and through the Lord Jesus Christ You have made me Your Child forever. Thank You, Father God, for Your unending love for me and all they that would know You as Lord and Savior. In Christ's name. Amen.

Day Twenty Eight: The Guideline

Your constant love is my guide; Your faithfulness always leads me. (Psalm 26:3)

If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths You are there. (Psalm 139:8)

All of us seek fulfillment in our lives, for our family, friends, and many others that we care about. My true fulfillment did not come from the many achievements and honors that graced my life. My true fulfillment came from an everlasting hope, fueled by my faith, that this life is only the beginning of greater plans that my Creator Father has for me and those whose life I have touched.

We are told early in life that we can succeed if we work at it. It is supposed to be a truism that success breeds success. Remember the story of the Little Engine that Could? But often there are great disappointments, tragedies even, caused by many factors out of our control. It happens all the time that the best laid plans go awry. We can adopt a “Can Do” spirit, and achieve much beyond our expectations with God’s help.

Experience teaches that when we reach out to Him with outstretched hands, all goes well and in the right direction and objectives are reached that at times appeared impossible. However, all can collapse if, in our over confidence or self interest, we forget the purpose for which we are trying to succeed. Self confidence can be fueled daily by knowing that our Creator Father God is always ready to remind us, “I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me” (Philippians 4:13).

My Prayer: Dear Father God, in Your strength I exist, in Your strength I accomplish, in Your strength the challenges of the day are addressed with overwhelming success. Thank You Father Almighty. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Twenty Nine: The Protection Plan

The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The Lord protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid. (Psalm 27:1)

This is an old story but worthy of retelling. A flood came and the water had risen up to the second floor home of a man we shall call “John.” Well, John was now on the roof praying to God to help rescue him as the water continued to rise. A boat that could hold several more people came by and asked John if he wanted to get into the boat. “No,” said John, “I think I’m all right for now!”

The water kept rising; John kept praying to God for help. Just then a helicopter came by, and the pilot asked, “Want us to pull you up to safety?” John looked around and saw there was still some roof left to sit on, so he replied, “I think I’ll be ok for now!” As the helicopter went out of sight, the water covered the roof. John lost his life and found himself in Heaven, asking God why He did not answer his prayers. God replied, “John, I did, I sent you a boat and a helicopter.”

We must pay attention to events in our lives and make every effort to see Jesus Christ reaching out to us as He attempts to help us during this earthly journey. He not only speaks to us through His word, the Bible, but through life’s circumstances that are designed for our good and His glory.

My Prayer: Jesus Christ, help me to see each opportunity as a gift from You for my growth, and not as a calamity. Give me strength and discernment in all of life’s circumstances. For in Your wisdom and grace, I am at peace. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Thirty: Faithful

As high as the sky is above the earth, so great is His love for those who honor Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our sins from us. As a father is kind to His children, so the Lord is kind to those who honor Him. He knows what we are made of; He remembers that we are dust. As for us, our life is like grass. We grow and flourish like a wild flower. Then the wind blows on it, and it is gone—no one sees it again. But for those who honor the Lord, His love lasts forever, and His goodness endures for all generations of those who are true to His covenant and who faithfully obey His commands. (Psalm 103:11-18)

Prayer and planning is a must. Self-discipline is the bridge we walk between goals and accomplishments. This is a good guideline: “We may make our plans, but God has the last word” (Proverbs 16:1).

When our Creator has the last word we can be assured that the results will be for our good and His glory. If this is true, why do we go through such hard times? Well, perhaps one reason may be the fact that we chose to go our own way and failed to ask Him to bless the outcome. He steps back and waits, controlling circumstances to point us in the right direction for our good.

My Prayer: God Almighty, You are my All in All, I am only complete when in Your promises, when in Your protection and in Your will for my life, both now and throughout all of eternity, thank You for loving me, Father. Thank You, in Christ’s name. Amen.

Day Thirty One: Everything I Need

The LORD is my shepherd.
I have everything I need
He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths, as He has promised.
Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid,
Lord, for You are with me
Your shepherd’s rod and staff protect me.
You prepare a banquet for me, where all my enemies can see me;
You welcome me as an honored guest and fill my cup to the brim.
I know that Your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
And Your house will be my home as long as I live.
Psalm 23

What matters most, what I need for this life’s journey, is the Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior and King.

My Prayer: Creator Father God, this redeemed daughter thanks You beyond human words, for creating me, saving me from myself, and, welcoming me in that day, with the family robe, and Your eternal embrace. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I offer this my prayer. Amen.

Today I'm Standing For Jesus

© March 2008 by June G. Paul

Today

*I'm standing up for the Jesus in me
and the Jesus in others
The Jesus who has been mocked
And scorned, ridiculed and rejected*

Today

*I'm standing up for myself and others
Who have been judged according
To the standards of the world
Instead of the standards of
The Spirit of God in Christ.*

Today

*I'm confessing my love
For the Jesus in me and others*

Today

*I'm giving myself and others
A blessing of peace.*

Today

*I'm choosing to know
And choosing to believe
That God is God
And no human being
Here or in all the earth
Can compare to or
Compete with Him.*

Today

*You are invited to stand up
For Jesus with me.*



Chapter Eight

The Community of the Eucharist

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My Body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you."

Luke 22: 19-20



**Dear God,
We who share Eucharist are united in spirit
in the living community of
believers in heaven and on earth
for eternity by Your grace. Amen.**

The Community of the Eucharist

There are actually two elements within this spiritual reflection: the Community (us) and the Eucharist (Christ). Can there be a community without Eucharist? Yes, there can be a gathering of people, a gathering of your chapter members and even guests, without the Eucharist. But can there be Eucharist without a community? Christ without community? Absolutely not! Christ is never alone, eternally united with God our Father and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The National Study Guide suggests that a chapter ask their priest to celebrate Eucharist at their chapter meetings. Our mutual service in the world and in the church is our service to Christ, through Christ. Celebrating the Eucharist as a chapter reminds us of God's desire for unity in all circumstances.

During the celebration of the Eucharist the priest says, "Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this Holy Sacrament, and serve You in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all Your saints into the joy of Your eternal kingdom" (BCP 363). To 'sanctify' means to be set aside for a holy purpose. The community of Eucharist helps each of us to discern our individual and common holy purposes.

What we call The Eucharist is recorded as having been instituted by Jesus at The Festival of Unleavened Bread, also known as The Passover Meal or the Last Supper. Greater insight into the mystery of the Eucharist comes from understanding the Jewish Passover, which commemorates the Israelite liberation from Egypt.

