



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY  
TO PRISONERS

# Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES



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## Getting free

**W**e all want our freedom, whether we are in prison, or outside. Our spirits yearn to be free.

To get right to the point, we are most totally free when we surrender our lives to God through his Son Jesus Christ. Freedom comes from embracing God's life and his will for us.

You probably didn't expect to read that! Freedom is a work of God in us.

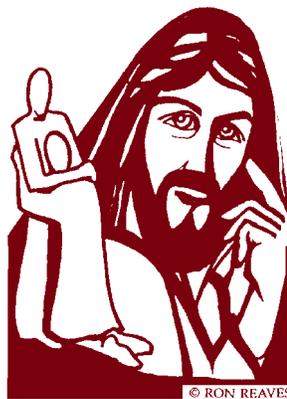
**Prayer of surrender.** St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, wrote a wonderful prayer for surrender to God.

*"Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess You have given me: I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will. Give me only*

*Your love and Your grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will desire nothing more."*

Ignatius practiced what he preached. He had lived far from God as an adventurer and soldier in his early life. After being seriously wounded in battle, Ignatius experienced spiritual conversion in 1521 while recovering. He turned from his old life of sin and self-centeredness, and embraced Christ. He became a great Saint of the Church.

**Make this prayer your own.** This prayer is short enough that you can reflect on it each day. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you need to surrender to God so you can become free in him. Some things may be obvious: perhaps anger, bitterness, or



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selfishness. Ask God's forgiveness and turn these sins over to him for forgiveness and inner healing. Ask the Spirit to show you more, to take you deeper into your life, to show you how you resist walking with God each day.

You are surrendering your memory, understanding, and will. God will have to show you what this means in your life. If you ask him and listen to him, you will come to see what he shows you. It is a slow process. But one thing is for certain: You can be sure that God wants more for you than you can ever imagine.

Expect God to lead you. Follow him and you too will become a saint. That really is our calling as followers of Christ.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This special Year of Faith draws to a close on November 24, 2013. This year has been a special time to come to know Jesus more deeply, to learn more of his love for us, and to receive the new life he gives. These goals should continue on in our lives even after the Year of Faith ends!

Our lives are important and have meaning. Remember this and your time in prison will make a difference for the better in your life. Let us all continue to follow Jesus as his disciple and pray that we continue to be transformed in him. This is a goal for our lives which should never end.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP  
President, PEM

### Praying the Mass, Part 3

## Giving Back to God

by Susan Timoney

**"I** don't want to go to Mass; I don't get anything out of it!" Every parent has heard these words on a Sunday morning. It is not just kids who feel this way. Have you ever heard yourself say this? In a world driven by a consumer mentality, we seem wired to put our needs first.

Like grocery shopping or entertainment options, we ask ourselves, "What do I want?" "What do I need and where can I get that need met?" In one way the spiritual life is like this, we may have come to realize we need God, and Sunday Mass is the place we find what we need. In another way, there is a fundamental difference with our spiritual lives. In spiritual matters, it is not all about me. Sunday Mass is all about God. Mass is what I do for God.

**Keep the Lord's Day holy.** From the time that God chose the Israelites to be his people he asked that as the Creator, as the source of all that is good and all that we have, he be worshipped as the one true God. In the third commandment, he even set aside the Lord's Day and asked that we keep it holy, first and foremost in worship and secondly as a day of rest—a Sabbath day.

We learn that in "keeping the Sabbath, the People of God recognized the power of God over his entire creation and over all people" (*Introduction to Catholicism for Adults*, p. 661).

*continued on page 2*

## CHURCH CALENDAR

### OCTOBER 2013

- 1 St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor
- 2 Guardian Angels
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, religious
- 6 **Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 13 **Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 15 St. Teresa of Avila, virgin, doctor
- 17 St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr
- 18 **St. Luke, Evangelist**
- 19 Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, priests and martyrs, and companions, martyrs
- 20 **Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 27 **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 28 Sts. Simon and Jude, apostles

### NOVEMBER 2013

- 1 All Saints
- 2 All Souls
- 3 **Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4 St. Charles Borromeo, bishop
- 9 **Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**
- 10 **Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 11 St. Martin of Tours, bishop
- 12 St. Josaphat, doctor, martyr
- 13 St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, virgin
- 17 **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 21 Presentation of Mary
- 22 St. Cecilia, virgin, martyr
- 24 **Christ the King**
- 28 Thanksgiving Day in U.S.
- 30 **St. Andrew, Apostle**

