

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 6 April, 2003

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

Again this week, this won't exactly be a prayer...but I thought it might be valuable to think about.

It's based on "The Lord's Prayer", and it really asks us to think deeply about what those very familiar words mean.

Here goes:

I cannot say OUR, if my religion has no room for others
and their needs.

I cannot say FATHER, if I do not demonstrate this relationship
in my daily life.

I cannot say WHO ART IN HEAVEN, if all my interests and pursuits
are in earthly things.

I cannot say THY KINGDOM COME, if I am unwilling to give up
my own sovereignty and accept the will of God in my life.

I cannot say THY WILL BE DONE, if I am unwilling or resentful
of having it in my life.

I cannot say ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN, unless I am truly
ready to give myself to his service, here and now.

I cannot say FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE
THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US,
if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, if I deliberately choose
to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot say DELIVER US FROM EVIL, if I am not prepared to
fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.

I cannot say AMEN, unless I am also willing to honestly say:
"Cost what it may; this is my prayer".

So the next time you pray the words of Jesus, think deeply about what you're saying.

The words are action-packed!!

And, of course, don't forget our soldiers:

Father,
hold our soldiers in your loving hands.
Keep them from spiritual and bodily harm.
Place them under the protective mantle of
our Blessed Mother Mary,

and send Michael and the holy angels
before them in every danger.
Give them and their families
courage, strength and hope.
In Your mercy,
grant peace to all Your children
in every nation on earth.
We praise You and thank You
in Jesus' Name.
Amen!

May God grant all of us His peace...and soon!

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

PERSONAL CONFESSION

The annual Lenten RECONCILIATION SERVICE will be held on next Tuesday evening, 8 April, at the Chapel at 1900. If you want to make Personal Confession before Easter, you are most welcome to do it at this Service.

UCF RETREAT

Our cadet "United Catholic Fellowship" will sponsor a Retreat over Palm Sunday weekend (11-12-13 April). Any cadet is welcome. Please contact CDT Pat Sullivan for information.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday of Lent at 1800, there will be STATIONS OF THE CROSS at the Chapel. Each week, the Ceremony will be followed by a simple supper of soup...to preserve the spirit of fasting.

DAILY MASS

Mass is offered every weekday (except Saturdays and holidays) in the Catholic Chaplain's Office at 0630. Everyone is welcome.

LENTEN FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Just for your reference during Lent...
Catholics are asked to ABSTAIN from meat on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent (including

Good Friday).

Catholics are also asked to FAST on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday only (one full meal, two lesser ones).

ABSTINENCE is asked of all those between the ages of 14 and 59.

FASTING is for those between 18 and 59.

DID YOU KNOW?

PALMS:

With Palm Sunday so close (13 April), let's deal with some trivia on the subject.

At the beginning of his last week of earthly life, Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by crowds waving palm and olive branches.

The palm that we use in the USA is generally "ground palm" from Texas. In other countries, willow or cedar branches are used; some places even use flowers.

In 1513, Ponce de Leon sailed into what is now Tampa Bay on PALM SUNDAY. He named the land "tierra florida" ("flowering land") because he was impressed with the abundance of flowers and because in his native Spain, the people used flowers to celebrate PALM SUNDAY. The name stuck, and we call the location "Florida".

Palms blessed on PALM SUNDAY have always held a special place in Catholic households. Some people place a piece of palm behind their crucifix as a reminder of this event in Jesus' life.

In earlier times, people would save the palm and burn a little when a storm threatened. This custom may have come from Slavic countries where it used to be common to scatter bits of the palm around farm-fields to protect the fields and the animals against bad weather and disease.

The Church has always considered this practice to be more superstition than anything else, a holdover from Greek and Roman and Celtic times, when certain plants were thought to have mystical powers.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

...our Catholic Firsties (and their prospective spouses) who are making their Marriage Preparation weekend, starting today).

...the Catholic Choir, which is traveling to Atlantic City this weekend.

...all our graduates and relatives who are serving in Iraq...and their families.

...all the military personnel in Iraq...and their families.

...the POWs and their families.

...the casualties on both sides and their families.

...the innocent victims and their families.

...the intention of peace and a just settlement to the current conflict.

GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Father, my roommate and I were having a discussion about being Roman Catholic. He argued that it is useless to call oneself a Catholic because you are “Christian” anyway with or without the Church. My question is: what does it mean to be “Catholic” as opposed to being just “Christian”? Is there a distinction?

A: Obviously, I wouldn’t agree with your roommate.