Another insight comes from the understanding of the paschal lamb. During the Passover ceremony, a spotless lamb is sacrificed to God as an offering on behalf of the Jewish people. The lamb is then eaten at the Passover meal, as it was just before the Israelites fled from Egypt. At the Last Supper, Jesus became the final fulfillment of the Old Covenant, becoming Himself the Paschal Lamb. He offers Himself to the Father to "take away the sins of the world". We will be blessed by reflecting on the Last Supper and the events that preceded Jesus' last Passover meal with his disciples.

Thoughts to Consider

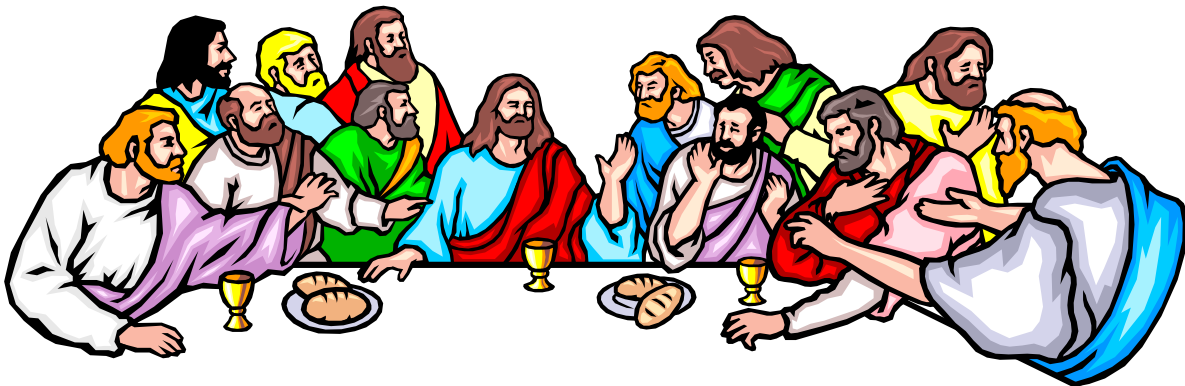
Rewind if you will, to a time long ago where there were no tractors, no bread mixers, no vehicles, no automatic wine presses, no gas, electric, or microwave ovens. There was only feet and legs, plows and horses, donkeys, and strong arms and hands to till the soil, plant the seed, harvest the wheat, thresh the grain, prune the vines, pluck the fruit, dance on the grapes, carry the water, collect the honey, knead the dough and place it in the brick oven, strain the juice from the peels, and carefully tend the fermenting liquid. Rewind to a time where people remembered and celebrated the salvation of children and families because the hand of the Lord passed over their homes and only the first born of the Egyptians was slain. A time when people remembered God fulfilling his promise never to leave them or

forsake them by giving them prophets and priests to lead and guide them. A time when people remembered that they had strayed from obeying God, and yet celebrated their redemption. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began with the entire community hustling about to make preparations.

The original Last Supper was such a memorial and yet, for Jesus, it was more than that because it was His last. He had much love to share with His disciples. He desired to encourage them to maintain their faith in God and their unity with Him and each other after His suffering and death. Christ, still known to them as Jesus, was well aware of their natural bent toward division and quibbling amongst themselves.

Could it be that we are not so different from those disciples within our own churches and chapters and in our relationships with our parish priest and chaplains on local, provincial, and national levels? Quibbling about the work to be done and who does it best? When and how the communion table should be set? Who is responsible for cleaning the altar linens and whether or not they are ironed? Or maybe we quibble about who is bringing whom to church and the Eucharist in our evangelistic efforts? However, the Scriptures do tell us this: “Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me” (Matt 25:40). When we quibble amongst ourselves or with our parish priest and chaplains, we are quibbling with Christ.

So there they were, and here we are, going about our daily work and eager to celebrate the Eucharist, without really understanding that for any of us, it could be our last supper together. We may not be headed to trial and crucifixion, but our life on earth is fragile. Each of us goes through trials or troubles during our life, each of us is in the process of maturing as a disciple, and the number of our days together is known only to God.



b. Who is Jesus calling you to serve?

6. **Unity (verses 28 – 30)**

a. There cannot be community without unity. Unity is standing with each other, just as the disciples stood with Jesus. We cannot be in union with Christ without being in union with each other. The Eucharist is where we are all equal in the sight of God, where we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness and receive the forgiveness of our sins. We remember Jesus, His service in the world, and how He poured out His life for us. Now He asks us to do the same for each other. The Eucharist draws us together and brings us back into righteous relationship with God and each other. How would your chapter or church meetings be different if you approached them with this thought in mind?

b. Do you approach the celebration of the Eucharist with a feeling and commitment to unity and in love for ALL others?



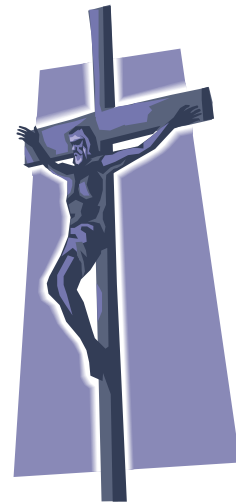
📖 FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

Suggestion: Close your meeting with celebrating the Eucharist using the following:

| Readings | Hymns |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Old Testament: Exodus 40:32-43 | The Servant Song |
| Psalm 133 | One Bread, One Body, One Lord of All |
| New Testament: I Corinthians 12:12-27 | Isn't He Wonderful? |
| Gospel: John 6:27b – 39 | Lift High the Cross |
| | Take Us To The River |

True Love

*Come close, listen to the story
About a love more faithful than the morning
The Father gave His only Son just to save us
The earth was shaking in the dark
All creation felt the Father's broken heart
Tears were filling heaven's eyes
The day that true love died,
When blood and water hit the ground
Walls we couldn't move came crashing down
We were free and made alive
The day that true love died,
Search your hearts
You know you can't deny it
Lose your life just so you can find it
The Father gave His only son just to save us
Jesus is alive*



(Phil Wickham, *True Love*, from the album *Cannons*)
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Chapter Nine

Growth Through Service

*The King will reply, "I tell you the truth,
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers
of Mine, you did for Me."*

Matthew 25:40



**Dear God,
What have I neglected to do?
Where have I not gone?
Why have I not given?
How shall I grow if I do not serve?
Amen.**

Growth Through Service

Called to Serve

Carrying the light of Christ into the world is God's call for each of us. One of the primary ways we respond to this call is through service. Service can be as simple as a pat on the shoulder and a few encouraging words or as complex as raising millions of dollars for a relief project. The monetary value of our service is not important. What is important is that each of us responds to God's call in our life by offering ourselves up to His service. Jesus said that He came to serve – not to be served. Since our goal as Christians and as Daughters is to grow daily more and more into the likeness of Christ, we also are called to serve rather than be served. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.

