

No.13

19th November 2020

Dear Friends,

Welcome again to our weekly newsletter in place of our normal RCIA sessions. I am very grateful to Ann Bennell for the notes on her talk this week - which is a reflection on Grace, Prayer and the Christian Life.

Our Sunday Sermon this week I have taken from earlier in the Church's year - from Trinity Sunday. For a good preparation for this sermon by Bishop Robert Barron I would urge you to look up the readings for Trinity Sunday : Exodus 34 : 4-6, 8-9; St John's Gospel 3 : 16 - 18. Bishop Barron pulls no punches in setting the scene - the Trinity is not an easy doctrine to understand. He says some have called it the "Rubrik Cube of theology"! And yet it is crucial to our Christian Faith. The world record for solving Rubrik's cube is under ten seconds! Bishop Barron speaks for around fifteen minutes about the Trinity. His sermon is worth every minute! I think I have learnt more about the Trinity from this sermon than in all my previous life - quite a claim - so please stick with it!

We finish, as usual, with our Night Prayer (Compline) which we have been using at our real RCIA sessions. Let us pray for each other during this difficult time.

God bless

John de Waal

Grace, prayer & the Christian Life

God made us to be His friends, to be part of His Body, to be with Him always but our selfish choices separate us from Him. Thankfully, God has not given up on us. Through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, he grants us his favour – his Grace. We are saved through this Grace.

Grace is the source of all that is good. Faith, Hope and Love come from the Grace of God. The Gospel is the Good News of Grace (Dictionary of the Bible) through which, we know of God's Love and Mercy through Jesus Christ. God's Grace is boundless, it overcomes all the darkness in our lives. It is a free gift which God wants us to accept so that we might know Him in our lives.

When Jesus was asked to teach His disciples to pray, he gave them the Our Father. He taught them to call God Abba Father which is like saying Daddy, the greeting of a very special relationship. Through His Grace, God wants us to know that He wants to be part of every aspect of our lives good and bad. Like Jesus, who at every opportunity went off on his own to pray, to share every aspect of His life with His Father, God calls us to share our lives through prayer with Him.

There are many ways to pray, both individually and with our community. The Mass is the highlight of our life as the Catholic family, at which we receive the Body and Blood of Christ to feed and sustain us in our Christian lives.

We can prayerfully read the scriptures. We can say formal prayers, of which there are many. We can be silent and listen for God's Word for us. We can just pray in our own words. If we try, we can see God is all around us in nature, in music and art, in our relationships with our family and friends and even in the smile of a stranger – indeed in all things.

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian life. Through prayer, our relationship with God in Jesus will grow, giving us the courage to share our faith with others, to make us aware of those most in need, to serve our community and to be Christ in the world. We never need fear for God is carrying us in our journey to him.

Bishop Barron's Sunday Sermon.

Please click on the link below - it lasts about 15 minutes.

<https://youtu.be/0gvYoLYW9OE>

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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.

“A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it.” (G.K.Chesterton).