

THOUGHTS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

January 2023



The effectiveness of a man's apostolic work
(what God sends him out to do)
depends upon the reality
and intensity of his mystical life
(the personal experiential encounters
with the Divine).

No one can give what they do not have.
One silent, solitary, God-centred,
God-intoxicated man can do more
to keep God's love alive
and his presence felt in the world
than a thousand half-hearted, talkative,
busy men living frightened,
fragmented lives of quiet desperation.

*William McNamara OCD
The Human Adventure*

1 st	The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus: After eight days had passed, it was the time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. <i>Luke 2:21</i>
2 nd	Basil of Caesarea (d.379) and Gregory of Nazianzus (d.389), bishops and teachers; Eliza Hassall, pioneer of CMS (Australia) and missionary training (d.1917): They asked him, "Why then are you baptising if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptising. <i>John 1:25-18</i>
3 rd	Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement. ... get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed. <i>Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972)</i>
4 th	The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. <i>John 1:36-39</i>
5 th	You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. <i>Psalms 16:11</i>
6 th	The Epiphany of our Lord: Lord Jesus may your light shine our way, as once it guided the steps of the magi: that we too may be led into your presence and worship you, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the Saviour of mankind; to whom be glory forever.
7 th	Sometimes the best gain is to lose. <i>George Herbert (1593-1633)</i>
8 th	The Baptism of our Lord: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practise it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever. <i>Psalms 111:10</i>
9 th	Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. <i>Hebrews 1:1-4</i>
10 th	William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, martyr (d.1645): Our present ecological crisis, the biggest single practical threat to our human existence in the middle to long term, has, religious people would say, a great deal to do with our failure to think of the world as existing in relation to the mystery of God, not just as a huge warehouse of stuff to be used for our convenience. <i>Rowan Williams</i>
11 th	Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. <i>Hebrews 2:18</i>
12 th	Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. <i>Psalms 33:8-9</i>
13 th	Hilary of Poitiers, bishop and teacher (d.367): We are not responsible for the circumstances we are in, but we are responsible for the way we allow those circumstances to affect us; we can either allow them to get on top of us or we can allow them to transform us into what God wants us to be. <i>Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)</i>

14 th	Sava, first archbishop of the Serbian church (d.1235): Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. <i>Hebrews 4:14-16</i>
15 th	Second Sunday after Epiphany: Like the Magi, may we also journey and be attentive, untiring and courageous on the path to find the invisible God who was born among us. <i>Pope Francis</i>
16 th	While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a man in jail, I am not free. <i>Eugene Debs (1855-1926)</i>
17 th	Antony of Egypt, abbot (d.356): I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. <i>Psalms 40:8</i>
18 th	Confession of Peter: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." <i>John 8:12</i>
19 th	Instead of loving what you think is peace, love other men and women and love God above all else. Instead of hating all the people you think are warmongers, hate the appetites and disorders in your own soul which are the causes of war. <i>Thomas Merton (1915-1968)</i>
20 th	An enemy is one whose story we have not heard. <i>Gene Knudsen Hoffman (1919-2010)</i>
21 st	Agnes, martyr at Rome, virgin (d.304): I revere your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. <i>Psalms 119:48</i>
22 nd	Third Sunday after Epiphany: Father, use us, unworthy as we are, to bring in your kingdom of mercy, justice, love and peace. Empower us by your Spirit and unite us in your Son, that all our joy and delight may be to serve you, now and forever.
23 rd	The only thing we can offer to God of value is to give our love to people as unworthy of it as we are of God's love. <i>St Catherine of Sienna</i>
24 th	Companions of Paul, including Timothy, Titus and Silas: For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead. <i>James 2:26</i>
25 th	Conversion of Paul the Apostle: For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. <i>Psalms 62:1</i>
26 th	Australia Day: We bless you, God of the Universe, for this land, for its contrasts of landscape and climate, for its abundance of wealth and opportunity. We bless you for our history, with all its struggles in adversity, its courage and hope. Give us in our diversity tolerance and respect for each other and a passionate commitment to justice for all. <i>Amen.</i>
27 th	John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, teacher (d.407): True progress quietly and persistently moves along without notice. <i>Attributed to St Francis</i>
28 th	Thomas Aquinas, theologian (d.1274): If the only prayer you say in your whole life is thank you, it will be enough. <i>Meister Eckhart.</i>
29 th	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany: Loving God, you have blessed us with the eternal gift of your Son Jesus Christ. Like the wise men of old, create within us the joy of giving, as we humbly offer the treasures of our lives so Christ might be truly honoured and we might know his delight deep within our souls.
30 th	Charles, king of England (d.1649): Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord. <i>Psalms 31:24</i>
31 st	When he was dying, St Francis made clear to his brothers the uniqueness of each person's response to Christ. He covered the wound in his side with his right hand as if to preserve the seal of his own unique response, and he said, "I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours to do."

PRAYER THOUGHTS



Sunday

This world and all within it is part of your glorious plan, devised and created in love for your people to enjoy. Such divine mystery; Such wonder; that you should consider humankind so precious and provide for our needs. God of all, our creator, our rock, our refuge, our confidence and hope, our rescuer and deliverer, in whom we can rely, we will praise your name today and all days. *Amen.*

Monday

Keep us, O God, from all pettiness. Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off all self-seeking. Grant that we may realise that it is the little things of life that create differences, that in the big things of life we are as one. And, O God, let us not forget to be kind.

Tuesday

For John the Baptist preparing the way by repentance and baptism we thank you. For Jesus Christ proclaimed your Son by water and Spirit we thank you. For Good News that Salvation has come to the earth we thank you. For your love undeserved and graciously given we thank you. For the Holy Spirit transforming and empowering lives we thank you. For your promise of an eternity in which to praise you we thank you.

Wednesday

A prayer for Ukraine: God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today. We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons. We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them. We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions. Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Thursday

Forgive us, Lord when we are struggling with life, searching for answers in vain, relying on our own strength and failing again. Remind us, Lord that you are the strength upon whom we can call, the power to endure, the answer that we seek, the one in whose arms we can safely fall. Forgive us, Lord when we forget.

Friday

Dear Lord, I pray that I can show mercy without judgement, compassion unconditionally. Lord, guide my hands to serve you. Move me. Infuse my spirit. Bless me.

Saturday

Lord, please keep me from the foolishness of sin. I ask for wisdom and discernment to make wise choices in my life. When I am tempted, give me strength to flee it. When I am uncertain, help me to know the right course of action. When I need good ideas, enlighten my mind with creativity and intelligence. May I walk in your wisdom and learn your ways.

Thoughts for Prayer & Reflection
for our *city on a hill*... and beyond.

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