Part of our vow is to live by a Rule of Service that stresses the need to bring others into the wonder of God's kingdom, to take a regular part in the worship, study, and work of the church, and to render aid to the rector as deemed necessary for the spiritual upbuilding of the parish. Willingness to serve is an essential part of who we are. The question then arises: "Whom do we serve?" Is it the homeless person at the shelter, the elderly at the retirement home, abused children, single parents, or the starving poor? No matter what faces we see as we go about serving others, the answer to the question of whom it is that we serve, is God. Remember Jesus' words: "Whenever you did it for the least of one of these, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40). We serve God in many ways: worship, praise, prayer, adoration, and awe. All pull us into God's service and we find ourselves reaching out to others in God's name.

Why do we serve God? We serve in response to God's great love! God loved us, created the world for us, sent His only son to save us, and offered us the gift of eternal life. God loves us. We respond by loving God in return, keeping His commandments and serving Him. In John 15:15-17, Jesus calls us friends, and tells us that He has chosen us, and wants us to go and bear fruit. Fruit that will last. He finishes by saying: "Love one another."

Wherever you are, serve God there. Let's take a quick look at the motto of our Order, which calls us to serve.

For His Sake... I am but one, but I am one.

I cannot do everything, but I can do something.

What I can do, I ought to do.

What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.

Lord, what will you have me do?

National Handbook, p. 2

Equipped to Serve

The New Testament tells us that God gives us gifts so we are equipped in this life to help the world be transformed. The lists of the gifts in Romans 12:6-8 and I Corinthians 12: 1-30 make it clear that there are a variety of gifts and that they are given for the common good. In I Peter 4:10, the author emphasizes that good stewards of God's gifts use them in the service of others. When we discover that God can use the gifts He has given us to equip us to make a difference in someone else's life, a difference is made in our lives as well. Service that may start out as a duty becomes transformed into a blessing.

We each have our own set of spiritual gifts, talents, unique personality, and experiences that have equipped us to serve in the places where we now are. God has directed and will continue to direct the paths of our journeys. He has nourished us by drawing us into a closer walk with Him. As we walk with the Lord we often find ourselves called to serve in areas that fit our unique gifts and talents. Understanding that it is by the grace of God that I can do something, and asking, "What would You have me do?" opens up the door of empowerment that leads into service. We discover the desire of God for our lives when we use our spiritual gifts to meet the needs of others. Look around. Where you see a need ask yourself: "Am I the one God has gifted to be of service here?"

Ways to Serve

Close communication between the leadership of the chapter and the clergy is very important as we seek to serve, since each chapter is asked to support the rector in whatever ways the rector deems appropriate. Daughters of the King often serve others in our congregations by maintaining a prayer list and offering daily prayers for those on the list. Altar Guild service, providing for funeral receptions, making baptismal banners, or visiting the sick and shut-in may be ways your chapter serves your congregation. Be aglow with the Spirit, says the Word. When a group of women, filled with the love and power of the Holy Spirit, come together to meet a need in the congregation, others cannot help but be touched with the love and grace of God. Their lives are changed. Our lives are changed.

Individually, there are at least two kinds of service for each of us, planned and unplanned. A favorite banner of mine has one single flower and the words: "Bloom Where You Are Planted." Bloom where you are planted as a typist, an encourager of others, an intercessor in prayer, a roof repairer, painter, gardener, or giver. Serving in whatever ways God has gifted you is important. Planned actions bring others into contact with God's love in human form. No matter what the vehicle of our service is, it can be the basis for evangelism.

As you study God's call on your life and you look for those areas that bring joy and enthusiasm to your service, don't overlook the areas about which you complain. Do you find yourself dissatisfied with the form of worship in your church? Perhaps you are being called to serve on the worship board. Is the stewardship campaign a bone of contention for you? Could God be calling you to service there? If you have complaints about an education

program or outreach ministry, God may be prodding you to ministry in those areas. Be open to God's call for a change in how and where you serve.

Just as planned action allows others to see our good works and give the glory to our Father in heaven, unplanned actions can also bring others into the sacred place of God's presence. Interruptions are frequently opportunities for service. Have you ever noticed how often Jesus was interrupted? There He is, going about His daily life when someone touches the hem of His garment, or a centurion asks for prayer, or a man on a cot is dropped through the roof! People interrupted Jesus. People interrupt you and me as well and we need to be ready to respond to them in service, maintaining a Christ like spirit in all that we do.

I Corinthians 15:58 calls us to be steadfast, to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Intentional study, to decide on what the planned actions of your life should include, is necessary. Trust in God and He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-7). Trust! In planned or unplanned actions, God will provide what we need whether it be a computer or patience. When we set out to be fruitful in every good work, not working grudgingly but with an attitude of gratitude, God is there with us.

The phrase: "What would Jesus do?" has become a part of our world. Perhaps we need to ask as well: "How would Jesus do it?" Our gifts, talents, personalities, and experiences may determine what God is calling us to do, but our attitude determines how much of a Christ like spirit we have developed. The old nature is self-centered, but the old has gone. The new has come. Certainly we are not always successful in keeping the "old" gone. We fail. The secret is to keep trying. Our selfishness must die so that we can become one who always loves. This is not easy, not quick, but it is also not impossible. Love is a choice. Service is a choice. We can choose to love and to serve. When we count on the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain us, we can be successful in loving even those who at first seem unlovely.

Whatever path you are on, God has given you a great commission. Don't step out in fear. God has not given you a spirit of fear. Step out in anticipation and excitement. God has chosen you! Even if you feel inadequate, God is not. He takes you by the hand and leads you on the path He has prepared for you. When faced with a situation that seems impossible, remember that with God all things are possible. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Jesus chose twelve rather ordinary people to begin the transformation of the world. He looks at us, rather ordinary people, and sees the potential gifts for continuing the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God.

As Daughters we pledged ourselves to a life-long program of prayer, service, and evangelism, the spread of Christ's kingdom in the world. Serving God is an exciting, incredible journey. It is a journey in word and deed. The light of Christ has come into the world and it is reflected to the world through you and me. Let your light shine!

Chapter Nine Questions

1. There are many verses in the Bible on service. What verses about service can you quote without even looking them up?
2. Theodore Roosevelt said, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Look around at your sisters. What are some of their gifts that you see them using to serve God?
3. What is your chapter doing to render aid to the rector for the spiritual upbuilding of your parish? What other areas of service might you suggest?
4. How can you help your chapter become the center of service that it is called to be?
5. Much of the discussion about service centers on loving God and loving others. What is one of your favorite verses about love? How does that verse affect your life and your service?

6. If evangelism is one of the main ways we serve God, how can we open ourselves up to being an “every day in every way” evangelist?

