

Monday

The wonder of the human person

Indeed, it is now clear that the soul of a faithful person, the most worthy of all creatures because of the grace of God, is greater than heaven itself, since the heavens and the rest of creation cannot contain their Creator; only a faithful soul is His dwelling place and throne, and this only through the charity that the wicked lack. The Truth says: Whoever loves me will be loved by My Father, and I too shall love him, and We shall come to him and make Our dwelling place with him.

— St. Clare of Assisi, “The Third Letter to Agnes of Prague”

Scripture

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. (Psalm 139.1-10, 13-15)

Prayer

Creator of the universe, you have made me in your own image and likeness. This alone demonstrates my deep connection to you and endows me and all other people with special value and dignity. This Lenten season, remind me of how precious I am in your eyes, and keep me ever mindful of my own dignity and worth as well as that of others.

Tuesday

Love in action

I admonish and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ all my sisters, both those present and those to come, to strive always to imitate the way of holy simplicity, humility and poverty and also the integrity of our holy way of living, as we were taught from the beginning of our conversion by Christ and by our blessed father Francis....And loving one another with the love of Christ, may you demonstrate without in your deeds the love you have within so that, compelled by such an example, the sisters may always grow in the love of God and in mutual charity.

—St. Clare of Assisi, “The Testament”

Scripture

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

(1 John 3.14-20)

Prayer

Lord, it is easy to have feelings of love in my heart or to say that I have love with my words. However, you ask me to follow your own example by demonstrating my love in my actions. As an important part of my conversion and as a reflection of your own self-giving love, help me to give of myself in loving service to others, to those most in need.

Wednesday

Consequences of sin

As often as they have turned away from the commands of the Lord and “wandered outside obedience” (Honorius III), let all the brothers [and sisters] know, as the Prophet says, they are cursed outside obedience as long as they knowingly remain in such a sin. When they have persevered in the Lord’s commands—as they have promised by the Holy Gospel and their life, let them know they have remained in true obedience and are blessed by the Lord.

—St Francis of Assisi, *The Earlier Rule*

Scripture

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6.3-11)

Prayer

Lord, you call me to follow you because you want what is best for me in life. Yet, sometimes I turn away from you and then suffer the consequences of having rejected your life and love. When I choose darkness and death, call me back to your light and life. I ask for forgiveness for the times I have hurt my relationship with you.

Thursday

Uniting our sufferings with Christ

If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him.
weeping with Him, you will rejoice with Him;
dying on the cross of tribulation with Him,
you will possess heavenly mansions with Him
among the splendor of the saints
and in the Book of Life your name will be called glorious among the peoples.

— St. Clare of Assisi, “The Second Letter to Agnes of Prague”

Scripture

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5.1-5)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you did not avoid suffering. With great faith in your Father, you faced it head-on. I live in a world that urges me to avoid suffering at all costs. Give me strength as I too face suffering in life. Help me to remember that suffering is part of the growth process of becoming the kind of person who is suited to spend eternal life with you.

Friday

Becoming Christ-bearers like Mary

As [Mary] carried [Christ] materially, so you, too, by following in her footprints, especially [those] of humility and poverty, can, without any doubt, always carry Him spiritually in your chaste and virginal body, holding Him by Whom you and all things are held together possessing that which, in comparison with the other transitory possessions of this world you will possess more securely. In this, certain worldly kings and queens are deceived, for, even though their pride may reach the skies and their heads touch the clouds, in the end they are as forgotten as a dung-heap!

— St. Clare of Assisi, “The Third Letter to Agnes of Prague”

Scripture

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.
(John 19.25-27)

Prayer

O God, this Lenten season teach me by Mary's example. Help me to be open to your will as she was throughout her life. Teach me what it means to be a faithful follower of your Son, even to the cross. As I seek to follow in Mary's footsteps as a model of Christian discipleship, may I bring Christ to others through the way that I live my life.

Saturday

Lip service

Because the spirit of the flesh very much desires and strives to have the words but cares little for the activity; it does not seek a religion and holiness in an interior spirit, but wants and desires to have a religion and a holiness outwardly apparent to people. They are the ones of whom the Lord says: Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

—St. Francis of Assisi, *The Earlier Rule*

Scripture

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart. (Jeremiah 24.4-7)

Prayer

Lord, it is easier to speak of my faithfulness than to live it from my heart. I do not want to live a life of hypocrisy where my words say one thing but my heart and actions say another. Give me the strength and courage so that I might be a person of integrity. Permeate me with the fire of your love so that my words are not empty but reflect a heart and life devoted to you.