

*“Rejoice in the Lord always,
I shall say it again: rejoice!”*

(Phil 4:4)

Jesus



Our

Learning

Charles Van Winkle, CSC



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JOY

Jesus Our Yearning

Charles Van Winkle, CSC



READ THIS BOOK

for answers and amplification about the following,
and much more:

1. “HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDEN-SOME (cf. 1 Jn 5:3b).
2. According to a Gallup Poll, committed Christians “are far, far happier than the rest of the population.”
3. The older you get, you will only grow to the degree you become more like a little child.
4. “WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD” (cf. Heb 11:6a).
5. There is less suffering in resisting a temptation than in giving in to the temptation.
6. Living the FLP will set you free.
7. “He (She) who hesitates is lost.”
8. Simply to be catechized is not to be evangelized.
9. Love is the most misunderstood of realities.
10. You don’t have to like a person to love the person.
11. You don’t necessarily feel good about a person you love.
12. The high school senior broke up with his girl friend because he loved her.
13. No one has ever fallen in love or ever will.
14. Many people who marry do not know if they love each other until after they have been married for awhile.



15. It is always possible to know if you love another person.
16. Love equals power.
17. The dry martyrdom can be more powerful than the swifter, more radical forms of martyrdom.
18. The worst sinner in the world is loved 100% by God.
19. If you were the only person who needed to be redeemed, Jesus would have suffered and died for you alone.
20. You do not need the love of another human being to become fulfilled, happy and independent in the Lord.
21. If you are unfaithful, God will remain faithful.
22. You don't have to ask God for his love and mercy, you simply have to be open to receive his love and mercy.
23. You can choose to repent and be forgiven, even if you don't feel sorry for your sins.
24. Everyone is handicapped in five ways.
25. Again, "WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD" (Heb 11:6a).
26. If you don't judge others, God will not judge you.



DEDICATION

To the Most Holy Trinity:

For openness, Holy Spirit, to your inspiration;

To your strength, Lord Jesus, to live it;

That your will, Heavenly Father,

May be done on earth as it is in heaven.





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YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

PREFACE

“HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDENSOME” (cf. 1 Jn 5:3b) but, rather, are a source of JOY. And since God says so, it must be true.

However, the following statistics indicate that perhaps many Christians of good will find the commandments burdensome for the same reason that St. Paul cried out in anguish: “... The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not” (cf. Rom 7:18b). In May, 1991, the following results of a Gallup Poll were published as a National and International Religious Report: (1) “Fewer than 10% of Americans are deeply committed Christians. (2) *These are far, far happier than the rest of the population* (My emphasis). (3) Most Americans who profess Christianity don’t act significantly different from non-Christians in their daily lives. (4) Overall the Sunday school and religious education system in this country is not working. Not being grounded in the faith, these professing believers are open to anything that comes along. (5) The churched are just as likely to engage in unethical behavior.”

The Gallup Poll came to a very obvious conclusion: “The average Christian has a need for PRACTICAL HELP in developing a mature faith” (My emphasis).

The good news is that PRACTICAL HELP, fortified



with numerous Scripture inspirations of the Holy Spirit—over 200 quotes— is clearly presented in this little book—simple, practical means of living the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction that sets us free; the proof of why **GOD’S COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDENSOME.**

To a very significant degree we are living in a sophisticated, complex, bureaucratic, self-centered society that would have us believe that the answer we are seeking is unreal unless it reflects the same attitude. As you know, Jesus emphasizes the opposite as he reminds us, “**AMEN, I SAY TO YOU, WHOEVER DOES NOT ACCEPT THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE A CHILD WILL NOT ENTER IT**” (cf. Mk 10:15).

Robert Fulghum wrote the runaway best seller, *All I Really Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten*. In fact, it is not even necessary to have gone to kindergarten to become the happy, fulfilled persons we are called to be. And this little book of *JOY* you are about to read allows the Holy Spirit to verify that “...the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32b).

The late poet Sarah Teasdale wrote that she wasn’t going to heaven at last, but that she was going all along. Therefore, in chapter one, “The Faith-Love Principle,” the simple approach to entering the kingdom of heaven along the way to your final graduation to the fullness of life where there is no remaining obstacle to happiness is emphasized. You will find its application throughout the book as you increasingly experience *JOY*—the freeing, exhilarating truth that “**HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE**



NOT BURDENSOME” (cf. 1 Jn 5:3b).

As *you* read this book, have the intention of being open to the special message the Holy Spirit has for *you*, that *you* may become the fulfilled person *you* are called to be. Also, be mindful of how *you* can more effectively exercise your baptismal priesthood by sharing what *you* are going to find so effective in promoting your own freedom and happiness. That is, you may know someone who is trying to overcome a bad habit or an addiction to food, alcohol, drugs, pornography, or some other challenge.

Regardless, everyone is eager to find a more effective means of dealing with the challenges of the daily cross. Therefore, you can in a casual, non-preaching manner say to people something to this effect: “I read a book called *JOY* that enables me to overcome my daily challenges and to grow stronger in the process.” Then simply share with them what you have found so helpful and/or let them read the book.





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~ 1 ~

THE FAITH-LOVE PRINCIPLE

A boxer approached the late Bishop Sheen and said, “I’m gonna have a fight tonight. Do you think it will help me win if I get your blessing?”

“Son,” he replied, “it won’t help you if you do not know how to box.”

Likewise, although as baptized Christians we have ready access to victory over our fallen human nature through our Risen Savior, we are not able to keep the Commandments and become the liberated persons we are called to be, if we fail to understand and apply the simple means to overcome the daily challenges to live them. In our vain efforts to resist temptations, we become frustrated, disillusioned and discouraged. No doubt the inability through lack of understanding on the part of so many to live the freeing truth is a major reason there are 30,000,000 non-practicing Catholics in the United States today.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul expresses a similar complaint: “...The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want ... Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body” (Rom. 7:18b, 19, 24)?



To a very significant degree we are living in a sophisticated, complex, bureaucratic, self-centered society that would have us believe that the answer we are seeking is unreal unless it reflects the same attitude. As you know, Jesus proclaims the opposite. It is just a matter of programming yourself to apply a simple formula founded on Jesus' words, not only to overcome the temptation, but to grow stronger with each victory; and, if necessary, to conquer a bad habit.

Fortunately, Jesus confronted Paul with the *simple* answer. Subsequently, he was able to live the **GOD**, the **Good Orderly Direction** that set him free. And *you* will be given the answer in the following pages. Read on to discover how *you* can become increasingly the happy, free, optimistic person God is calling *you* to be. What you are about to consider "... has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found wanting to be tried."

HAVING THE FAITH OF A CHILD

"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD" (cf. Heb 11:6a). For the following reason, faith and love are inseparable. The only way a small child can show love for a loving parent is to believe in the parent. And only through that faith is the child open to the love of the parent. Accordingly, when a small child encounters any danger, he or she does not stand there, think about it and decide to attack. No, in faith the child is programmed *immediately to retreat* to the protective love of the parent.

Likewise, Jesus says we are to have no less faith in him, for "Without me you can do nothing." (Jn 15:5b). "But seek



first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness...” (Mt 6:33a). “Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it” (Mk 10:15).

Because of our fallen human nature, when we are tempted by the threefold foe of the secular world, flesh, and devil, we are inclined to do just the opposite of what a small child does upon meeting any danger: we tend to think about the temptation, entertain it and attack. Consequently, we succumb to the temptation and suffer from a guilty conscience. “He (She) who hesitates is lost.”

Only living the truth enables us to become whole, holy, happy, more human, free, mature, in control, lovers, Christlike—who we are called to be. Jesus has conquered the world, flesh, and devil. He has the victory, and the victory is ours to the degree we respond in the face of temptation as does a little child upon meeting any danger—*immediately* retreat, not attack. As the Holy Spirit reminds us through Peter: “Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith...” (1 Pt 5:8b, 9a). And three times in scripture we are also reminded that “Everyone shall be saved who calls upon the name of the Lord” (Acts 1:21).