7. Jesus said that He came so that we might have life more abundantly. How are you enabled to experience abundant life through service?



The Difference

*I got up early one morning
and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish,
I didn't have time to pray.*

*Problems just tumbled about me,
and heavier came each task.
Why doesn't God help me? I wondered,
He answered, "You didn't ask."*

*I wanted to see joy and beauty,
but the day toiled on, gray and bleak.
I wondered why God didn't show me,
He said, "But you didn't seek."*

*I tried to come into God's presence,
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."*

*I woke up early this morning,
and paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.*



Grace L. Naessens

FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

1. How have you surrendered the activities of your life to God to be transformed into areas of ministry?
2. Is God calling you to change your present service? Is what you are doing now right for you? Does it truly reflect who you are or is it a leftover from another time in your life?
3. Have you arrived at your service by accident or is it something someone else told you that you should do? Have you asked God about it?
4. Is there a gift that you feel God has given you that is not being used or is underdeveloped? How can you change that?
5. What might you need to do to open yourself up to a deeper knowledge of God, a deeper appreciation of God's love and a greater reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit as you live out your life of service to God?

6. The following are scriptures that help our understanding of service to God. Select three verses to read and meditate on how God is calling you to serve:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| I Corinthians 2:5-6, 12:31-14 | I Corinthians 12 |
| I Corinthians 13 | I Corinthians 15:58 |
| Romans 12 | Ephesians 2: 8-10 |
| Ephesians 4:2 | Ephesians 6:7 |
| James 1:22 | Titus 3:1 |
| Titus 3:12 | I Timothy 1:7 |
| II Timothy 1:6 | Hebrews 6:10 |
| Hebrews 10:24 | Matthew 25:35-40 |
| Matthew 5:14-16 | Luke 10:3-11 |
| John 15:15-17 | I Thessalonians 1:3 |
| Colossians 1: 9-10 | Proverbs 3:5-7 |
| I Peter 4:10 | II Peter 1:5-7 |
| Matthew 28:36-40 | Hebrews 13:20-21 |



Note: The following Guidelines for Visitation come from the *National Chapter Manual*, page 84 and have been added here to remind us that we are called to visit the sick, shut ins, and those in prison. As Jesus said in Matthew 25:34-36: “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, You who are blessed by my Father; take Your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for You since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and You gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and You gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and You invited Me in, I needed clothes and You clothed Me, I was sick and You looked after Me, I was in prison and You came to visit Me.’”

Guidelines for Visitation

Visitation is a ministry that your chapter may choose to do. Literally weeks could be spent delving into various techniques used in calling on the sick and shut-ins, lapsed members, newcomers, and visits made for a specific task or an evangelistic opportunity. You are encouraged to consult your clergy for guidance, to draw on their experience, and to use them as a valuable resource in this important ministry. There are no pat answers or routines. Instead of going into specifics, a list of general guidelines is listed below.

1. Pray. Ask God for guidance, strength, and discernment during the visit.
2. Go as a team. Two Daughters may go together or a Daughter may accompany a member of the clergy. A team makes conversation easier and offers security.
3. Before you make the visit, determine the purpose for the visit and something about the person, their family, activities, etc., so that you will be prepared.
4. When you arrive, cheerfully identify yourselves: “We are from _____ Church and Father _____ asked if we would drop by and say, “Hello.”
 - Do talk about activities, anything you have been doing, what the world is doing, the weather, the elections, parish activities, etc.
 - Do enter into a relationship. If you wish, you may offer a copy of the parish bulletin, the parish directory, a pamphlet, article, or book that you have read. Say, “Here is something I enjoyed.” You might be prepared with a devotional or scripture reading if they seem receptive.
 - Do stay about 15 minutes. Short visits, frequently made, are best. When it is time to go, simply stand up and say, “I enjoyed being with you,” or, “We will visit again soon,” or, “May we pray together before we leave?” Then LEAVE.
 - Do not say, “How are you?” or discuss their physical or mental problems.
 - Do not mention your own illnesses or those of your friends or family.
 - Do not sit on the bed, if they are bedridden. It may make them uncomfortable.
 - Do not make judgments. We are about God’s work, not our own, and we do not know all the circumstances.
5. Maintain a record of all visits to avoid duplication. Records should list the date of the visit, the names of the visiting team, to whom the visit was made, and any special notations needed for future reference.
6. Pray. Thank God for the opportunity to serve In His Name and For His Sake.

The Value of a Member



Ten little Daughters standing in a line,

One disliked the president, and then there were nine.

Nine ambitious Daughters prayed very late,

One forgot her promises, and then there were eight.

Eight creative Daughters had ideas straight from Heaven.

One lost enthusiasm, and then there were seven.

Seven loyal Daughters got into a fix.

They quarreled over programs, and then there were six.

Six Daughters remained, all with a spirit and drive.

One moved away, and then there were five.

Five steadfast Daughters wished there were more.

One became indifferent, and then there were four.

Four cheerful Daughters had never disagreed,

'til one complained of meetings, and then there were three.

Three eager Daughters, but what could they do?

One got discouraged, and then there were two.

Two hard-working Daughters, our rhyme's nearly done.

One joined a health club, and then there was one.

One faithful Daughter was feeling rather blue.

So she found another candidate, and then there were two.

Two earnest Daughters each one enrolled one more

Doubling their number, and then there were four.

Four determined Daughters, just couldn't wait

'til each won another, and then there were eight.

Eight excited Daughters brought in eight more.

In another six verses, there'll be a thousand-four!

Anonymous



Chapter Ten

Holy Listening

*My dear brothers, take note of this:
Everyone should be quick to listen,
slow to speak and slow to become angry*
James 1:19



**Dear God,
Quiet my thoughts, still my movements,
that I might hear in my
heart the words spoken from You.
Amen.**

Holy Listening

Throughout history, recorded in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, God has spoken to us, and we have sought to hear God's word. Some are not pleased with what they hear, and some choose not to follow the instructions. The Bible indicates that some have heard from God directly, and others have been given God's message from strangers, through nature, or from heavenly beings.

What stories or verses in Scripture do you remember that involve holy listening? There are many stories: from Adam and Eve (who listened not only to God but to the serpent), Moses, Samuel, Jacob, Abraham and Sarah, all the prophets, to Elizabeth, Mary the Mother of our Lord, Mary, Martha's sister, the Apostles, and Mary Magdalene. Discuss these stories and others, and see if you can find some common characteristics.

Have you thought or known God to speak to you directly? Through a stranger? Through nature? From heavenly beings? In the written word? In a dream? There is biblical precedence for all these ways of hearing God. Share your experience with your chapter members as you feel comfortable doing so.

