



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 1

DISCURSIVE PRAYER: I TALK, GOD
LISTENS; GOD TALKS, I LISTEN

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Preparing for the Journey

listen



In Revelation Five, Week One, we will continue to examine how Jesus' witnesses testify to His identity and mission as the Son of God. On Days One and Seven we continue to offer Helps to Prayer to help your discipleship. On Day One, we will examine Discursive Prayer: I talk, God listens; God talks, I listen. Prayer is the vehicle by which we express our relationship with Jesus, and through Him, with the Blessed Trinity. Prayer is the place where we speak to God, and as we mature in the relationship, we realize that God speaks to us and we learn to listen and recognize God's voice.

On Day Seven, we will consider Practicing Gratitude. As creatures, we are beholden to God our Creator for the essence of our being. What is even more striking is that God has chosen to establish a union of likeness with us. God chose Jesus Christ to be our Savior by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We are God's sons and daughters and Jesus' brothers and sisters.

On Day Two, we will reflect on The Healed Demoniac's Witness. The healing of the demoniac addresses the truth that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well. Jesus is about destroying the power of Satan, overthrowing his dominion over people, and over this man, particularly. In the encounter between Jesus and the unclean spirits, they concede defeat because they know that Jesus is the Son of the Most High.

On Day Three, we will experience The Healing of a Paralytic. The Paralytic was relegated to the lost sheep of Israel because of his illness which was viewed as a punishment for sin. Jesus begins the interaction by forgiving the Paralytic his sins. Clearly then, Jesus is claiming that He is God, and as God, He has the power to cure the man of his illness. After Jesus forgives the man his sins, He then heals the paralytic of his illness. Jesus can be our Savior because He is God!



Preparing for the Journey

On Day Four, we will ponder The Healing of a Demoniac. Jesus heals the blind and mute demoniac through His own power because He is God. Jesus has come to overthrow the dominion of Satan because He is the Savior of the world. Only God can have such power over Beelzebul.

On Day Five, we will reflect on Joseph of Arimathea's Witness. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin. According to God's original intent, the Council was supposed to serve the spiritual well-being of the people. However, in Jesus' time the Sanhedrin had become corrupt and self-serving. From the way he has been described in all the four gospels accounts, Joseph lived the way a Sanhedrin member was supposed to live, as an earnest seeker of truth. No wonder he was attracted to Jesus. After Jesus' death, Joseph offered his own tomb for Jesus' burial. For the sake of Jesus, Joseph was willing to be scorned by his former colleagues in the Sanhedrin.

On Day Six, we will ponder Nicodemus' Witness. Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin who was genuinely well disposed toward Jesus. He chose to meet with Jesus in the dark of night. After Jesus' death, Nicodemus publicly declared his loyalty to Jesus. As a criminal, Jesus forfeited any burial rites and burial in a tomb. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea defied the ban. When Jesus had been lifted up on the cross, Nicodemus remembered the words that He had spoken to him in the night interview. Nicodemus was now born again and had entered the reign of God.



Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer is the vehicle by which we express our relationship with Jesus, and through Him, with the Blessed Trinity. In prayer, we come to know who Jesus is, and in Him, who the Father is, and through Him, who the Holy Spirit is as the Keeper of our soul. In prayer, through the action of the Holy Spirit, Jesus reveals to us how we are being re-created in His image and likeness. Prayer is the place where we speak to God, and as we mature in the relationship, we realize that God speaks to us and we learn to listen and recognize God's voice.

Our re-creation in the image and likeness of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit is a gradual process that has very definite steps that the seeker takes. The first step is a sincere acknowledgment of one's sins. Isaiah, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints took this first and necessary step. And implied in the acceptance of one's sinfulness is the understanding that living free of the shackles of sin is beyond us. We need an outside power to save us from our slavery to sin and addictive behaviors. And we have come to see that Jesus fits that bill perfectly. His life, words and works, climaxing in His death on the cross leading to His resurrection, impel us to accept Him as our Savior and Lord! Our acknowledgement of sin leads to repentance. We accept to live according to the teachings of Jesus.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Such honest repentance leads to faith in Jesus. We surrender our lives to Him in gratitude, praise, and adoration. We ask Him to become the Lord and Master of our lives. In prayer, we go through these various steps, and gradually move from communication to communion to union with the Divine. For a good part of this journey, the seeker engages in discursive prayer, using their thoughts, words, imagination, and memory, to reveal to God their hopes and aspirations, as well as their burdens and long-standing festering wounds! In this daily encounter with God, their hearts are made whole, being forgiven and offering forgiveness to all. This stage of prayer could be simply described as, I talk, God listens.

