

Day 205 – Sunday, October 11, 2020

Sunday mornings are always a rush for me, so I don't have time to write something, but because it is Thanksgiving weekend. We need to remember all of those who are an important part of our lives, whether they are living or deceased.

Pray For The Living & The Dead

What is the geography of your prayer? Do you pray for your personal needs, immediate family, close friends, and local community? What about the needs of others, complete strangers, enemies, and people in cities on the other side of the world? Do you pray for just the living, or do you also pray for the dead—the souls in purgatory? Prayer changes things. And as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we should “pray without ceasing”—pray constantly and endlessly. This doesn't mean that we need to spend all day, every day, in a church praying the Rosary, and saying Our Fathers and Hail Mary's. It means incorporating prayer—conversations with God, Jesus, Mary, and the saints—into our everyday lives.

How can you and I, the busy people that we are, adopt a pray-without-ceasing lifestyle? It's much easier than you think. One practical way is to offer up our monotonous daily tasks for others—both living and deceased—turning our lives into a beautiful offering to God. Suddenly, sitting in traffic on your way to work doesn't seem as frustrating when you offer up your irritation for a loved one fighting cancer or battling an addiction. Another way to adopt a pray without-ceasing lifestyle is to treat every encounter with someone—at the grocery store, at a ball game, at work, or in your own home—as an opportunity to pray for that person. And every reminder of the blessings we have is an opportunity to pray for those who are without. Here are some simple ways to incorporate praying for the living and the dead into daily life.

- When you hear a police car, ambulance, or fire truck siren,
pray a Hail Mary for the officers, paramedics and anyone involved
- When you pass a funeral home with a parking lot full of cars,
pray for the soul of the deceased person, as well as that person's family and friends.
- When you do laundry, prepare a meal, take a shower, or go to bed at night,
ask God to comfort those who don't have clothes to wash, food to eat, running water to use,
or a bed to sleep in.
- When you see a cemetery, pray for the souls of the people who are buried there,
as well as the souls of your loved ones who have passed away.
- When you see a sunrise or sunset,
smell fresh baked cookies, hear your favorite song, or taste something delicious,
pray for those who are blind, deaf, or unable to experience life through their senses.
- When you are impatient, frustrated, or going through a struggle in your life,
pray for the poor souls in purgatory who are patiently,
painfully awaiting their entrance into heaven.
- Sometime during November—the month devoted to praying for the deceased—pray a novena
specifically for the souls in purgatory.
(You can find various novenas and short prayers for the souls in purgatory online.)
- Prayer changes things. Imagine meeting a family member, friend, or stranger in heaven and finding out that your prayer during their life on earth or their pit stop in purgatory helped them get through a rough time or purified them for heaven. That's mercy.

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein