

Living Life In Abundance

The Transforming Power of Prayer



Men's Retreat

Holy Innocents Catholic Church

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The Plan

“I came so that they might have
life and have it more
abundantly.”

John 10:10

Prayer Primer

- Prayer as relationship/encounter (Zechariah's Canticle Luke 1:67-79)
- Catechism of the Catholic Church Part 4
- Praying in the "power" of the Holy Spirit (The Role of the Holy Spirit in prayer)
- The fruits of prayer (Galatians 5:22)
- Holy Father's Catechesis
- Distractions (Forced Prayer)
- The Mass (The Source & Summit)

A Year of Faith

The “door of faith” (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime. It begins with baptism (cf. Rom 6:4), through which we can address God as Father, and it ends with the passage through death to eternal life, fruit of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, whose will it was, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to draw those who believe in him into his own glory (cf. Jn 17:22). To profess faith in the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is to believe in one God who is Love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8): the Father, who in the fullness of time sent his Son for our salvation; Jesus Christ, who in the mystery of his death and resurrection redeemed the world; the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church across the centuries as we await the Lord’s glorious return.

A Year of Faith

During the homily at the Mass marking the inauguration of my pontificate I said: “The Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life, and life in abundance.” It often happens that Christians are more concerned for the social, cultural and political consequences of their commitment, continuing to think of the faith as a self-evident presupposition for life in society. In reality, not only can this presupposition no longer be taken for granted, but it is often openly denied. Whereas in the past it was possible to recognize a unitary cultural matrix, broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of the faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swathes of society, because of a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people. (Motu Proprio *Data Porta Fidei* #1-2)

The Vision

- ## New way of life

Hence, now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death.

(Romans 8:1)

- ## The Inner Self

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(Ephesians 3:15-19)

Key Points

- “The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the lives of believers: by their very existence in the world, Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us.”
- To the extent that he freely **cooperates**, man’s thoughts and affections, mentality and conduct are slowly purified and transformed, on a journey that is never completely finished in this life. “Faith working through love” (Gal 5:6) becomes a new criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole of man’s life (cf. Rom 12:2; Col 3:9-10; Eph 4:20-29; 2 Cor 5:17).
- It will also be a good opportunity to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is “the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; ... and also the source from which all its power flows.” At the same time, we make it our prayer that believers’ witness of life may grow in credibility. To rediscover the content of the faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed, and to reflect on the act of faith, is a task that every believer must make his own, especially in the course of this Year.

Biblical Examples

- “Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved” (Rom 10:10). The heart indicates that the first act by which one comes to faith is God’s gift and the action of grace which acts and transforms the person deep within.
- The example of Lydia is particularly eloquent in this regard. Saint Luke recounts that, while he was at Philippi, Paul went on the Sabbath to proclaim the Gospel to some women; among them was Lydia and “the Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:14). There is an important meaning contained within this expression. Saint Luke teaches that knowing the content to be believed is not sufficient unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace that allows the eyes to see below the surface and to understand that what has been proclaimed is the word of God.

Keeping Focused

- During this time we will need to keep our gaze fixed upon Jesus Christ, the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2): in him, all the anguish and all the longing of the human heart finds fulfillment. The joy of love, the answer to the drama of suffering and pain, the power of forgiveness in the face of an offence received and the victory of life over the emptiness of death: all this finds fulfillment in the mystery of his Incarnation, in his becoming man, in his sharing our human weakness so as to transform it by the power of his resurrection. In him who died and rose again for our salvation, the examples of faith that have marked these two thousand years of our salvation history are brought into the fullness of light.

A Changed Life

- Personal Relationship with Christ

“Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

- Sense of direction in life

“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare, not for woe! plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

Life Transformation

- Relationships - healthy relationships
- View of the world
- Ability to bring peace and grace
- Mercy
- Valuing things that really matter (Philippians 1:10)
- Joyful life
- Experience of suffering changes (Redemptive Suffering)

How Do We Get It?

- Repentance
- Faith
- The Grace of Pentecost
- Ongoing formation

Formation

- Prayer
- Scripture
- Mass
- Reconciliation
- Spiritual Friendships

A Personal Encounter

The Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.

Spe Salvi #2 Pope Benedict XVI

Joy In All Circumstances



HOW MANY KINGS

FROM DOWNHERE

Follow the star to a place
unexpected
Would you believe after all
we've projected
A child in a manger

Lowly and small, the
weakest of all
Unlikeliness hero, wrapped
in his mothers shawl
Just a child
Is this who we've waited
for?

Cause how many kings,
stepped down from their
thrones?
How many lords have
abandoned their homes?
How many greats have
become the least for me?
How many Gods have
poured out their hearts
To romance a world that
has torn all apart?
How many fathers gave up
their sons for me?

Bringing our gifts for the
newborn savior
All that we have whether
costly or meek
Because we believe
Gold for his honor and
frankincense for his
pleasure
And myrrh for the cross
he'll suffer
Do you believe, is this who
we've waited for?
It's who we've waited for

How many kings, stepped
down from their thrones?
How many lords have
abandoned their homes?
How many greats have
become the least for me?
How many Gods have
poured out their hearts
To romance a world that
has torn all apart?
How many fathers gave up
their sons for me?
Only one did that for me

All for me
All for you
All for me
All for you