God is now at the Center of their lives. However, there are other priorities and passions that continue to dissipate their commitment to discipleship. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit keeps beckoning them, convicting them without condemning them. Gradually, the seeker moves toward becoming a disciple. God becomes the Center of their lives! Living for God and serving others becomes their priority. They have eschewed deliberate sin, replacing their sinful thoughts with what Jesus tells them to do, fasting from excessive eating and snacking, and thus having a better control over their minds and hearts. They have subjected themselves to the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit and are able to retain their peace and joy even in challenging circumstances. There is a qualitative change in the way they pray. They make sure that they are honest and transparent before God. They are now much more receptive to listening to what the Holy Spirit has to say to them. This stage of prayer could be described as, God talks, I listen!

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!



Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O my God, I thank you for all the graces and blessings which I have received from you this day. Express to God your gratitude as you recall the blessings and graces that were present today: For what are you grateful?

Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

Step Five: Looking to improve your spiritual focus?

- Gaining control of our physical senses and temptations can allow for a deeper commitment to our spiritual goals. Increase your spiritual endurance by practicing mastery over your physical desires and distractions.
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- Treating your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, find opportunities for daily physical exercise of your choice.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

[illegible]



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 2

THE HEALED DEMONIAC'S WITNESS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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"As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him. But he would not permit him but told him instead, "Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you." Then the man went off and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him; and all were amazed." - Mark 5: 18-20

During His ministry in Galilee, Jesus set up headquarters in Capernaum. He was contending with some major challenges to establish the Kingdom of God. Herod Antipas was the Tetrarch of Galilee and his fortress in Tiberias was not far off. He had beheaded John the Baptist and was paranoid about any charismatic leader rebelling against him. Jesus was attracting crowds in the thousands and could become a major threat. Hence, He repeatedly told those He cured not to tell anyone of their healings. Secondly, Jesus was debunking the notion that the Messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel through military power. His own disciples would have great difficulty accepting Jesus as a Suffering-Servant Messiah who would take away the sins of the world through His sacrifice on the cross. Lastly, the concept that Jesus would be the Messiah of the whole world was foreign to His Jewish audience even though this truth was foretold in their Scriptures about the Suffering-Servant being for all humankind: "It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 49: 6).



Face to Face WITH GOD

The healing of the demoniac addresses the truth that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well. The disciples will understand this truth only after the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The presence of the herd of swine tells us we are in Gentile territory. Most probably, the demoniac was a Gentile. He was dwelling among the tombs, and no one could restrain him, not even with chains. Jesus is about destroying the power of Satan and his dominion over people, and this man, particularly. In the encounter between Jesus and the unclean spirits, they concede defeat because they know that Jesus is the Son of the Most High. Jesus accedes to their request to inhabit the herd of swine, unclean animals, who are a better dwelling place for them than humans.

The change in the Gerasene man is amazing: “the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him.” Instead, Jesus sends him on a mission, asking him to witness to his family and friends: “Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you” (Mark 5: 19). This visit to Gentile territory was the first of two. The first time, the inhabitants were awed by Jesus’ power, and terrified by it as well. They asked Jesus to leave them. During His second visit, however, the crowds were very welcoming of Jesus. They followed Jesus in great numbers. He fed four thousand people by multiplying seven loaves and a few fish. Probably, the healed demoniac was a powerful witness to Jesus among his fellow inhabitants, preparing them to receive the good news in Jesus.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

