

**No.20.**

**11th February 2021**

Dear Friends,

Continuing our exploration of prayer, Fr Ronald Rolheiser talks about the problem of finding time to pray in a very busy world, with all its hustle and bustle. I think we can all relate to this.

Caroline Rother has chosen a reflection by another Canadian priest calling us to enjoy the calm and inner peace of our relationship with Jesus and sharing that blessing with others.

This ties in very well with Bishop Barron's Sunday Sermon in which he speaks of St Paul's placing his relationship with Jesus and his duty, as he sees it, to share that relationship with others, at the very centre of his life. This doesn't mean ignoring everything else we have to do but it does mean seeing all that we have to do in the light of Jesus. This, in turn, gives a wonderful meaning to everything in life.

Take care and God bless,

John de Waal.

## **Prayer    Finding time for prayer.    by    Ronald Rolheiser.**

Where we differ from the past is not so much in badness as in busyness. Most days we don't pray simply because we don't quite get around to it. Perhaps the best metaphor to describe our hurried and distracted lives is that of a car wash. When you pull up to a car wash, you are instructed to keep your motor running, to take your hands off the steering wheel and to keep your foot off the brake. The idea is that the machine itself will suck you through.

For most of us that's what our typical day does to us - it sucks us through. We have smart phones and radios that stimulate us before we are fully awake. We are texting friends, checking Facebook or emails, watching the news, or listening to music

before we even shower or eat breakfast. The drive to work follows the same pattern. We return home to television ... preoccupations of all kinds. Eventually we go to bed , where, perhaps we read or watch a bit more TV. Finally, we fall asleep. When, in all of this did we take time to think, to pray, to wonder, to be restful, to be grateful for life, for love, for health, for God? The day just sucked us through.

Moreover, prayer is not easy because we are greedy for experience. The spiritual writer Henri Nouwen puts this well : “I want to pray,” he once said, “but I also don’t want to miss out on anything - television, movies, socializing with friends ...” Because we don’t want to miss out on anything, prayer is truly a discipline. When we sit or kneel in prayer, our natural craving for experience feels starved and begins to protest.

Ironically, most of us crave solitude...How do we foster solitude? How do we get a handle on life so it doesn’t just suck us through?

The first step is to “put out into the deep” by remaining in God’s presence, in solitude, in prayer. If it is your first time doing this, set aside fifteen minutes for prayer. In time you might be able to manage thirty minutes. Remember, your heart is made to rest in God. If St Augustine is right, and he is, then you can count on your restlessness to lead you into deeper prayer - the kind of prayer that leads to profound transformation, the kind of prayer that will not leave you empty-handed.

(From : “Prayer - our deepest longing” by Ronald Rolheiser).

## **A Reflection chosen by Caroline Rother.**

In these days, sometimes rather dark days, a book I often return to (one of my favourites) is entitled “Called to Intimacy - Living in the Indwelling Presence”, by the scholar and priest of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, George Maloney. I love how he urges us to enter into ever deeper communication and communion with the God and Spirit of love in order to go out and deliver that love to those around us. “If God is love” he says, “and we have been made for God by Him, then we have been made for love”. These sentiments I find bring comfort and solace in those darker days. I hope you too will enjoy this short extract from the book.

### **A LIGHT TO THE WORLD**

“As you yield to Christ’s transforming light from within you, the same Spirit of the risen Lord urges you to let the transforming light of Jesus pour through your transfigured oneness with him to become his light and presence of love to the world around you. *I am the light of the world, anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark, he will have the light of life - Jn 8, 12.*

The inner light of Christ leading you into the light of the indwelling Trinity suffuses your entire being as you joyfully experience in every thought, word and deed, the exhilarating joy of being a child of God. God has called you *out of darkness into his wonderful light* - 1 Peter 2, 9.

But the light of Christ is to shine through you outward toward others:

*You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub, they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven -Matt 5, 14-16.*

Jesus is risen and lives within you as light and raises you from your darkness into a sharing of his risen life. But his spirit of love drives you to become Christ's translucent light of new life and love to all you meet. You now have the power, to the degree that you have become light from Christ's light, to bring the same transfiguring light to the world that lies in the darkness of brokenness and self-centredness all around you. Christ can become light for them only if you, and like minded Christians, allow His light of love to go through you into the darkness of others. You breathe the name of Jesus and his light-presence over each person you meet and you believe as you have experienced within yourself that they also can rise to a sharing in His risen glory and become less dark and more of loving light in the world."

## **Bishop Robert Barron's Sunday Sermon.**

To prepare well for this sermon you may like to look at the second reading for the 5th Sunday of the Year : St Paul I Corinthians : 9 : 16-19, 22-23. Bishop Barron speaks about Evangelisation and what it should mean to us.

<https://youtu.be/L9nWBwPy6es>

**Final Prayer** - taken from Compline (the Night Prayer of the Church).

**Antiphon.** Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

**Nunc Dimittis.**

At last, all-powerful Master,  
you give leave to your servant  
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared for all nations, the  
light to enlighten the Gentiles  
and give glory to Israel, your people.

**Antiphon.** Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

A short time for silent prayer.

**Concluding prayer.**

Lord our God,  
restore us again by the repose of sleep after the fatigue of our daily work;  
so that, continually renewed by your help, we may serve you in body and soul.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

**Blessing.** Lord, grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen.

**A final thought.**

“Preach the Gospel wherever you go, even use words if necessary.”  
(Attributed to St Francis of Assisi).