THE APPLICATION

“EVERYONE SHALL BE SAVED WHO CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD” (cf. Acts 1:21).

In practice, therefore, *at the very first sign of temptation*, react as a little child in the face of danger; that is, when tempted, like withdrawing your fingers from a hot stove,



immediately retreat to Jesus who dwells in your heart through baptism. And at that same moment, in your mind—not on your lips—one time say, “No, in the name of Jesus.” In the name of Jesus means with the strength of Jesus. “Jesus” means “Savior” and in Hebrew means “Healer.” The love you express by *immediately rejecting* the temptation through faith in Jesus enables you to be open to his saving, transforming love.

Therefore, after one time mentally saying “No, in the name of Jesus,” *immediately* to the rhythm of your breathing hear the word “Jesus” in your mind; that is, simply breathe in the first syllable and breathe out the second syllable. Continue this faith-breathing exercise until the temptation is overcome—until you realize the promise of Jesus: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest...For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:28, 30).

REALIZING HEALING AND GROWTH

Since “Jesus” means “Savior” and “Healer,” as you make the loving act of the will *instantly* in the name of Jesus to reject the temptation and *immediately* begin breathing “Jesus,” not only are you being saved from the temptation, but you are also being healed. You are gaining increasing control of your fallen human nature and becoming more happy, free and confident about the present and the future. For just as you grow physically through physical exercise, you grow spiritually through spiritual exercise by *immediately retreating* as a little child in faith to receive the healing, transforming love of Jesus.



CHOOSING THE LESSER SUFFERING

And although there is suffering in rejecting temptation, there is even greater suffering in giving in to the temptation: “Why did I do that again?!” Also, be mindful that just as Jesus proved his love for you through his redemptive suffering, then came the resurrection. Likewise, by living the FLP to overcome any temptation, you are able to prove your love for God, self and neighbor through your redemptive suffering and increasingly experience the kingdom of heaven along the way to the fullness of life. Therefore, choose the lesser suffering of overcoming the temptation to grow stronger, more mature, in control—more open to God’s transforming love we celebrate in the Mass.

LIVING THE FLP WILL SET YOU FREE

Again, Jesus is the Victor over the fallen world, flesh, and devil, the sources of all temptation. And through your application of the FLP—the *immediate* “No, in the name of Jesus,” and the immediate mental repetition of the word “Jesus” until the temptation is conquered—you will increasingly delight in the realization that “All things are possible for God” (Mk 10:27b).

The FLP is the Scriptural application of the freeing truth that enables you increasingly to become the person God is calling you to be, as manifested in the ongoing growth of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: “...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22, 23a).

“I was hard pressed and falling, but the LORD came to my help.



The LORD, my strength and might, came to me as savior” (Ps 118:13, 14).

“For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome...AND THE VICTORY THAT CONQUERS THE WORLD IS OUR FAITH” (cf. 1 Jn 5:3, 4b).

EMPHASIS – GRACE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

Hopefully throughout this explanation of the FLP, you have noticed the emphasis placed on the importance of *immediately, instantly retreating* from the temptation in order to express faith in the saving, transforming love of Jesus. This *immediacy of retreat* is so *very important* because at every single moment of our lives, our Risen Savior is offering the strength to be victorious – to live the truth that sets us free. Therefore, if we hesitate at the very first moment we become aware of temptation, we fail *immediately to accept* the strength for victory. In other words, we give the deceiving world, flesh and devil an opportunity to prevail; that is, we begin to think about and entertain the temptation and are inclined to attack rather than live the FLP by *immediately retreating* in childlike faith to the transforming, protective love of our victorious Savior. “HE (SHE) WHO HESITATES IS LOST.”