Proverbs is filled with wisdom about holy listening and understanding. Read Proverbs 1:33, 12:15, and 15:31-32. In the gospels of Matthew (11:15), Mark (4:9), and Luke (8:8) we are told God asks us "to listen to Him!" In John 10:27, written much later and in metaphorical form, we are told Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Holy listening is a vital part of our prayer life. This time of listening, expectant and patient, simply resting in God's love and drawing in the fullness of our own being, often yields the most clear and direct guidance. Use the following form of prayer with your chapter to open your soul to God's still, small voice. Allow twenty minutes to a half an hour, in order to experience at least 10-15 minutes of quiet, holy listening. Work to extend the listening time in your private prayer life. Try this exercise now as part of this study.

1. Find a place of peace (outdoors, a quiet room, an empty church or chapel).
2. Sit comfortably, in a chair or on the floor (or kneel or lay prostrate).
3. Use a candle, a cross, the Bible, a rosary, an icon, a rock or leaf, or some other helpful visual and/or tactile focus (optional).
4. Consciously relax from head to toe.
5. Pray what you need to pray for aloud or in silence.
6. Then quiet your mind of your words, hurt, and needs.

Holy listening involves more than silence. It requires a presence, an attentive focus on God and God's presence in and around you, in friends, strangers, old and young, and in nature. It uses more than just the sense of hearing. Holy listening includes the senses of taste, touch, sight, and smell as well as sound. Perhaps with this understanding, you can find

times when God was speaking to you? Or when you were used by God to speak to another?

We are all called to listen to one another in holiness. Are you able to really listen to those around you? Can you train yourself to listen to what is being said without thinking of your response or interrupting to make what you hear palatable? A few hints in doing this are:

- Ask clarifying questions, especially if you are not absolutely positive what is being said.
- Listen not only for what is being said but to what is behind it, driving the conversation.

Holy listening is not an inborn gift, it takes practice. It is not so much the listening techniques that matter. What is important is the communication from the listener to the one speaking and that what is being said has value. All too often, we jump in without real consideration. If you find yourself being caught up in a need to respond immediately, ask if you can give some time and prayer to what you have heard.

When one is fully listened to, sometimes God speaks to the one talking without need for response from the listener. This is part of the ministry of presence and it is a ministry to which we are all called, to be present to one another in God's love.

This attentive, holy listening to one another is an important part of meeting in community, in our chapters. It binds us more deeply in Christ. Practice this holy listening with your sisters and critique one another on how well you felt you were listened to. Share your struggles and joys as a holy listener.

Find time to be silent, to listen for God's urgings and comfort. Write down your dreams when you awaken, if you can remember them. They often give you insights into those things that are happening around you. Be alert to hearing God everywhere... in those you meet, those you know well, in what you read, and what you see around you. Jesus sought solitude in order to listen more carefully. We are asked to do the same.

Use a journal to note your observations and share these with your chapter, a special prayer sister, or a spiritual director.

Let us remember these two passages: "So, then, my beloved, let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19); and "Listen, my beloved brothers [and sisters], didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him?" (James 2:5). Make it a habit to listen wholly; it is holy!

Chapter Ten Questions

- 1 “I will listen to you in the depths of my being and follow where you lead me, even when the path is unpredictable.” (Joyce Rupp, *Inviting God In*). Learn to let what you see or what you hear change from distraction to devotion. Ask God in what way does He want you to grow?

- 2 Another example of holy listening that can be practiced in a chapter meeting or by oneself, is this, from Joyce Rupp’s *Out of the Ordinary*:
 - a. Read and listen carefully.
 - b. “Incline your ear, and come to me; listen so that you may live” (Isaiah 55:2-3).
 - c. “Your servant is listening” (I Samuel 3:10).
 - d. Do: Sit very, very quietly.
 - e. Be still. Listen to all the sounds around you.
 - f. Listen to all the sounds that are within you.
 - g. After your time of listening, make a list of what you have heard.

 - h. Reflect: What do you hear in the silence of your heart?

 - i. Pray: Blessed Life-giver, You have created me wonderfully. Awaken me through my listening. Surprise me, entice me! Draw me into gratitude and awe! Thank You for the gift of hearing and for what it teaches me about You.

📖 FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

Those who like to use a concordance may wish to research: listening, listen, hear. There are many, many aspects of holy listening to be found throughout the Bible. Some of the examples that you may wish to explore more deeply are:

| Holy Listening: Hearing God | | Holy Listening: Friends, strangers, heavenly beings | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Moses | Samuel | The Shepherds | The Wise Men |
| Sarah | The Burning Bush | The Apostles | Elizabeth |
| The Apostles | Jesus | Mary Magdalene | Joseph |
| | | Mary, sister of Martha | Mary, the mother of our Lord |

A Listening Heart

By Kathleen Nyhuis

How much of prayer is listening?

My personal suggestion is to spend at least as much time in prayerful listening as in reciting litanies.

In times of crisis and of joy, we are often quick to make lists of wishes and thanksgivings. Although this isn't necessarily a bad thing to do, perhaps we would do well to simply sit or kneel with a smile on our face and in our heart, resting in the pain or basking in that which surrounds us.

The softening, molding, admonishing, encouraging, strengthening, reconciling, and recreating of us is much more amenable to God when we are attentive and willing, when we join in the process.

An attitude of being is mightily coupled with a listening heart.



***Pray, pray, pray
Recite your litanies
Say your prayers
But take the time
To listen as well
Enjoy the silence
Give your thoughts
Time to mingle with
God, and for God's
Response and urgings***



For me, prayer is time spent with God. May you find the balance of recitation and listening as you pray.

The Virtues of Womanhood – Part I

Sarah (Genesis 17:15 – 25:12): She had a long waiting time. Think about a time of your waiting on God. What helped you be patient when waiting on the Lord? Psalm 40:1

Rebekah (Genesis 24:1 -29:12): She allowed circumstance to affect her trust. What steps help you to trust God? Proverbs 3:5.

