

Let's *Talk!*®

A Catholic Ministry to Prisoners



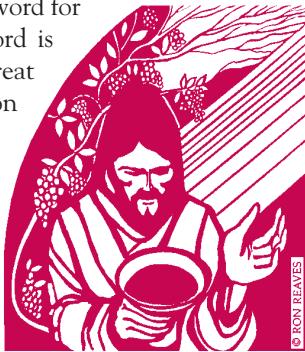
PNCEA Prison Ministries • 3031 Fourth St., NE • Washington, DC 20017

You Are Made for Great Things

Times may be tough for you right now because you are in prison or jail. Time incarcerated can be a time of real discouragement. It may come on top of a life of many disappointments to you and your family and friends.

Pope Benedict XVI has a word for you...for all of us. That word is that we are “made for great things.” So often, we focus on the small and petty. The pope said, “Man is often tempted to stop at the little things, those that give ‘cheap’ satisfaction and pleasure, those things that instantly gratify, things that are...easy to obtain.” Trouble is, these things are also quick at passing and are often without meaning.

Look to God. The pope went on to say that we “do not live by bread alone.” We live by the higher things, things that fill the deep yearning and hunger in our hearts. We often spend our lives avoiding those things that can fill us with hope and joy. Instead, we seek the material things of this world—a nice car, more money than we need, drugs, empty sexual relationships.



We may seek power over others so we can dominate and get our own way.

When even “good things” are not done with purity of heart, they will bring only fleeting happiness. And the “bad things” bring us nothing of value. God is the source of our joy and hope. God alone can fill the empty and yearning heart with a sense of his life and love. And he wants to do this.

Seek greatness. These last months of the year are important in our lives as Catholic Christians. The readings on Sunday take us to the gates of Jerusalem with Jesus, where he fulfills his earthly mission. We celebrate the Kingship of Christ at the end of November, and then begin the journey of Advent to Christmas. The Church remembers many things during this time to help us on our own life pilgrimage.

In your prayer, ask God to help you be present to him. He is always present with us if we but pay attention. Ask God to show you that you are made for great things—even while you are in prison. No time is without meaning if we live that time with God.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the great gifts God has given us is our human dignity. We are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). We are not just accidents of nature but created by God with a purpose—to know him, love him and to live with him forever in glory.

Our challenge is to value our dignity and not to tarnish it through sin. Granted, that is easier said than done! But as we recognize our dignity and live each day asking God to help us walk faithfully with him, God will honor our prayer. We will see our lives gradually change, for with God all things are possible. Trust in that!

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP
President, PNCEA

The Nine “Fs” to Spiritual Fulfillment

by Fr. William Brailsford

We can compare spiritual fulfillment to an arch. The keystone is at the top, securing the two sides of the arch. Each side of the arch has three sections, just like the three at the top of the arch, the keystone. That gives us our nine “Fs” to spiritual fulfillment.

The First Side of the Arch

One side of the arch consists of Scripture and Christ.

Feed on the Word: God’s Holy Word is one of the greatest treasures that we have. It is an infallible rule for the practice of our faith. God gave us the Bible so that we know how to act as Christian people. But we have to read it faithfully, not keep it on a dusty shelf.

Follow Christ: The noisy, busy world we live in offers many bad role models. We always are looking for signs, wondering how we might be better people. But there is only one road, one path that leads to Christ and salvation. That is the narrow road, the road paved by our understanding of all that is good, noble and holy. The broad road of the world, simply put, leads to nothing less than destruction of our spiritual life.

Fall in Love with Christ: There is no greater love than God’s love. But as the Bible tells us, we can love him because he first loved us. We have to fall in love with Christ, putting all else, every distraction aside, or our arch will fall.

The Second Side of the Arch

The other side of the arch consists of the following practices:

Faithfully Pray: If you have fallen into the habit of praying only when you want
(continued on page 2)

October 2010

- 1 St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor
- 2 Guardian Angels
- 3 **Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, religious
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 10 **Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 15 St. Teresa of Avila, virgin, doctor
- 17 **Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 18 **St. Luke, Evangelist**
- 19 Sts. Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf and companions, martyrs
- 24 **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 28 **Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles**
- 31 **Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**

November 2010

- 1 **All Saints**
- 2 **All Souls**
- 4 St. Charles Borromeo, bishop
- 7 **Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 9 **Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**
- 10 St. Leo the Great, pope, doctor
- 11 St. Martin of Tours, bishop
- 12 St. Josaphat, doctor, martyr
- 13 St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, virgin
- 14 **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 17 St. Elizabeth of Hungary, religious
- 21 **Christ the King**
- 22 St. Cecilia, virgin, martyr
- 25 Thanksgiving Day in U.S.
- 28 **First Sunday in Advent**
- 30 **St. Andrew, Apostle**

December 2010

- 3 St. Francis Xavier, priest
- 5 **Second Sunday of Advent**
- 7 St. Ambrose, bishop, doctor
- 8 **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
- 12 **Third Sunday of Advent**
- 13 St. Lucy, virgin, martyr
- 14 John of the Cross, priest, doctor
- 19 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- 25 **Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**
- 26 **Holy Family**
- 27 **St. John, apostle, evangelist**



Let's Talk!®

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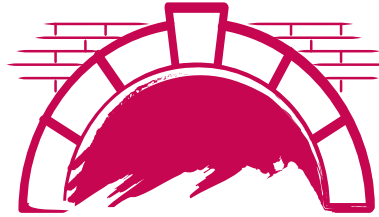
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The Nine "Fs" to Spiritual Fulfillment

(continued from page 1)

something, you are insulting God. We must pray daily. Imagine you are at the judgment seat of Christ. He simply says that he hasn't heard from you in awhile, so heaven must not be of interest to you. "But God," you say, "I had a busy life. I had lots of work. I couldn't sleep. I was exhausted. I wanted my own space." Remember there are twenty-four hours in a day. What's your excuse?



Fellowship with Godly People: If you were to introduce your friends would you be embarrassed? Their goals, their language, their church attendance—how would you explain that? How about the cuss words, the off-color jokes or the gossip? What excuse would you offer? We become like those we hang around with. More importantly, what example are you giving your children?

File Away Sins: Once our sins are forgiven, they are forgotten. If we have confessed a sin, we must not confess that old sin again. If we believe that the first confession "didn't take," we DO NOT trust God. If we were to see Our Lord in heaven, and say sorrowfully that we are sorry for our past sins, Our Lord will look at you and say "What sins?"

Keystone

The keystone of our arch is what holds everything together: Foresee, Flee, and Fortify.

Foresee: We must be on the look-out for sin and near occasions of sin. Put down that magazine! Turn off that movie! Don't go near that computer unless serious work must be

done. Keep the magazines where everyone can see them. Use the mother or nun rule: If you wouldn't show them the magazine or the movie you are watching, should you?

Flee: When you see a sin staring you in the face, run for your life! You foresaw it, you know it's bad, now flee from it. Do not tempt yourself to see how much resistance you have. Try walking through fire to see if it burns. It does, but that

is easier than saving your soul if you entertain serious sin. As in everything, ask the Holy Spirit, and he will help you. You cannot do it alone.

Fortify: How do we fortify ourselves for a long journey? We pack bread and water, our medicine, and a map. How do we pray for a spiritual journey? We take advantage of the proper provisions. As mentioned, the Word and prayer are the basics. But we must also have a goal, an idea of where we are going. If heaven is not your goal, you do not need any fortification. As St. Paul wrote us: "Abhor that which is evil, cling to that which is good." We have our map and directions—they're better if they are used.

The Christian life need not be complicated, it needs to be embraced and simply followed.

Fr. William Brailsford is Parochial Vicar at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Gaithersburg, MD. This article which appeared in the parish bulletin summarizes a series of homilies he gave on Spiritual Fulfillment during July and August, 2010. Used with permission.

Prisoner Saint

Blessed Miguel Pro (1891-1927) ✠ "Long live Christ the King!" These were Fr. Pro's last words before he was shot to death by a firing squad. His crime: being a Catholic priest and serving the people in revolutionary Mexico. Persecution of Catholics was intense in Mexico in Fr. Pro's day. He nonetheless returned there in 1925 after ordination as a Jesuit priest in Belgium. For two years, he ministered "underground." He chose times and places thought safe by the faithful band of Catholics he served. Pro was arrested and imprisoned on false charges that he planned to assassinate the president of Mexico. Neither danger nor hardship could dampen Pro's love for Christ. Nor did his desire to serve Jesus and his people in Mexico lessen. Pope John Paul II declared Pro Blessed in 1988.

Feast Day: November 23

The Liberating Word, Part 2

In the Garden; in the Slammer

by Rev. Frank DeSiano, CSP

Jail. Prison. Slammer. Lockup. Brig. Away. Upstate. Downstate.

We have lots of words for being incarcerated, some of them direct and some of them nice ways to say something unpleasant. One of my cousins would say her son was “Upstate,” and presume we knew exactly what she meant. I’m sure prisoners have several words they use themselves, and I’m sure they have words for different parts of a prison that they’d have to translate for visitors.

Prison, however, gives a false impression—as if some people are in jail, but others are not. That’s not how the Bible sees it, not completely anyway. Of course all those locks and bars, all those jangling keys and the endless inspection of ID’s show there is a large separation between those in the slammer and those who are not.

Everyone’s in the Slammer

But if we think about the opening sections of the Bible, there’s a way in which everyone is in the slammer. Everyone is in exile. Prisoners feel it more because of their situation, but that doesn’t mean everyone else isn’t stuck one way or another.

Think about those opening sections of Genesis—from chapter 2:4 onward, where God, like a pottery worker, molds the first man and then, from the man’s rib, the first woman. They are free to eat, enjoy, cultivate and use the garden, so long as they realize who they are—so long as they see their limits, that they are not God.

The tempting snake (a way to make fun of snake worship in the nations surrounding ancient Israel) drops the first suggestion, and then builds upon it. The serpent allures Eve to eat fruit God told her not to eat. “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). A smooth talker, that one! But, of course, we’ve all been smooth-talked in our lives—that’s why we’re where we are.

What happens when the woman and the man eat the fruit of the forbidden tree—the fruit they did not have the ability to eat and digest in a spiritual way? “He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24).

There you have it. The man is thrown out. In exile. Put away. In the slammer.

This is a very hard lesson for people because, even though the Bible teaches that we are all “away,” most people refuse to realize it. It just doesn’t dawn on folks that they are caught, locked up, restrained, exiled. But that’s one of the Bible’s basic messages—that everyone needs to be freed, that everyone needs a liberator, someone to redeem them, someone to “buy them back.”

Being in the slammer we perhaps think of ourselves as in a very different place from folks on the outside. While that is true, it is not entirely true. What we feel on the inside is what everyone experiences, whether inside our outside, even if they don’t know it.

The liberating Word says we all need to be freed, and only God can do it!

Prison Might be a Way to Find Freedom

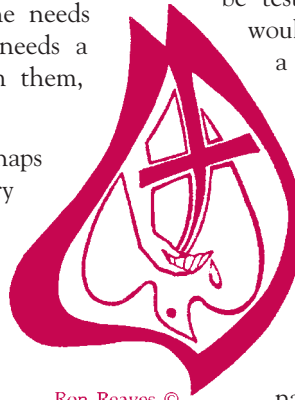
After all the bad news of those early chapters of Genesis—indeed we needed a flood to wash away the nonsense of our foolishness—God calls Abram (he’d later be called Abraham) from the only place Abram knows, the nation of Ur (somewhere near today’s Iraq). The Bible puts it this way: “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you’” (Genesis 12:1). So Abram is sent “away.”

Ask yourself how Abram must have felt. Even though he had his wife Sarah (Isaac had yet to be born), lots of servants, kinsmen and animals, he had a home no more. He had to act purely on faith. He had to step into the unknown. So, in a sense, Abram is in exile too; all he had was God’s promise to him, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1).

The only strength that Abram had in his exile was his absolute trust in God, his faith, his willingness to put the destiny of himself and his wife in the hands of God. (Doesn’t that sound like a good strategy for surviving when you’re in exile?) This faith would be tested many times—whether Abram would believe that God would give him a son; whether Abram was willing to offer this only son to God, or whether Abram would survive a struggle with God in the form of a wrestling match.

Because of Abram’s faith, he becomes a symbol of liberation and blessing, not only for the Jewish people who are his direct descendants, but also for all the nations. The Bible says: “God said to him, ‘As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you’” (Genesis 17:4-6).

Although Abraham goes into exile, he becomes the sign of freedom—by leaving his home nation of Ur, he can become a blessing to many nations and, in effect, change the world. As hard as imprisonment and exile from one’s family might be, through prayer, grace and opening ourselves to the Spirit of God, even this might be a way to attain freedom and blessing for ourselves and for those who love us.



Ron Reaves ©

Pray for the Good, not just Yourself

Abraham fathers Isaac; Isaac fathers Jacob; and Jacob fathers twelve sons who would be emblems of the twelve tribes of Israel. One of the sons he begets is Joseph—his youngest and perhaps his favorite. Many of us know the story of the multi-colored cloak Jacob had made for him. Many also know how Joseph's dreams—of how he would receive the praise of his older brothers—engendered terrible anger and resentment among them.

