

# Easter Prayer 2008

We had occasion to talk to someone on Palm Sunday. They related how they would like to continue with their Lenten spiritual practices on in to the rest of the year. Lent should be a time to increase our spiritual practices and bring something new into our lives. It is Our opinion that what is needed from all Christians today is an increase in true prayer or as Pope Pius XII said: *What is of prime importance for the action of the priest and the laity is the interior life, the life of union with God, the life of prayer, the life which St. Paul speaks of when He cries out: "Your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3,3).*

*He will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and he will pray in the sight of the most High. He will open his mouth in prayer, and will make supplication for his sins.*<sup>1</sup>

## A Requested Practice

This same person said that they cannot get into anything first thing in the morning. As such, We recommend to them that they set aside the best time of their day for this practice. However, for most of us, the best time is first thing in the morning. We should give our *first fruits* to God. Not just the *first fruits* of income, but also the *first fruits* of our very life. Didn't our life and everything we have come from God? And what return to we make to Him for the many gifts He has bestowed upon us?

### Morning Offering

Everyone should begin by offering the day by God the moment they awake. A more formal offering should be made soon afterwards. However, this offering is worthless, as The Art of Prayer observes, if it is not renewed throughout the day.

### Morning Meditation

We believe that meditation is essential to being a true Christian. This holy practice should be begun at the time we reach the use of reason, so fathers should see to it that their children are taught how to meditate. In fact, fathers may wish to read a short meditation and then exhort their family to think on what was just read. The Saints tell us that those who faithfully meditate daily and persevere in this practice until death will save their souls. As Saint Alphonsus says they will either give up sin or they will give up meditation. With such assurance, only a fool would refuse to undertake such a holy practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus 39:6-7 on the wise man. We recommend meditating on this whole chapter.

# Spiritual Reading

Spiritual reading is also essential, especially in these days when we are bombarded by all sides by the world. If a person does not have time for a quarter of an hour's spiritual reading, then it is time to haul the television set to the curb. Suddenly the time will be found. How many hours do we spend being bombarded by the world, and yet we cannot find a half an hour for God. What folly.

## Other Practices

In Mediator Dei Pope Pius XII<sup>2</sup> outlines the main *private devotions* of Christians: *meditation on spiritual things, diligent examination of conscience, enclosed retreats, visits to the blessed sacrament, and those special prayers in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary among which the rosary, as all know, has pride of place.* We have already inculcated the necessity of meditation and remind all that true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is also essential to our salvation. She is the Mediatrix of grace and our *Co-Redemptrix*. Also each day should end with an examination of conscience before our head hits the pillow.

## *A Little Church*

Thus Saint John Chrysostom calls the family. The family is a small *religious community*, sanctified by a *Great Sacrament*, the Sacrament of marriage. Of course, the family does not follow a strict rule as religious *families* do, but there should be a *rule of life*. Below We have reproduced Saint Elzear's rule for his household. Remember Saint Elzear was a layman! Every family should sanctify the day with prayer from morning until evening. We have seen families, which begin the day with *community prayer*, and this is indeed an edifying practice to be imitated where possible. Children must be taught their morning and evening prayers, as well as their holy religion. And religion is more than a system of doctrines and practices, but it is a way of living!

## The Art of Prayer

This book is finally prepared for downloading, printing and study. As it says of itself, it is not a book to be read, but a manual to be studied. We believe it is essential to keep a spiritual notebook alongside as we progress in learning the *art of prayer*, which is the *science of the saints*. Even if you cannot draw a straight line with a ruler, you can master the *art of prayer*. Even if you don't know a proton from the a mammal, you can master the *science of the saints*. Any *reasonable* person can master this art and science,

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 174

and by reasonable We mean having he use of reason. Failure can only come if we refuse to do God's will and learn the *art of prayer* and the *science of the saints*.

## Prayer Is the Lifeblood of the Church

We wish to remind all that we are part of the *Communion of Saints*. We are the Church Militant, fighting against our threefold enemy, the world, the flesh and the Devil. As someone recently observed to US, how can we love the world if it is our enemy? It is indeed foolish to love the world, which is a place of exile for a moment on our way to eternity. If we love the world, we will conform ourselves to its maxims, which are those of the Devil and not of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sacred Scripture and the Saints often remind us that the world and Jesus are totally opposed to each other and we will either love Jesus or the world. So, let us learn the maxims of Jesus, meditate upon them and then live by them!

## Saint Elzear's Rule of Life For His Household

Let us remember first of all Saint Elzear was a layman.

Saint Elzear made the following regulations for his family:

1. *Everyone in my family shall daily hear Mass, whatever business they may have. If God be well served in my house, nothing will be wanting.*

2. *Let no one swear, curse, or blaspheme, under pain of being severely chastised, and afterward shamefully dismissed. How can I hope that God will pour forth His heavenly blessings on my house, if it is filled with such miscreants who devote themselves to the devil? Or, can I endure stinking mouths which infect houses and poison the souls of others?*

3. *Let all persons honor chastity, and let no one imagine that the least impurity in word or action shall ever go unpunished in Elzear's house. It is never to be hoped for of me.*

4. *Let all men and women confess their sins every week; and let no one be so unhappy as not to communicate at least on all the principal festivals; namely, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and all the feasts of Our Lady.*

5. *Let no persons be idle in my house. In the morning, the first thing shall be, that everyone raise his heart to God with fervent prayer and oblation of himself, and of all his actions; then let all go to their business, the men abroad, the women at home. In the morning a little more time shall be allowed for meditation; but away with those who are perpetually in the church to avoid the business of their employments. This they do, not because of a love of contemplation, but because they desire to have their work done for them. The life of the pious woman, as described by the Holy Ghost, is not only to pray well, but also to be modest and obedient, to ply her work diligently, and to take good care of the household. The ladies shall pray and read in the mornings, but shall spend the afternoon at some work.*

6. *I will have no playing at dice, or any games of hazard. There are thousands of innocent diversions, though time passes soon enough without being idly passed away. Yet I desire not my castle to be a cloister, nor my people hermits. Let them be merry, and sometimes divert themselves; but never at the expense of conscience or with danger of offending God.*

7. *Let peace be perpetually maintained in my family. Where peace reigns, there God dwells. Where envy, jealousy, suspicions, reports, and slanders are harbored in one family, two armies are formed, which are continually upon the watch and in ambush to surprise one another, and the master is besieged, wounded and devoured by them both. ... Slanderers, detractors, and disorderly servants tear one another to pieces.*

8. *If any quarrel happen, I will have the precept of the apostle inviolably observed, that the sun set not before it be appeased; but, in the instant that it falls on us, let it be squashed, and all manner of bitterness laid in the tomb of forgetfulness.*

9. *Every evening all my family shall assemble to a pious conference, in which they shall hear something spoken of God, the salvation of souls, and the gaining of paradise. What a shame it is, that though we are in this world save only to gain heaven, we seldom seriously think of it: and scarcely ever speak about it but only occasionally!*

10. *I most strictly command that no office or servant under my jurisdiction or authority injure any man in his goods, honor, or reputation, or oppress any poor person, or ruin any one under the color of doing my business.*