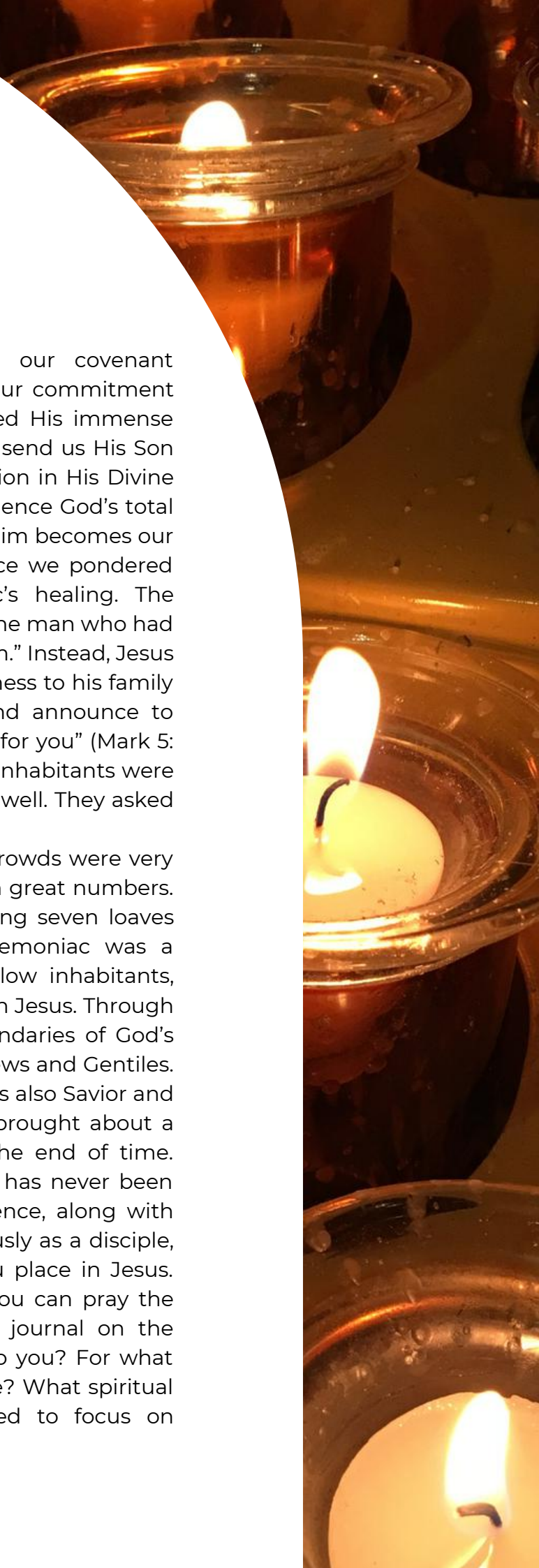
Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!

NIGHT *listen* Prayer



The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. We are assessing our commitment to Jesus as His disciple. God demonstrated His immense love for us when He made the decision to send us His Son to be our Savior and ensure our participation in His Divine Life! In covenant union with God we experience God's total gift of Himself to us, and our surrender to Him becomes our heart's desire. In our morning Face to Face we pondered the healing of the Gerasene Demoniac's healing. The change in the Gerasene man is amazing: "the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him." Instead, Jesus sends him on a mission, asking him to witness to his family and friends: "Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you" (Mark 5: 19). In this first visit to Gentile territory, the inhabitants were awed by Jesus' power and terrified by it as well. They asked Jesus to leave them.

During His second visit, however, the crowds were very welcoming of Jesus. They followed Jesus in great numbers. He fed four thousand people by multiplying seven loaves and a few fish. Probably, the healed demoniac was a powerful witness to Jesus among his fellow inhabitants, preparing them to receive the good news in Jesus. Through this event, it becomes clear that the boundaries of God's covenant family will expand to including Jews and Gentiles. Jesus is Savior and Lord of the Jews. Jesus is also Savior and Lord of the Gentiles! The Risen Lord has brought about a paradigm shift that will reverberate till the end of time. Since the resurrection of Jesus, the world has never been the same. In your examination of conscience, along with reviewing your failures to respond generously as a disciple, you can reflect on the faith and trust you place in Jesus. When you are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?





Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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Examination of Conscience

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The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

Step Five: Are you looking to improve your spiritual focus?