### DECEMBER 2013

- 1 **First Sunday in Advent**
- 3 St. Francis Xavier, priest
- 7 St. Ambrose, bishop, doctor
- 8 **Second Sunday of Advent**
- 8 **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
- 12 **Our Lady of Guadalupe**
- 13 St. Lucy, virgin, martyr
- 14 St. John of the Cross, priest, doctor
- 15 **Third Sunday of Advent**
- 22 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- 25 **Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**
- 26 St. Stephen, first martyr
- 27 St. John, apostle, evangelist
- 28 Holy Innocents, martyr
- 29 Holy Family

## Let's Talk!

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Thank you for your help.

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## Praying the Mass **Giving Back to God**

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In a homily, a priest said to look at it this way. "Imagine that someone gave you 168 dollars as a gift, and said you can have all of this, no strings attached, if you leave me just 1 dollar. Most of us would say, that's an awesome deal and we would do it. It's like this with God. God gives us 168 hours in a week and asks for just one hour back for himself."

**Come ready to give.** In that hour, he speaks to us in his Word. He forgives our shortcomings and failings. He prepares us to receive his Son in the Eucharist, and we receive him in the bread that becomes his very living presence. God asks us to set aside one hour each week to remind ourselves that in him, we live, we move and we have our being.

We are nothing without our Creator. Should this not be the hour that fills us with such a joy in knowing our Father loves us, desires to feed us, and promises to be with us in each of the other 167 hours of the week? We are asked to come to Mass ready to give God all of our mind, heart and soul. We are asked to come ready to give, not wondering what we will get!

Something beautiful about the Sunday Mass is that it doesn't need lots of extras to be done right—it needs a priest, the Scriptures, bread and wine. While music can lift our hearts and minds to God, music can be a few people singing badly but with love, or a talented choir and musicians.

While we are blessed with many beautiful churches, Mass is exactly the same on a small table in a battlefield or in a prison

as it is at St. Peter's in Rome. We can have powerful preachers whose homilies help us to see God more clearly or we can have no homily at all, knowing the Word and the Eucharist are the essentials. Sometimes the more simple and humble the setting the more clearly we see the Lord in the breaking of the bread. The celebration of Mass does not need extras to make it complete and perfect.

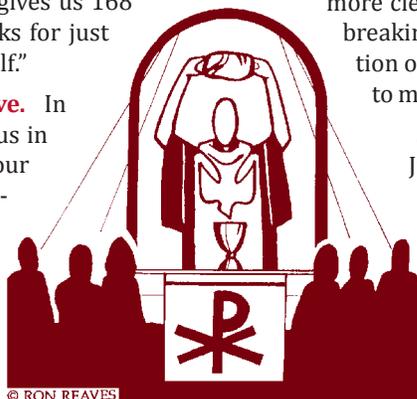
### **Sunday as a day of rest.**

Just as Mass can be simple or grand, making Sunday a day to rest in the Lord can be expressed simply or grandly. For many readers, what brings joy is not within reach. Yet, the source of our deepest joy, the joy that

brings peace is our Lord, he who is never beyond our reach, is in fact closest in our darkest hour. We can find joy in asking what at this time will be most restful or will bring a feeling of simple joy. In any place we can feel the joy of being a child of God.

Consider making Sunday the day you do those things that are simple joys. (If Mass is not offered on a Sunday, celebrate it when you can. If it is not offered at all, dedicate some special time to God.) Allow yourself to dream, and invite God into those dreams. Keeping the Lord's Day means making Mass a priority, when possible, and going to Mass ready to give glory to God. Then make the rest of the day special in some way that shows that Christ is at the center of your life.

*Dr. Susan Timoney works with parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington to grow as communities of faith. She writes frequently on spiritual topics and leads retreats for lay people.*



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## Prisoner Saint

**Bl. Rupert Mayer (1876-1945) +** As a young Jesuit priest, Fr. Mayer collected food and clothing for the poor and helped the unemployed find jobs. He later served as a chaplain in World War I and received the Iron Cross for bravery. His army career ended when a grenade shattered his leg and it was amputated. Returning home, Fr. Mayer was a popular preacher and friend of the poor. He was also a vocal opponent of Hitler and the Nazis. To silence Mayer, the Nazis imprisoned him three times. When his health began to fail while he was in a concentration camp, they moved him to a monastery so he would not die a martyr in prison. His health now broken, Fr. Mayer died while saying Mass on November 1, 1945.

