

THOUGHTS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

January 2021

Life in God should be a daring adventure of love - a continuous journey of putting aside our securities to enter more profoundly into the uncharted depths of God.

Too often, however, we settle for mediocrity.

We follow the rules and practices of prayer but we are unwilling or, for various reasons, unable to give ourselves totally to God.

To settle on the plain of mediocrity is really to settle for something less than God that leaves the heart restless and unfulfilled.

A story from the desert fathers reminds us that giving oneself wholly to God can make a difference:

Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him,

“Abba, as far as I can I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts.

What else can I do?”

Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands towards heaven.

His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him,

“If you will, you can become all flame.”

*Ilia Delio
Franciscan Prayer*



1 st	The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! <i>Psalms 8:9</i>
2 nd	Basil of Caesarea (d.379) and Gregory of Nazianzus (d.389), bishops and teachers; Eliza Hassall, pioneer of missionary training and CMS Aust. (d.1917): Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. <i>1 John 3:2-3</i>
3 rd	Second Sunday after Christmas: Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. <i>Sirach 24:1,9</i>
4 th	The next day, John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. <i>John 1:35-39</i>
5 th	Ingratitude is the soul's enemy; it empties it of merit, scatters its virtues, and deprives it of graces. <i>St Bernard of Clairvaux</i>
6 th	The Epiphany of our Lord: Lord Jesus, may your light shine our way, as once it guided the steps of the magi; that we too may be led into your presence and worship you, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the Saviour of mankind; to whom be glory for ever.
7 th	The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. <i>1 John 4:21</i>
8 th	And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the son of God does not have life. <i>1 John 5:11-12</i>
9 th	Little children, keep yourselves from idols. <i>1 John 5:21</i>
10 th	The Baptism of our Lord: And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." <i>John 1:32-34</i>
11 th	Aspire not to have more, but to be more. <i>Oscar Romero (1917-1980)</i>
12 th	Perfection does not consist in the knowledge of God's order, but in submission to it. The order of God, the good pleasure of God, the will of God, the action of God, grace -- all these are one and the same thing in this life. Perfection is nothing else than the faithful cooperation of the soul with the work of God. This ultimate purpose of our life grows and increases in our souls secretly and without our knowledge. <i>Jean-Pierre de Caussade (d.1751)</i>
13 th	Hilary of Potiers, bishop and teacher (d.367): For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. <i>Hebrews 3:16-18</i>
14 th	Sava, first archbishop of the Serbian church (d.1235): True progress quietly and persistently moves along without notice. <i>St Francis</i>

15 th	Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret – it leads only to evil. <i>Psalms 37:8</i>
16 th	Every hour of every day is an unspeakably perfect miracle. <i>Walt Whitman (1819-1892)</i>
17 th	Second Sunday after Epiphany: Like the Magi, may we also journey and be attentive, untiring and courageous on the path to find the invisible God who was born among us. <i>Pope Francis</i>
18 th	Confession of Peter: O Lord, never suffer us to think that we can stand by ourselves, and not need thee. <i>John Donne (1572-1631)</i>
19 th	As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <i>Colossians 3:12-13</i>
20 th	Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone. <i>Colossians 4:6</i>
21 st	Agnes, martyr at Rome, virgin (d.304): The Gospel takes away our right forever, to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving poor. <i>Dorothy Day (1897-1980)</i>
22 nd	Vincent, deacon and martyr (d.304): My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. <i>James 1:2-4</i>
23 rd	Doubt is the origin of wisdom. <i>Rene Descartes (1596-1650)</i>
24 th	Third Sunday after Epiphany: Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth: Father, protect in your love our neighbours, our families and this community of which we are a part ... Lord of glory, hear our prayer.
25 th	Conversion of Paul the Apostle: None knows the weight of another's burden. <i>George Herbert</i>
26 th	Australia Day: We bless you, God of the Universe, for this land; for its contrasts of landscape and climate, for its abundance of wealth and opportunity. We bless you for our history, with all its struggles in adversity, its courage and hope. Give us in our diversity, tolerance and respect for each other and a passionate commitment to justice for all. Bless us so that we might be a blessing to others. <i>Amen</i>
27 th	John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, teacher (d.407): Fairy tales are more than true — not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be beaten. <i>G K Chesterton (1874-1936)</i>
28 th	Thomas Aquinas, theologian (d.1274): Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. <i>Amen. Thomas Aquinas</i>
29 th	He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade. <i>Mark 4:30-32</i>
30 th	Charles, King of England (d.1649): You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. <i>Kahlil Gibran: The Prophet</i>
31 st	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practise it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever. <i>Psalms 111:10</i>



PRAYER THOUGHTS

- Sunday** Creator God, at the start of this New Year when thoughts turn again to beginnings, starting afresh, new leaves and turning skeletons free from cupboards; be with us as we gaze into the distance of fresh hopes and dreams, opportunities for service, challenges and uncertainties. Take our fears and turn them into strengths. Take our lack of faith and empower us through the Spirit who breathes life into this world, whose presence is reflected in the icy chill of winter's breath as well as the comforting warmth of a summer breeze. Walk with us into this New Year of opportunity.
- Monday** Lord Jesus, may your light shine our way, as once it guided the steps of the magi: that we too may be led into your presence and worship you, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the Saviour of mankind; to whom be glory forever.
- Tuesday** Keep us, O God, from all pettiness. Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off all self-seeking. Grant that we may realise that it is the little things of life that create differences, that in the big things of life we are as one. And, O God, let us not forget to be kind.
- Wednesday** All through this day, O Lord, by the power of your spirit, let me touch the lives of others for good, whether through the words I speak, the prayers I pray, or the life I live. *Amen*
- Thursday** Lord, show us where there is loneliness, that we may take friendship. Show us where individuals are not seen as persons, that we may acknowledge their identity. Show us where there is alienation that we may take reconciliation.
Prayer for Women's World Day of Prayer, Jamaica
- Friday** Lord, give me the grace to trust the silent growth of your seed in my heart and to let that trust grow stronger and taller than all my worries. *Amen*
- Saturday** Out of the depths, I call Lord; in those depths let me meet you. *Amen*

Thoughts for Prayer & Reflection

for our *city on a hill*... and beyond.

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Little by little our church is opening up and services
are now conducted at 8 am and 10 am on Sundays,
and a Healing Service at 10.30 am on Thursdays.
However the church is not open for contemplation and prayer.

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