- Gaining control of our physical senses and temptations can allow for a deeper commitment to our spiritual goals. Increase your spiritual endurance by practicing mastery over your physical desires and distractions.
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- Treating your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, find opportunities for daily physical exercise of your choice.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date : _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a long-sleeved shirt and shorts, is kneeling on a rocky mountain peak. His arms are raised high in the air, palms facing forward, in a gesture of prayer or praise. The background features a vast mountain range under a warm, golden sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect on the man and the landscape.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 3

THE HEALING OF A PARALYTIC

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth" – he said to the paralytic, "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home." He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this." - Mark 2: 9-12

The miracles of Jesus play an important role in revealing His identity and mission. Today, we will consider the healing of a paralytic. Given the theological bias of the times, the paralytic was relegated to the lost sheep of Israel because of his illness which was viewed as a punishment for sin, either his own or those of his parents. How then was he able to overcome his sense of despair and misery and come to Jesus? Was he able to persuade his stretcher bearers to take him to Jesus because of his faith, or was it their faith that persuaded him to approach Jesus? Their faith is severely tested when they realize that they cannot have access to Jesus because of the crowd around Him in the house and around it. While their faith might have been bent, it did not break. Rather than give up or wait for another auspicious time, they became even more determined to see Jesus, their only meaningful last recourse! They climb up the roof and let the paralytic down to Jesus through the roof! Faith in Jesus can be amazing, producing totally unexpected deeds!



Face to Face WITH GOD

Jesus begins the interaction by forgiving the paralytic his sins. Jesus is making a profound statement through this astonishing and shocking introductory action. Only God can forgive sin! Clearly then, Jesus is claiming that He is God, and as God, He has the power to cure the man of his illness. After Jesus forgives the man his sins, to the horrified disgust of His opponents, He then heals the paralytic of his illness. Jesus is making a further point. Jesus can be our Savior, bringing about our exodus from the kingdom of sin and darkness to the kingdom of God, because He is God! The man's gesture of rising, picking up his mat, and walking away in the sight of everyone, is an indescribable sight! God's actions in Creation, and in the miracles of healing and exorcisms, make it clear that God is incomprehensible to our minds, and holy or totally other-than what we can ever imagine. The spontaneous response on our part, therefore, is astonishment, amazement, gratitude and praise on our lips! As the crowd exclaimed, "We have never seen anything like this!"

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 4

THE HEALING OF A DEMONIAC

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

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Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute. He cured the mute person so that he could speak and see. All the crowd was astounded, and said, "Could this perhaps be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons." - Matthew 12: 22-24

In several references in Isaiah, miracles characterize the advent of God's kingdom through the Messiah. Isaiah 29: 18-19 is one example: "On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll; and out of the gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly shall again find joy in the LORD, the poorest rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" When John the Baptist's disciples asked Jesus whether He was the Messiah or should they look for another, Jesus reiterated the same point in Isaiah when He replied: "Go tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them" (Matthew 11:4-5). Through His miracles, Jesus demonstrates that He is the Messiah and Lord. In this miracle, Jesus heals the blind and mute demoniac through His own power because He is God. Jesus demonstrates that He has come to overthrow the dominion of Satan over people's lives because He is the Savior of the world.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Only God can have such power over Beelzebul, the prince of demons. On different occasions, Satan made it clear that no human could be a match against him without God's help. In Acts 19 for instance, the evil spirit wounded and mauled the seven sons of Sceva, and fear came upon Jews and Greeks alike. The aftermath was that Jesus, in whose name Paul worked mighty deeds, was held in great esteem.

This and other miracles astound Jesus' listeners, leading them to ask a deeper question: "Could this perhaps be the Son of David?" They knew that the Messiah would spring from the seed of David and be king over the restored kingdom of Israel. The Pharisees, on the other hand, are obstinately blinded to the truth. Acceptance of Jesus' teachings and submission to His authority is out of the question. They are filled with hate and prejudice to the point of making ridiculous assertions: "This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons." Besides pointing out the absurdity of the charge, Jesus asks them how they would interpret the work of Jewish exorcists (your own people). Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the sin of attributing to Satan what is the work of the Spirit of God: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12: 28). While miracles are glimpses into the kingdom of God, they also display the power of sin over people who refuse to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord! This opposition to Jesus is on display in our midst, daily.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!