**Feast Day: November 3**

## Pope Francis' Prayer Requests for October/November/ December

### OCTOBER

**General.** *People in Despair:* That those feeling so crushed by life that they wish to end it may sense the nearness of God's love.

**Missionary.** *World Mission Day:* That the celebration of World Mission Day may help all Christians realize that we are not only receivers but proclaimers of God's Word.

### NOVEMBER

**General.** *Suffering Priests:* That priests who experience difficulties may find comfort in their suffering, support in their doubts, and confirmation in their fidelity.

**Missionary.** *Latin American Churches:* That as fruit of the continental mission, Latin American Churches may send missionaries to other Churches.

### DECEMBER

**General.** *Victimized Children:* That children who are victims of abandonment or violence may find the love and protection they need.

**Missionary.** *Prepare the Savior's Coming:* That Christians, enlightened by the Word incarnate, may prepare humanity for the Savior's coming.

*Pope Francis invites all people to join him in praying for these intentions.*

## Talking about Religion, Part 5

# What about Christmas!?!

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

**Peaches:** I've got a doozy for you this time, Deke!

**Me:** What does your fundamentalist cellie want to know now?

**Peaches:** She says that Christmas is a pagan holiday! That's not true, right, Deacon?

**Me:** Well . . .

**Peaches:** Well what?! Now you're rocking my world, here! Don't take Christmas away!

**Me:** Easy, Peaches. Don't get "snaky" on me! No one's taking away Christmas. This is a classic case of a half truth.

**Peaches:** Carefully, Deacon! I love the baby Jesus.

**Me:** So do I. Now, there were no birth certificates in the ancient world for a little peasant baby born in the back end of the Roman Empire.

**Peaches:** So December 25th isn't Jesus' birthday?!

**Me:** We don't know what the day was. However, the pagans celebrated the birth of the Sun as the days started to lengthen at the end of December. It was a big party time for the Sun God.

**Peaches:** We like parties, don't we?

**Me:** We do. And when missionaries are working with new Christians our policy was and is not to disturb their culture and practices unless they are sinful.

**Peaches:** I guess that's smart if you are a world-wide Church with lots of different cultures.

**Me:** Correct. And one culture is not better or superior to another so unless there is sin involved . . .

**Peaches:** You leave the culture alone.

**Me:** Right. How many of us Americans would be able or willing to become Christians if, say, we were required to give up everything we knew and loved that was good and become something else, like, for example, Chinese?

**Peaches:** Yeah, that would be a "deal breaker" for sure.

**Me:** That was St. Paul's argument at the Council in Acts of the Apostles. The Gentile

pagans should not be required to become Jews and adopt that culture in order to be Christians (Acts 15:19-21).

**Peaches:** So, this pagan party...

**Me:** So, this party was Sun worshipping and the Church said "OK, as Christians you cannot have a celebration for the birthday of the Sun because that would be sinful and worshipping a false god but you can have a celebration for the birth of the Son of God!"

**Peaches:** I get it but she's right. It's pagan.

**Me:** So were those Christians before they were baptized! And we baptized that celebration and made it Christian too! What's more "Christian" than Christmas?!

**Peaches:** So just good mission policy then.

**Me:** Yes, and one that has been repeated many times and in many places. Easter eggs, for example were originally part of Spring fertility rites in pagan Europe. Christmas trees and wreaths were also incorporated into Christian customs from pagan cultures as well.

**Peaches:** I get it, but Karen is going to say it's unchristian and unbiblical.

**Me:** Well, lots of the bible is unchristian . . .

**Peaches:** You're killing me, Deke!

**Me:** The whole Old Testament is Jewish, not Christian. And much of the New Testament is full of Greek (pagan) culture and philosophy so everybody needs to get over that idea or we have to throw out the Bible too! Everything good comes from God and everything that is good is redeemed in Christ.

**Peaches:** I guess God would be OK with that. He would want us to take the good and leave the bad. The good is always from him in wherever it's found. And he must like diversity. He made us all different, after all.