Miriam (Exodus 15:20-21; Numbers 12:1 – 26: 59): Her pride affected her relationships with her brothers Moses and Aaron and brought God's anger. In what things are you prideful? How can our avoid pride and slander? I Peter 5:6

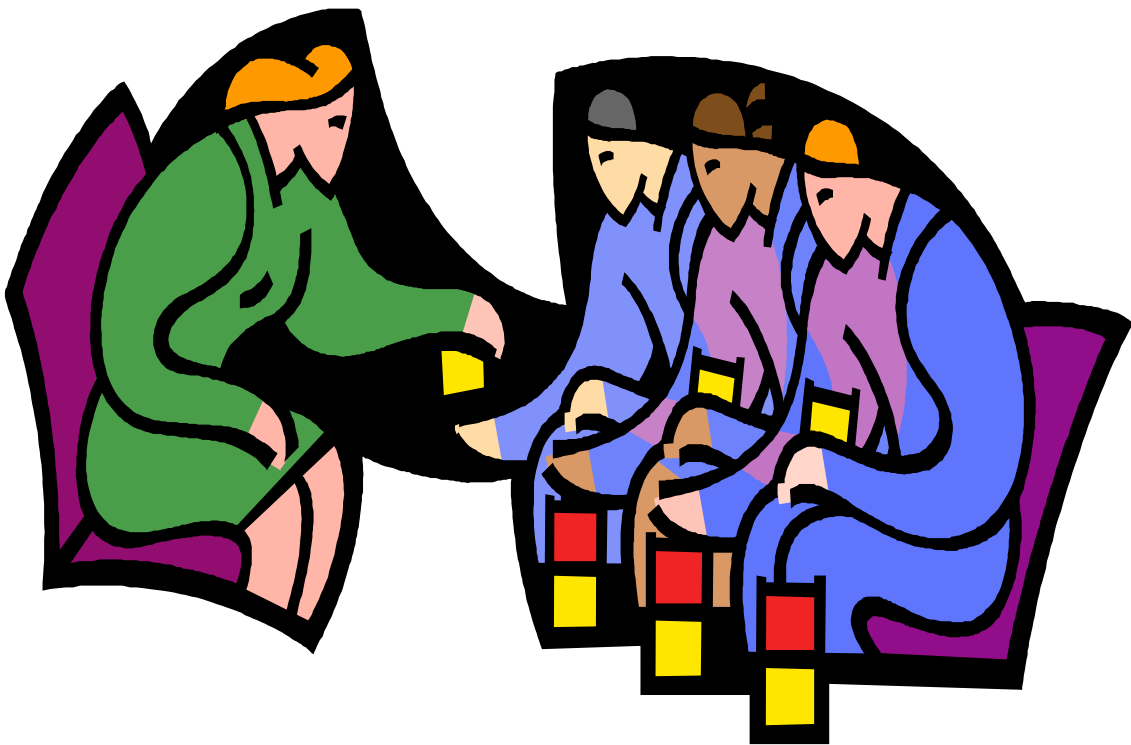
Hannah (I Samuel 1:1-2:21): She was a woman of prayer. How may our prayer life grow? Psalm 66:18, Jeremiah 29:12-13.

Chapter Eleven

Spiritual Mentoring

*Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands
and children, to be self-controlled and pure,
to be busy at home, to be kind...*

Titus 2:4-5



**Dear God,
We journey not alone.
Help us to accept the guidance of a helping
hand that leads to spiritual growth.
Amen.**

Spiritual Mentoring

Mentoring according to Webster's dictionary is, "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher, an influential senior sponsor or supporter." The synonyms are adviser, master, guide, or preceptor. Being a mentor is helping someone come to a decision that will improve, promote or enhance her life and the lives of her loved ones. It is important to encourage; to be available; to listen wholeheartedly; and to give ourselves over completely.

As Mother Teresa said in her book, *Jesus, the Word to be Spoken*: "Formation will be given not so much by words, but by the living example of those in charge of formation, as well as of each one in the community, and also by prayer, sacrifice, and real personal concern for them preparing the way for the Lord in their lives" (115).

Naomi & Ruth

The story of Ruth is a beautiful one. The relationship between Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, is not the kind we hear about often in our society. All too often the "mother-in-law" is the brunt of jokes, labeled meddlesome and conniving. She is often considered to be responsible for all that is wrong in many families. However, this is not the case with Naomi. Is she meddlesome? Maybe. Is she shrewd? You better believe it. Is she faithful to Y-hw-h? Without a doubt. Has she shared her faith and taught Ruth about Y-hw-h? Absolutely!

For this reflection, we will only focus on the first chapter of Ruth. The story tells of Naomi, her husband Elimelech and their sons, Chilion and Mahlon, fleeing a famine in Israel; they are aliens in the land of Moab. To keep the family lineage going in a land without many Jewish women, the sons marry Moabite women; thus, Orpah and Ruth are brought into Naomi's family. Their marriages end with the death of all the men in the family; neither Orpah nor Ruth have born children. In the Jewish traditions of that time, without a male child to carry the lineage, a kinsman must marry the widow and provide an heir for the widowed family. It is within this context that Naomi is a spiritual mentor for Ruth. Read Ruth 1.

Naomi and Elimelech (The House of Judah) were from Israel and both of them had been raised in the Jewish traditions. Naomi birthed sons and we expect the family lived a life devoted to the laws, rituals, and traditions of their faith. The God of Israel was their God. They lived in Moab about ten years. We are led to believe that Ruth and Orpah were married to Mahlon and Chilion for most of that period. Through marriage, Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth became members of the same household. Naomi would have taught them the Jewish traditions and shown them how to practice the rituals and customs of her family. Orpah and Ruth watched, listened, and participated with their husbands and Naomi. They knew what was expected of them. Because it is not stated otherwise, we can believe they were obedient throughout their marriage to the beliefs and traditions of Naomi's family.

The death of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion drastically changed their situation. Naomi learned that the famine in Israel was over and set out to return to their home to reclaim their family's land. As she departs, she offers Orpah and Ruth an opportunity to return to their families. Naomi knows what it is like to be a foreigner and does not expect them to leave with her. At Naomi's urging, Orpah eventually makes her decision to stay in Moab and kisses Naomi good-bye, a parting that is respectful, loving, and final. Ruth responds with the well-known passage:

Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. (Ruth 1:16-17)

This is where the faith journey becomes Ruth's as well as Naomi's. Ruth has watched, learned, and listened over these past years to the lessons that Naomi has taught her. She has taken these lessons to heart and adopted them as her own. The God of Israel has become her God, too. She has also developed a relationship with Naomi that goes beyond obligation.



Chapter Eleven Questions

Naomi has shown kindness and compassion to Ruth and Orpah. Her offer to allow them to return home is evidence of that. There was likely more to this discussion than these few lines show. Ruth's response seems to answer several concerns Naomi may have presented:

1. **Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.**

Ruth asks Naomi not to continue to insist that she leave her. Verse 14 says Ruth clung to Naomi. She does not want to separate herself from the new life she has found. Following Naomi to the land of her people shows that Ruth has become a follower of Naomi and her God not just through her marriage, but in a commitment of her heart. Naomi was a faith mentor to Ruth, and Ruth is committed to her. There is a conviction in Ruth's desire to follow on this journey. Who has been a mentor to you? In what ways? Would you be willing to follow her to a "new land"?