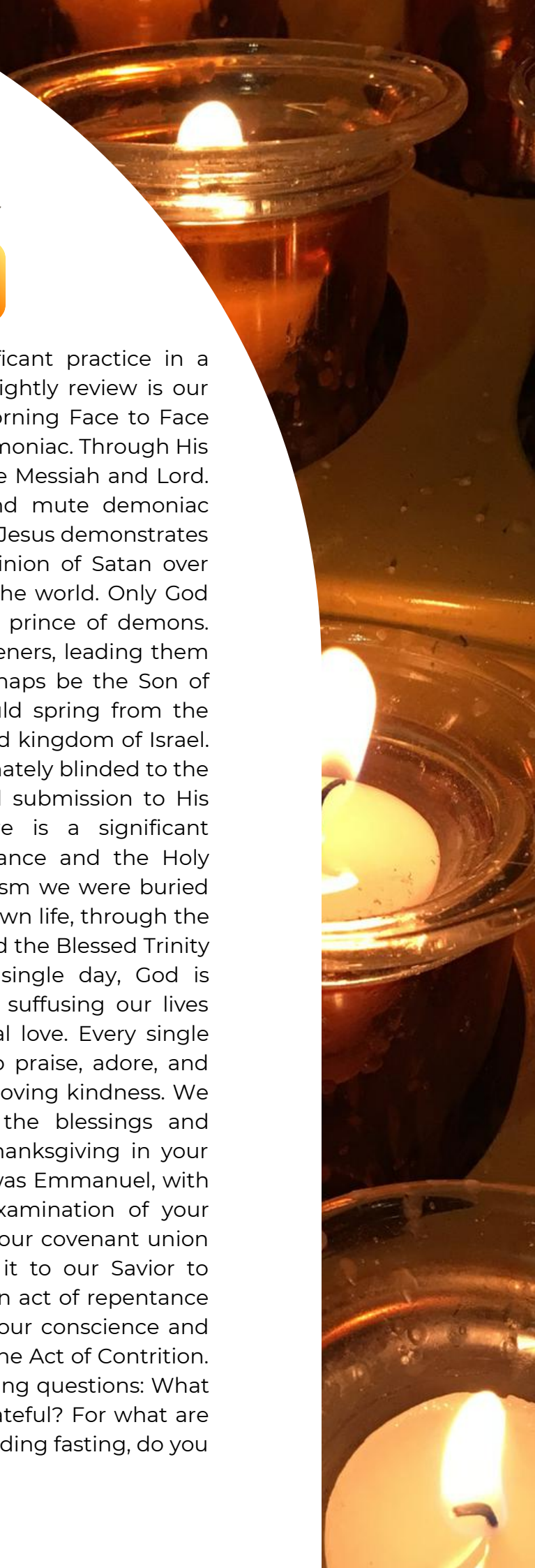
NIGHT

Prayer

listen



The nightly review of the day is a significant practice in a disciple's formation. The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. In our morning Face to Face with God, we witnessed the healing of a demoniac. Through His miracles, Jesus demonstrates that He is the Messiah and Lord. In this miracle, Jesus heals the blind and mute demoniac through His own power because He is God. Jesus demonstrates that He has come to overthrow the dominion of Satan over people's lives because He is the Savior of the world. Only God can have such power over Beelzebul, the prince of demons. This and other miracles astound Jesus' listeners, leading them to ask a deeper question: "Could this perhaps be the Son of David?" They knew that the Messiah would spring from the seed of David and be king over the restored kingdom of Israel. The Pharisees, on the other hand, are obstinately blinded to the truth. Acceptance of Jesus' teachings and submission to His authority is out of the question. There is a significant connection between the spirit of repentance and the Holy Spirit's abode in our hearts. Through baptism we were buried into the death of Christ, and rose to God's own life, through the resurrection of Jesus. We belong to God and the Blessed Trinity has become ours through Jesus. Every single day, God is overwhelming us with grace upon grace, suffusing our lives with His tender mercies and unconditional love. Every single day of our lives, then, is an opportunity to praise, adore, and thank God for His indescribable goodness loving kindness. We engage in praise and thanksgiving for the blessings and protection we received from God. With thanksgiving in your heart, go over your day and see how God was Emmanuel, with you and in you. You can then do an examination of your conscience to see how you responded in your covenant union with Him. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to humbly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?





Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O my God, I thank you for all the graces and blessings which I have received from you this day. Express to God your gratitude as you recall the blessings and graces that were present today: For what are you grateful?

Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

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- Treating your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, find opportunities for daily physical exercise of your choice.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

[illegible]

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a long-sleeved shirt and shorts, is kneeling on a rocky mountain peak. His arms are raised in a gesture of prayer or praise, with his hands open. The background shows a vast mountain range under a warm, golden sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect on the man's hair and clothing.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 5

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA'S
WITNESS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried." - Luke 23: 50-53

Both Luke and Mark tell us that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin. Jewish tradition gave this renowned institution a hallowed antiquity, going all the way to Numbers 11: 16: "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Assemble for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be elders and authorities among the people, and bring them to the tent of meeting... I will also take some of the spirit that is on you and will confer it on them, that they may share the burden of the people with you. You will then not have to bear it by yourself." According to God's original intent, the Council was supposed to serve the spiritual well-being of the people. However, in Jesus' time, the Sanhedrin had become corrupt and self-serving. In Luke's account, Joseph of Arimathea is described as a virtuous and righteous man who was awaiting the kingdom of God. In Mark's gospel, a distinguished member of the council is added to the list. Matthew tells us that Joseph was a rich man who was himself a disciple of Jesus. And John tells us that Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews.



Face to Face WITH GOD

From the way he has been described in all the four gospels accounts, Joseph would appear to have been the ideal choice for membership in the Sanhedrin whose sacred duty was to uphold the Mosaic Covenant laws. Joseph lived the way a Sanhedrin member was supposed to live, as an earnest seeker of truth. No wonder he was attracted to Jesus. Another argument in favor of Joseph being the right kind of council member was the fact that he had not consented to the Sanhedrin's plan of action to have Jesus arrested and crucified.

After Jesus' death, Joseph no longer remained a disciple in secret. He offered his own tomb for Jesus' burial. Were it not for Nicodemus who provided the oils and spices, and Joseph who provided the tomb, Jesus would have been disposed of as a criminal, dumped on the heap of rotting corpses! The help of these rich and honorable men was greatly needed in that hour of darkness. They had been able to do for their dead Master what would have been impossible for Mary, mother of Jesus, and the hapless disciples to do. Now, when the Jews were trying to destroy the infant church, Joseph came forward in her defense. No longer cautious and questioning, he encouraged the faith of the disciples and used his wealth to help sustain the church at Jerusalem and advance the work of the gospel. For the sake of Jesus, his Master and Lord, Joseph was willing to be scorned and despised by his former colleagues in the Sanhedrin. In the Roman Martyrology of the Catholic Church, Joseph is commemorated along with Nicodemus on August 31.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 6

NICODEMUS' WITNESS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN



MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

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Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.” - John 19: 39-42

Only John's Gospel tells us the story of Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was bitterly opposed to Jesus who seemed to pose a great threat to their influence and power. Their condemnation of Jesus was unrelenting, leading to His crucifixion and death. Nicodemus, like Joseph of Arimathea, was one of the few members who were well disposed toward Jesus. Too afraid to openly acknowledge his sympathy, he chose to meet with Jesus in the dark of night. Though afraid, his attraction to Jesus was greater than his risk of being exposed!

Their meeting impacted Nicodemus far more than he realized at the time. Jesus would bring about a re-birth in him through the baptism of water and the Spirit. Jesus revealed to him that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, Jesus, so that everyone who believed in Him would have eternal life and not perish! Jesus had ended His dialogue by stating that “whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God” (John 3:21). Soon, Nicodemus would come into the light.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Later in John 7, the Sanhedrin send temple guards to arrest Jesus. Instead, the temple guards are so impressed by Jesus that they do not arrest Him. The leadership is enraged. Nicodemus speaks up for Jesus, reminding the Sanhedrin that the law does not condemn anyone before first hearing them out. He has come under the influence of the Holy Spirit and is being reborn from above. He is moving into the light. In their rant against Nicodemus, the Sanhedrin made some interesting revelations. Nicodemus was of the same opinion as the temple guards: "No man ever spoke like that before!" When the Sanhedrin asked if any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in Jesus, little did they realize that Nicodemus had begun believing in Jesus and was no longer one of them! Their indictment of the crowd as knowing nothing about the law and being lost must have seemed odd to Nicodemus. He was no longer feeling lost. Rather, he was being reborn in Jesus.