**Me:** See, that's very "Catholic" of you, Peaches!

**Peaches:** Right. "Universal."

**Me:** What else can a Christian be if Jesus died for everyone?

*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.*

# Take Courage!

One of the things we likely admire in people is when they stand courageously in the face of the challenges and difficulties of life. We admire them for their courage, and it inspires us. A good example of this is when St. Paul was greeted by the brothers as he entered Rome for what would be his final captivity. Scripture says that at the sight of the brothers, Paul "took courage" (Acts 28:15). And from there he continued on for over two years while in prison doing the work God had given him.

Courage, sometimes called fortitude, strengthens us from fear in the face of danger or hardship. As with the other moral virtues, we seek balance in our expression of courage. "Too much" courage can lead to recklessness that can actually be dangerous. This is sometimes referred to as "bravado" or "daring." On the other hand, "too little" courage leads us to be cowardly or "spineless" in the face of danger or other challenges. Both extremes are to be avoided. Rather, we need to seek balance in all things!

As we have written in earlier articles in this series on living the good life, the moral virtues help us to achieve the happiness we all desire. The good life is achieved through living courageously.

**The twelve scouts.** Moses sent twelve scouts to explore the land of Canaan that God was giving the Israelites. After forty days, they returned and reported that it was a land of bounty, which "does indeed flow with milk and honey." But they were fearful

and reported that the people in the land were "fierce, and the towns are fortified and very strong." They spread discouraging reports, and the people were afraid. (See Numbers 13:1-33, especially 27, 28). Their punishment was than none of these people who put the Lord to the test would enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:20-24).

Their cowardice had consequences, as it does in our lives as well. This is the sorry result of lack of courage, or giving in to fear. Can you see examples in your own life or in the lives of people you know?

**Courageous people who inspire us.** On the other hand, think about people you know and why they inspire you. Also, think about people in Scripture who especially inspire. Two good places to start are those in the "lists" in Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus) in the Old Testament and in the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament.

In Sirach, chapters 44 to 50, we are inspired by Israel's great ancestors, and the author praises them for their greatness. These courageous people lived for God and brought hope to countless others. In a similar way, in Hebrews 11, the faith of the ancients is recalled, inspiring us again with their courageous lives.

As we read their names and a brief account

## The Moral Virtues

- **Prudence** helps us decide in every situation which action is really the best for us and to decide to do that. Sometimes it may mean "tough love" is necessary!
- **Justice** is the virtue which leads us to be honest and true to God and neighbor and to give what is due to them.
- **Fortitude** (also called courage) helps us to overcome fear or indifference and do what is called for in any situation.
- **Temperance** helps us be moderate with bodily pleasures so that we don't drink or eat too much, or too little for that matter.

of their heroic lives, we are inspired and encouraged to live courageously ourselves. We see this too in the lives of the Saints who saw beyond the everyday challenges of life, and reached higher. And hopefully we see it in the lives of friends and relatives who inspire us by taking on the challenges of life in faith, and live beautiful lives. Living courageously inspires ourselves and others, and helps us to live better, more fruitful lives.

**Some practical tips to follow.** In light of this, here are some practical tips. First, take advice *carefully* and weigh it. Second, look at the situation at hand and *honestly seek* to judge and act correctly. Third, *act* on what you have decided. Fourth, *review your actions* to see if the outcome seems wise. In all of this, don't immobilize yourself into inaction.

For a Christian, courage always takes into consideration God's will. A simple and popular way to say this is "What would Jesus do?" Or, "How would Jesus act?" We may not know for sure, but we can be pretty clear about it. One thing for sure, when we act with courage, we will be on our way to the good life and happiness.

~ Anthony Bosnick

## Help with addictions; 2014 Calendar

Every day is an opportunity to grow into the type of person we want to be. We can use each day wisely and take a step toward our goal. Or we can 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 Addictions (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 2014 calendar (available in November 2013). All material is available in English, and some in Spanish. Indicate the language you need. Their mailing address is: NCCA, 1601 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360. You can also contact them by email at [ncca@guesthouse.org](mailto: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.

## Prayer of Surrender

Take, O Lord,  
and receive my entire liberty,  
my memory, my understanding  
and my whole will.  
All that I am and all that I possess  
You have given me:  
I surrender it all to You  
to be disposed of according to  
Your will.  
Give me only Your love and  
Your grace;  
with these I will be rich enough,  
and will desire nothing more.

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