2. **Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.**

Ruth has committed herself to this journey and to a new life with all of Naomi's people. She affirms her intention to follow through with her responsibilities to Naomi and to the Jewish laws. She is committing to go where Naomi has gone in her commitment to worship and follow God. Have you mentored someone that has embraced Christianity, or did you come to Christianity or the Church through someone else? If so, share your experiences with your sisters.

3. **Your people will be my people and your God my God.**

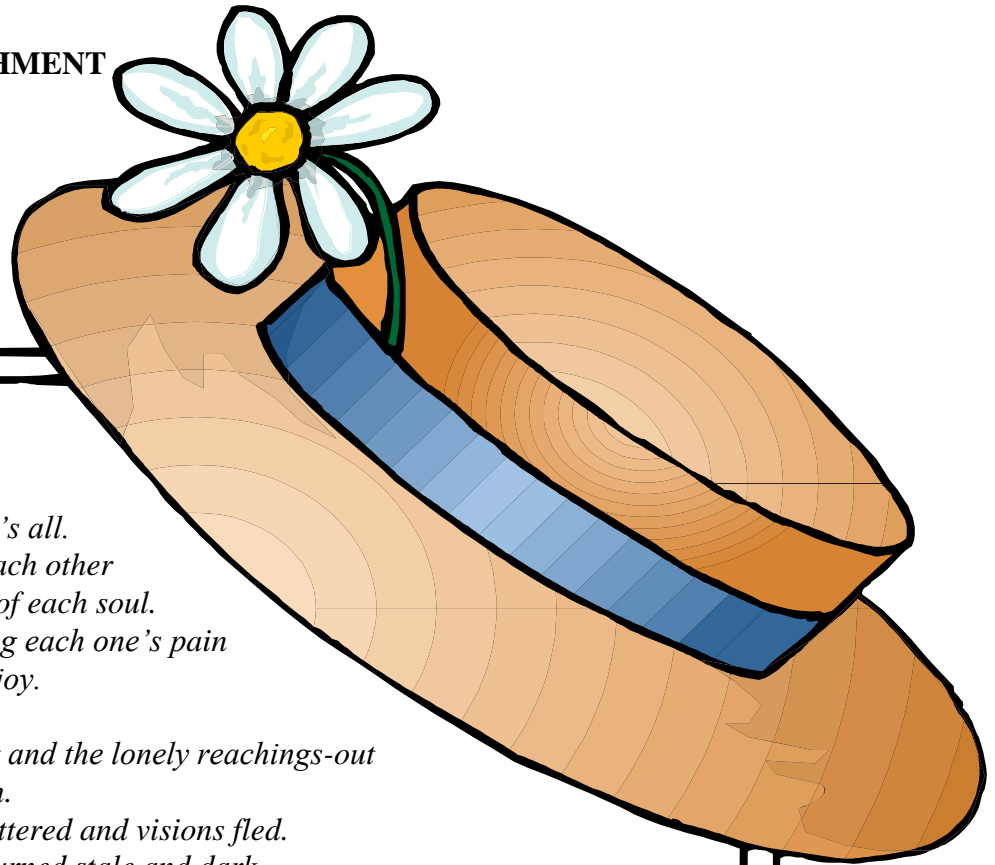
Ruth has adopted Naomi's people and with it the Jewish traditions, laws, rituals, and, most importantly, the God of Israel. Ruth shows that she is fully committed to accepting all that will be required of her in the new land and devoting herself to worshipping the God of Israel as Naomi has done. Have you watched someone fully devote themselves to worshipping God? How can we as Daughters upbuild the worship life of our Parish?

4. **Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried.**

Judaism sees death as the most significant day of a person's life. When a person dies, she is the person she has become. Ruth tells Naomi that she will walk with her and emulate her to become a faithful follower of Y-hw-h. She has put Naomi in very high esteem and tells her as much with this statement. Naomi has mentored Ruth through her devotion and commitment to her God; Ruth pledges herself to the same devotion and commitment. Through Naomi she has witnessed compassion, devotion, hospitality, kindness, and faithfulness to the God of Israel. How have you witnessed through these virtues? How can you develop these virtues to draw others to Christ?

5. **May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.**

This statement has Ruth in this all the way. She is not turning back. She is not wavering in her commitment. She is not questioning her devotion to her mentor, Naomi, or God. She is in this for the long haul! She wants to follow God and let Naomi continue to mentor her in the way. They are sisters on the journey. Who are your sisters on the journey?



The Sharing

*We told our stories, that's all.
We sat and listened to each other
And heard the journeys of each soul.
We sat in silence entering each one's pain
and sharing each one's joy.*

*We heard love's longing and the lonely reachings-out
For love and affirmation.
We heard of dreams shattered and visions fled.
Of hopes and laughter turned stale and dark.
We felt the pain of isolation and the bitterness of death.*

*But in each brave and lonely story
God's gentle life broke through
And we heard music in the darkness and
Smelt flowers in the void.*

*We felt the budding of creation in the searchings of each soul
and discerned the beauty of God's hand in each muddy, twisted path.*

*And God's voice sang in each story.
God's life sprang from each death.
Our sharing became one story of a simple lonely search for life and hope
And oneness in a world which sobs for love.
And we knew that in our sharing, God's voice with mighty breath was saying:
Love each other and take each other's hand.
For you are one, though many, and in each of you I live.*

*So listen to my story and share my pain and death.
Oh, listen to my story and rise and live with me.*

by Edwina Gately from *Psalms of A Lay Woman*

Chapter Twelve

Passing on the Journey

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and
preach the good news to all creation."*

Mark 16:15



**Dear God,
Teach others the way that we may come to share
in the joy, laughter, peace, and love
of Your kingdom in the fullness of time.**

Amen.

Passing on the Journey

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget all the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (Deut. 4:9)

In these two scriptures God charges us to evangelize by witnessing to what He has done in Jerusalem (our religious home, our parish), Judea (our neighborhood or our city or town), and in the entire world. And Moses delivers a message from God telling his people to remember all the things God has done and to teach them to their children and grandchildren. We are to pass on the journey. How are we to do this? Discuss each of the following requirements for evangelizing and passing on the journey:

1. We must know the story of God's redeeming acts climaxing in the story of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection, be able to summarize it, and to tell it in our own words.
2. We must be able to recognize God's work in our lives and to share our journey with Christ.
3. We must identify ways to respond to God's call to teach others, including our children and grandchildren, what we have learned in our journey of faith as well as teaching them the lessons learned by His people revealed in scripture. We must also respond to God's call to teach them to obey His commandments and to live holy lives empowered by God's Holy Spirit.
4. We must identify ways in which we can share His story and our journey so that others will come to recognize Jesus as their Savior and proclaim Him as their Lord.