After Jesus' death, Nicodemus publicly declared his loyalty to Jesus. As a criminal, Jesus forfeited any burial rites and burial in a tomb. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, a fellow-member, defied the ban. For them, Jesus' death on the cross was a reparation-offering on behalf of sinful humanity. When Jesus had been raised on the cross, Nicodemus remembered the words that He had spoken to him in the night interview. Nicodemus was now born again and had entered the reign of God.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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NIGHT

Prayer

listen



We do the nightly review of the day to assess our companionship with the Lord and take stock of our discipleship. St. Ignatius of Loyola introduced the Particular Examination of Conscience in the Spiritual Exercises. From his experience, he came to see that we all have a significant weakness or core wound which acts as a major stumbling block to our progress in the spiritual life. This core wound could be generational, a core sin in our gene pool that jeopardizes our discipleship, sabotages what is good in us, and prevents a seriously committed relationship with the Lord. Or it could be the result of bad habits that have become deeply rooted in us, leading us to succumb to temptation and sin. No serious discipleship can develop without the disciple establishing a central connection with the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is crucial, as He re-creates us in the image and likeness of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the divine truth and life in Jesus' teachings. It is the Holy Spirit who gathers us as God's covenant family to celebrate God's life in the Eucharist. Today, in your review, you can focus on the presence and role of the Holy Spirit in your discipleship. How important has the Holy Spirit become to you? The answer to this question can be a source of gratitude to God as well as a stepping-stone toward repentance and decisive action. As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?



Examination of CONSCIENCE

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

[illegible]



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 5: TRANSFORMED WITNESSES
OF JESUS
WEEK 1, DAY 7

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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In almost every letter, St. Paul is giving thanks to God, sometimes ceaselessly, sometimes exuberantly. His gratitude fortifies his trust that God will keep firm his various communities to the end, and irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 1: 8). This trust is based on God's faithfulness to His people. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul gives thanks to God constantly at the way the Philippians have continually helped to promote the gospel. In Paul, gratitude always seems to be the outflow of amazement and praise at God's marvelous favors and works among His people. Consequently, his gratitude moves into earnest petition on behalf of his flocks, asking God to provide them with the grace to remain faithful to Him.

What then is the basis of our prayer of gratitude? As creatures, we are beholden to God our Creator for the essence of our being. God upholds us in existence every waking and sleeping moment. In God, we live and move and have our being, regardless of whether we choose to have a relationship with Him or not. What is even more striking is that God has chosen to enter into a union of likeness with us. God chose Jesus Christ to be our Savior by dying on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus' death is the perfect sacrifice that has bought our forgiveness and salvation. We are God's sons and daughters. We are now brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Knowing full well our sinful and flawed lineage, God did not balk at making us divine heirs, giving us, His sons and daughters, all the rights and privileges that belong by right only to Jesus. Not only did God not hesitate to adopt us and change our blood lines in a manner of speaking, God then proceeded further to do the impossible by human standards, to make us holy and blameless through Jesus. Even though we have feet of clay, through God's power and passionate investment in us, we can and will be transformed if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, obeying His commandments and heeding His teachings with all our hearts, minds, and souls. In surrender to the Holy Spirit, our generosity and steadfastness will be provided to us by our Advocate. Already in this life, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens" (Ephesians 1: 3). We have every reason to thank God continually for His constant barrage of blessings and graces being poured out upon us through Jesus.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

Step Five: Are you looking to improve your spiritual focus?

- Gaining control of our physical senses and temptations can allow for a deeper commitment to our spiritual goals. Increase your spiritual endurance by practicing mastery over your physical desires and distractions.
- Pick a day or two and consider a commitment to moderate use of media besides use of Internet for business and work, to limit other uses of Internet, TV, and media to an hour daily. Work your way up to a daily commitment to this practice.
- Treating your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, find opportunities for daily physical exercise of your choice.

My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?

My Notes

Date :

[illegible]