I think he hasn’t taken human history into consideration.

I approach the idea from this direction: the historical development of Christianity has produced different interpretations of Jesus’ message. Right from the beginning, Christians were arguing about the exact meaning of the message of Jesus, and it seems to me that this is inevitable in every age.

It’s inevitable because human beings have a “thought process”, and they’re always concerned with “Truth” and how to find it. Consequently, the different interpretations of Jesus’ message resulted from this need to know the “Truth” and the different answers that have been proposed.

I believe that the different interpretations are important because they offer each believer a criterion by which he or she can get closer and closer to the “Truth” of Jesus’ message: what he REALLY said and what he meant by it.

My Presbyterian father and my Catholic mother were both Christians, but they looked at the great questions of “faith” and “religion” quite differently. And as I grew up, I too made a decision about which one I preferred, and I made the choice on the basis of whether I believed that the Presbyterian or the Catholic traditions of Christianity possessed the fullest “Truth” about Jesus’ teaching.

I chose to adopt the Catholic interpretation.

It doesn’t mean that I thought my father was “dead wrong”; it simply means that I thought that the Catholic interpretation was more “complete” and accurate in interpreting God’s revelation through Jesus.

That’s the reason I’m not a Methodist Christian or an Episcopalian Christian or a Christian Scientist or any of the many other interpretations. I simply have come to the conclusion that however much “Truth” these others may have, the Catholic Tradition expresses the fulness of Jesus’ message in the most complete way I’ve found.

This means that each person has to take the time to do some thinking and some research about how the different traditions of Christianity have developed and why.

In the end, what one calls oneself IS important because it reflects the level of understanding that one has about God’s revelation in Jesus.

And I don’t think that “Christian” is enough – because all kinds of people call themselves “Christian” – and in many cases, their interpretation of Jesus and his message is radically different from mine or yours.

I think that accuracy and authenticity are important, and my job as a human believer is to find what I believe is the most accurate and most authentic interpretation of Jesus that there is.

For me, Catholic tradition of his teachings is the most authentic.

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

ENVY:

Well, we talked about PRIDE last week...so it occurs to me that we might talk a little bit about ENVY this week.

In the list of the SEVEN DEADLY or CAPITAL SINS that the Catholic tradition has always preserved, it ranks second...next to illegitimate PRIDE.

Incidentally, the SEVEN CAPITAL SINS are called “CAPITAL” because moralists have always considered them the root from which all other sinfulness grows. The whole list is as follows:

Pride
Envy
Anger
Sloth
Avarice
Gluttony
Lust

Anyway, ENVY.

The dictionary defines ENVY in this way:

A feeling of discontent and resentment
aroused by the contemplation of another's desirable possessions
or qualities, with a strong desire to have them for oneself.

Catholic morality would accept this as a basic idea, but it would go on to add some other thoughts.

For Catholics, ENVY is rooted in a deep difficulty that a person may have in trusting God's love. An ENVIOUS person has forgotten that God loves him or her UNIQUELY and PERSONALLY.

Because of this, such a person is very INSECURE and actually doubts his or her own value. He or she is constantly occupied by worrying about what other people have or what they think, and this can lead to being JEALOUS of someone else. It can also lead to wanting to have what the other person has and being resentful that the other person is “successful” in some way.

When can this occur?

Most frequently, it can occur in settings that are heavily COMPETITIVE or in an atmosphere where COMPARISONS of people's performance are constantly made.

In such cases, the GOOD of someone else can become the EVIL for the person who is JEALOUS. The GOOD of someone else can seem to threaten or lessen one's own excellence.

This perception can lead to ENVY, and after ENVY, the next step is generally HATRED. Once HATRED sets in, the “other person” becomes a constant threat to one's own well-being.

It's a vicious spiral.

How to deal with it?

Catholic morality would say that such a person – filled with ENVY or perhaps even HATRED – needs to do something to address his or her own INSECURITY.

In a spiritual sense, such a person needs to deepen a sense of God's love for him or her as a UNIQUE person and to also deepen the feeling of compassion for others. Compassion is a

feeling which recognizes the unique value of each individual, with his or her own successes and failures.

ENVY is difficult to completely eradicate, but unless it's controlled, it can do tremendous damage to the human personality.

That's why it's listed as one of the SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

“One measure of LEADERSHIP
is the caliber of people
who choose to follow you.”

Dennis A. Peer

And that's the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!!

Have a good weekend.
I hope that LENT continues
to have a place in your busy lives.
Let's pray for each other...and for peace.

Woodie