This all leads to Joseph's imprisonment, at the hands of his very brothers, as he is sold off to become a slave in Egypt. We might be particularly disgusted that it was his own brothers that betrayed him, but isn't betrayal always at the hands of your own—your family, your friends, even your beloved? (What can be more painful than to have your own family testify against you? Often, when they are forced, it's unbelievably painful for them too.)

Joseph is thrown down a cistern, the modern equivalent of putting someone in a sewer system or throwing them into a water tank. What must have gone through his mind? "What did I do to deserve this?" Or, "How could they do this to me?" Or, "I'm too young to die." Most probably, though, he was thinking about how badly his father would take his death.

Is slavery better than dying? That's something like today's debate of whether life in prison is better than the death penalty. Either way, it's a miserable choice. But slavery was what Joseph faced—in all the history of the world, where civilizations routinely enslaved other nations, the numbers of those who have served as slaves over all the centuries of human life would probably blow our minds. Joseph was one more slave, one more statistic.

But that's not how it ends up. The Bible says, "Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master" (Genesis 39:1-2).

Are we surprised? Joseph, enslaved as he was, betrayed and considered dead, not only

lands on his own two feet; Joseph actually gets ahead, becomes the head of the household, the official representative of his master, "a successful man" as the scriptures put it. Yet how many people, put into terrible situations, end up getting ahead? We all know people like this, people who refuse to give up, people who have energy inside them to conquer even slavery and betrayal.

How can you get that energy unless you open your heart to God who alone creates the future? Unless you open your heart to God, who else can bring about even in the worst situations hope and vision? It's more than just praying for ourselves ("poor little me"); it's praying that the Good will come about, for everyone, for the world.

Not Free without Our True Selves

But it doesn't end there. As bad luck would have it, Potiphar's wife has the hots for Joseph. When Joseph refuses to accommodate her, she claims that Joseph assaulted her (not the first false accusation in history, or the last), and Joseph is thrown in the slammer. Talk about a roller coaster life! Up one day, down in the sewer the next; down one day, up in the leadership the next; up being the boss, and down in the brig the next day.

What holds Joseph together are the thoughts of his future, his family, and his trust in God. So close is Joseph to God that Joseph receives visions that endear him to the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. Now Joseph is put in charge of everything in Egypt. So wise and resourceful is he that he saves Egypt from famine and ends up selling bread to most of the countries surrounding Egypt when famine spread to their land.

In fact, one day Joseph's own brothers come to Egypt for bread. Here they are, bowing down before Joseph (though they don't know it's him yet), asking to buy flour and food, and breaking Joseph's heart because now he has his family back again. "Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did

not recognize him. Joseph also remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about them" (Genesis 42:8-9).

Think about that! For all Joseph's success in Egypt, for all his importance, he was not really free until he saw his family once again, until he was one with them, until his own father—Jacob who had cried endlessly for him—embraced him. Freedom might have more to do with reconciliation, with healing the past, with embracing and being embraced, than with all the silly ideas people sometimes have. We can have a car, money, a special other, even a job, but if we don't have our true selves, we're still not free.

Can God's Word Liberate You?

In the Garden, in the slammer. So many of the stories in the Bible are about people being "away," in exile, in prison, in slavery. Yet none of

the stories stops there. They all talk about how people get out of prison, how they find the liberating Word of God in their lives, and end up better in the long run.

What do you think freedom is? Do you think it's possible in your life? Do you think God's Word can liberate you?



Ron Reaves ©

Rev. Frank DeSiano is President of the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, of which PNCEA Prison Ministries is an outreach ministry. Fr. DeSiano has written *The Liberating Word*, which is a short walk through the Bible and salvation history for prisoners. In the last issue of *Let's Talk!* and in this current issue we have published two chapters from the book. We'd like to hear your thoughts on what you have read so far. Have the two chapters published been helpful to you? From what you have seen, do you think that the book will be helpful to those in prisons and jails? Please send your comments to Liberating Word, PNCEA Prison Ministries, 3031 Fourth St, NE, Washington, DC 20017. Thank you.

Growing in Prayer, Part 6

Making the Day Holy...Making it a Habit

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

Peaches: OK. So, daily spiritual reading to keep the “gas in our tank.” What’s next?