Overwhelming, isn't it? But, thanks be to God, we are not asked to do any of this in our own strength. We are to do it in His strength as He empowers us through His Holy Spirit. Read Acts 1:8. Jesus promised to give His followers – that's us – the Holy Spirit who gives us power to be His witnesses. Our part is to be prepared.



Chapter Twelve Questions

1. Read the Vision Statement and Mission of the Order found on page 1 in the *National Handbook*. How are we, as Daughters, called to pass on the journey?
2. Write the Gospel according to you in one paragraph – it must agree with Scripture.
3. Draw a time line of your journey. When did you experience the greatest spiritual life or spiritual growth? In good times, in bad times, in both the highs and lows of life?
4. Identify at least five ways to share your journey as a Christian with your sisters in Christ, your children or grandchildren, or others you come in contact with on a regular basis as a way of teaching how to live the Christian life.
5. Discuss one way to share the good news of Christ in your church, in your community, or in the larger world.

FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT

- Prepare a quiet day or retreat for your chapter. In the program, include the topic, an outline of the teachings and/or meditations, time and place, and music (if any).
- List topics for several chapter meetings which will help your sisters pass on their journeys.
- Plan a Bible Study which will help your sisters deepen their understanding of the Gospel. You can use a published Bible study, but review it and make sure it is approved by your chaplain.

Note: The following Guidelines for Quiet Days come from the *National Chapter Manual* of The Order, page 102, and have been added to assist in preparing a quiet day.

Guidelines for Quiet Days

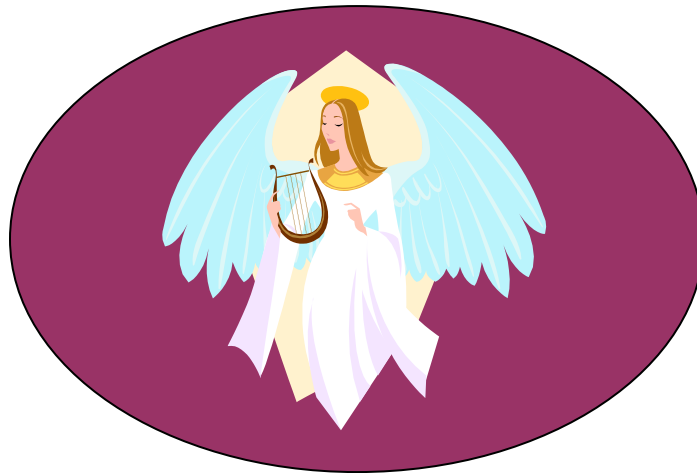
A quiet day is refreshment to the body, soul, and spirit. Daughters need to give and participate in quiet days. Nothing we have to say is ever as important as what God has to say to us. He constantly invites us to ‘come to him.’ Daughters who provide the time and space for such an experience for themselves and others are providing a way of coming into His presence and setting apart a time to take away all obstacles and just be with Him. Think of it as ‘hospitality for God.’ A quiet day may be held at any time and take any form the leader chooses. It will evoke different emotions and meanings in each person who attends. Reflect on the words of Jesus to His apostles when they told Him all they had done and taught and how Jesus responded, “Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31). Should not we do likewise? Other points to remember about a quiet day:

1. May be simple or elaborate. Regardless, make sure a comfortable setting is provided.
2. May be a gathering of a few Daughters who set aside several hours to silently meditate on a given Scripture or theme, or it may be a highly structured day led by clergy or a speaker who will request complete silence as everyone partakes in reflective meditation.
3. Silence is usually observed during a quiet day. It may be kept the whole time, a few hours, or only briefly. The intended duration of silence should be announced and clearly understood by all attending. Remember, this is a day of quietness, a day to refresh, a day to be set apart “...to get some rest.”

A Suggested Schedule for a Quiet Day

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Holy Eucharist |
| 9:30 – 10:00 | Registration and continental breakfast |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 10:00 – 11:00 | First meditation followed by silent personal reflection time |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | Second meditation followed by silent personal reflection time |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Angelus (provided at the end of this chapter) or other noonday prayers such as from <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i> , and lunch (silence may be kept or broken as the group desires) |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | Third meditation followed by silent personal reflection time |
| 1:30 – 2:00 | Group sharing on the day’s revelations |
| 2:00 | Close with prayer and blessing |



The Angelus

The **Angelus** (Latin for *Angel*) is a Christian devotion in memory of the Incarnation. The name *Angelus* is derived from the opening words: *Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae* and is practiced by reciting as versicle (short verse) and response three Biblical verses describing the mystery, alternating with the salutation “Hail Mary!” The devotion was traditionally recited in Roman Catholic churches, convents, and monasteries three times daily, at 6:00 am, noon, and 6:00 pm (many churches still follow the devotion, and some practice it at home). The devotion is also used by some Anglican and Lutheran churches. The Angelus is usually accompanied by the ringing of the Angelus bell, which is to spread good-will to everyone on Earth. The angel referred to in the prayer is the Angel Gabriel, a messenger of God who revealed to Mary that she would conceive a child to be born the Son of God (Luke 1:26-27).



The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

And the Word was made Flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Virtues of Womanhood – Part II

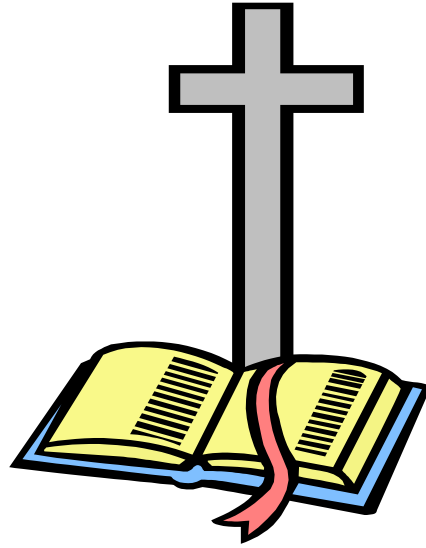
Esther (The Book of Esther): She was courageous in her trust. What is God able to do, as we trust? Write your concerns at this moment as you read Proverbs 3:5.

Elizabeth (Luke 1:1-57): She was a joyful woman. Are you joyful now? If not, what circumstances are causing you to be downhearted? John 14: 16-17, Galatians 5: 22-23.

Anna (Luke 2: 35-37): She helped those who had a loss. How can we help others? Think about trials in your life that have prepared you to help others. I Corinthians 1:4, II Corinthians 1: 3-5.

Martha (Luke 10:38-41): She was a woman of faith, but she allowed anxiety to interfere. What things keep you from listening to God? Psalm 46:10, Philippians 4: 6-7.

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