Me: Habit.

Peaches: How Habit?

Me: The power of habit is to get things going and support them day in and day out.

Peaches: What do you mean?

Me: Did you decide to brush your teeth this morning?

Peaches: Yes, I did.

Me: No, you didn’t.

Peaches: Yes, I did!

Me: No, you didn’t!

Peaches: Wanna go round again?

Me: No, that’s enough for now. I’m sure that you brushed your teeth this morning. But you did not decide to brush your teeth. You did it out of habit—automatically.

Peaches: True. Where are you going with this, Deke?

Me: In the same way, we use the power of developing a habit to support our daily prayer just like we develop a habit of brushing our teeth to support daily oral hygiene.

Peaches: How?

Me: Do it for a week or two and it will turn into a habit. For example, The Morning Offering. Before I get out of bed I offer the day to God. My first thought is of God.

Peaches: What do you say?

Me: Well, I simply say something like, “Thank you for another day to serve you, Lord. Let me be open to your Holy Spirit so that I can do something for somebody today.”

Peaches: That’s it?

Me: Well there are other Morning Offerings that you can use but that’s mine.

Peaches: So now that’s a habit?

Me: Yep, first thing I think of when my eyes open.

Peaches: Sounds simple. How else can you use habit?

Me: Well, I get a cup of coffee and *pray the morning news* for 10 minutes or so while I’m waking up. I just plunk down and pray, “God help her,” or “God help them,” depending on

the news story. That’s a habit. Automatically, what I do. I know it’s a habit because I’m still half asleep! Then I make breakfast.

Peaches: Then what?

Me: Then I say *grace* before I eat breakfast.

Peaches: So you are not even up an hour yet and you’ve already prayed several times automatically!

Me: Yes, and while I’m doing what I have to do anyway.

Peaches: And, if you get in the habit of thanking God for your food before you eat, that will be three more times in your day that you will create a habit of turning to God automatically during the day!

Me: Right. And many times at lunch time at work, I say *grace* silently in my head. You don’t have to make a big show of it.

Peaches: Any other habits of prayer?

Me: Yeah, I pray whenever anyone has bad news, or when I hear a siren or . . .

Peaches: Really? A siren!

Me: Yeah, just a quiet, in my head, “O God, please help those people as you best know how.” Got that from the nuns. They used to

stop class at the sound of a passing siren and we’d pray for whoever was in trouble.

Peaches: Any other tricks up your sleeve, O Sketchy One?

Me: Well, same thing only different. I have a habit here at the prison that whenever I hear a radio go off, I use that as a trigger for a short prayer. I use, “Come, Holy Spirit.”

Peaches: So whenever you hear a radio you pray? That’s a lot of prayers!

Me: They’re quick and in my head but they keep turning me back toward God during the day. That’s the important part. Not when or how you pray. Keeps me God-focused, you know?

Peaches: You get a lot of mileage out of habit, huh?

Me: Sure do and without really taking any extra time. All this is done in a few seconds, in my head on the fly during my day.

Peaches: Cool. Living *this* life in the Spirit of Jesus, just like you said.

Deacon Dennis Dolan is chaplain at York Correctional Institution, Niantic, Conn. and is a member of the Diaconal Mission Service Team of the Diocese of Norwich.

Pope Benedict XVI’s Prayer Requests for October/November/December

October

General. *Catholic Universities:* That Catholic universities may more and more be places where, in the light of the Gospel, it is possible to experience the harmonious unity existing between faith and reason.

Missionary. *World Mission Day:* That the World Mission Day may afford an occasion for understanding that the task of proclaiming Christ is an absolutely necessary service to which the Church is called for the benefit of humanity.

November

General. *Drug Addicts and Victims of Every Form of Dependence:* That victims of drugs or of other forms of dependence may, thanks to the support of the Christian community, find in the power of our Saving God strength for a radical life-change.

Missionary. *The Continent-wide mission in Latin America:* That the Churches of Latin America may move ahead with the continent-wide mission proposed by their bishops, making it part of the universal missionary task of the People of God.

December

General. *The Experience of Personal Suffering as a Help to Others who Suffer:* That our personal experience of suffering may be an occasion for better understanding the situation of unease and pain which is the lot of many people who are alone, sick or aged, and stir us all to give them generous help.

Missionary. *Opening Our Doors to Christ:* That the peoples of the earth may open their doors to Christ and to his Gospel of peace, brotherhood and justice.

Pope Benedict XVI invites all people to join him in praying for these intentions.

Lectio Divina, Part 6

Prayer as a Way of Life and a Way to Life

We now complete our reflection on *lectio divina*, the ancient prayer of the Church that is so useful to Christians today. When many of us think of prayer, we often think of what we have to do to express our thoughts to God. Oftentimes we turn to books of prayer to help us express ourselves and our thoughts. This is well and good, and helps us many times.

But *lectio divina* is different from reciting prayers to God. This is a prayer where we come into the presence of God through reading and meditation on the Word of God in Scripture and *wait upon God to speak to us and direct us*. We grow in our sense of God's loving care for us and how he wants to lead us on our life's walk with him.

Four movements or steps. As a quick review, we remember that there are four movements or phases to *lectio divina*. These movements are not separate, but flow from one to the other. First, we listen to or read a passage from Scripture. Second, we meditate on or reflect on the meaning of the text. Third, we pray with the text to see what deeper meaning for our lives God reveals to us. Fourth, we are open to God as we contemplate deeply on what God speaks to us through this prayer grounded in Scripture.

In our fast-paced world, we are often tempted to get through these four movements as quickly as we can. In a sense, we can approach this prayer in much the same way we do all prayer: treat it as a project or responsibility we need to finish. The prayer of *lectio divina*, like all prayer, should not be a project and rushed. Rather it should be seen and understood as a way we open the door of our lives to Jesus. Recall his promise, "Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me" Revelation 3:20).

We invite Jesus into our lives. The prayer of *lectio divina* is a way that we can invite Jesus into our lives. It is a way of life and to Life. That of course is the goal of all

prayer, but especially of *lectio divina* because in this prayer we begin by reading and thinking about God's Word to us through Scripture. Because this prayer is rooted in Scripture, it is by nature a privileged way that we hear from God about our lives.

We have to ask ourselves if that is what we want. Do we want to hear from God and receive his living word for our lives, his direction to us on how we should live? If we do, this prayer is very helpful that way. That is because "God's word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates and divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the reflections and thoughts of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Questions for Prayer and Discussion

1. Do you want to receive a word of God for your life? Do you want to hear God and follow his direction for your life?
2. When you sense God speaking to you or directing your life, what is your response? One of thankfulness and acceptance, or one of regret knowing you are called to change your life?
3. If you have tried *lectio divina*, what benefits have you found? What challenges does this prayer give to you?

~ Anthony Bosnick

This six-part series of articles on *lectio divina* now draws to a close. Please let us know if you think it would be helpful to print this series as a pamphlet which PNCEA Prison Ministries would make available for prisoners. If you are able, please send a brief note to "Lectio Divina," PNCEA Prison Ministries, 3031 Fourth Street, NE Washington, DC 20017. We look forward to hearing whether or not you think this would make a good pamphlet for use in prison. Thank you.

Help with addictions

Every day is an opportunity to grow into the type of person we want to be. We are all on a pilgrimage in this life. We can use each day wisely and take a step toward our goal. Or we can sit and let time pass us by. God gives us the grace to take that step forward. Our challenge is to accept the grace as freely as God gives it.

While on their walk through life, many people struggle with addictions of different sorts. If that is your burden, the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems (NCCA) offers you help. Their approach is spiritual, which you can add to support your personal efforts and any programs you may be attending.

Write to them for their booklet "Prayers for Addicted Persons and Their Loved Ones," their "Serenity Prayer Bookmarks," and their 2011 calendar. All material is available in English and Spanish. Their mailing address is: NCCA, 1601 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360. You can also contact them by email at ncca@guesthouse.org or by toll free telephone at 800-626-6910, ext 200.

Take advantage of this free offer. You'll be glad you did.

Letter from Prison

Our *Letter from Prison* column will continue in our next newsletter. Do you have a story of God working in your life you would like to share with others? Send us your witness of 350 words or less. Please send it to *Let's Talk!*; PNCEA; 3031 Fourth Street, NE; Washington, DC 20017.

Please include a note from your chaplain stating you are in good standing at the prison. To protect your privacy, we do not print your name or prison, but do give your location by state. We are not able to pay for your submissions.

Pray for our benefactors

Let's Talk! and its Spanish translation ¡Hablemos! are supported by donations. The newsletters are given free of charge to prison chaplains for distribution to inmates by PNCEA Prison Ministries. Please pray for our benefactors. To help support this ministry, please send your donation to the address on page 2 of this newsletter.