Since faith is the only way we can show love for God, the more readily we exercise faith—accept the grace of the present moment—the greater love we express. Accordingly, we are that much more open to God’s saving love and strength for immediate victory and growth.



In summary, programming yourself to live the FLP in the immediate manner in which a little child retreats from any danger enables you to enter the kingdom of heaven along the way, and finally to graduate to the fullness of life where every tear is wiped away. With St. Paul you will be able to say, “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on a crown of righteousness awaits me...” (2 Tm 4:7, 8a).





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~ 2 ~

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE EVANGELIZED

Very simply, to be evangelized means consciously to confirm one's Christianity; that is, to make the act of the will to accept Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior; to determine to be Christ-centered and not self-centered or other-creature-centered; to believe in him and not just that he exists and, therefore, daily *through faith in Jesus* to follow him as "...the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6a).

Evangelization has its foundation in Peter's Pentecostal sermon when he proclaimed to the gathered Jews of the Diaspora: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

When Peter states the need to "repent," the Holy Spirit is making known that it is necessary for us to be willing to forsake and forego any obstacle to greater freedom and happiness; to die to our sinful selves. Evil spelled backwards is live; to be fully free and alive, in Christ Jesus we must completely break with the bonds of evil.

And Paul reminds us, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own" (1 Cor



6:19)? As Jesus had promised, “I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you” (Jn 14:25,26).

But suppose you have contracted to have the interior of your home refurbished, and the first thing the interior decorator says upon entering your home is, “I will need your help to move the furniture, the obstacles, from the rooms so I can be free to beautify the rooms.” Likewise, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Artist, Artisan—the Sanctifier—is only free to beautify, to transform your temple to the degree you are willing to cooperate in removing the clutter, the sin obstacles.

However, our fallen human nature rebels at the thought of parting with obstacles that afford a bit of pleasure we are always seeking in our legitimate desire for fulfillment. Accordingly, in this relentless pursuit, many become addicted to drugs, pornography, alcohol, gambling, food and other limited creatures. But in his abortive attempt to satisfy his emptiness by a lustful way of life, St. Augustine finally realized that our hearts are yearning for God—the Unlimited—and cannot find rest until they rest in him.

Therefore, after telling the Jews it was necessary to repent, Peter said they must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. To be baptized, therefore, means to be Christ-centered, not self-centered or other-creature-centered.

Most of us Catholics were baptized as infants and were raised on a doctrinal faith—were catechized. However, just knowing the doctrine does not enable us to live it, as Paul agonizingly realized: “The willing is ready at



hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want....Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body” (Rm 7:18b, 19, 24)? Paul found the answer. Let us identify with him.

In the first book of the Bible, Gen 1:26, 29 and 9:6, we are told we are made to the image and likeness of God. In the last book of the Bible, Rev. 3:20, we find the answer as to how the realization of that transforming image is to evolve; how we are able to fill the void in our lives and live the truth that sets us free.

In Rev 3:20 Jesus says, “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.”

Imagine your heart as your temple. If you were an infant when baptized, you received God into your temple, but not into the inner chamber, the throne room. That is, you were not capable of making an act of your will to accept what it means to be a Christian; to be Christ-centered; to acknowledge Jesus as your Lord and Savior. As you reached the age of reason, you were able to learn about God and the various tenets of your religion—to be catechized.

However, it is one thing to be catechized and to believe in the existence of God, but so much more to acknowledge total dependence on God and live life with steadfast faith in him. And so Jesus says that only if you believe in him—are willing to accept him as your Lord and Savior and follow him as the way, the truth and the life,—can you



realize the fulfillment you are seeking; can you overcome the world, flesh and devil whom he has conquered; can you become whole, holy, happy, more human, free, mature, in control, a lover, Christlike—who you are called to be; can you receive the Fruits of the Holy Spirit to the fullest. For as Jesus says, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

Therefore, if you have not already done so, to be evangelized it is necessary to open your temple throne-room door on which Jesus knocks and invite him in. And having made the decision to get yourself and any other creatures off of the throne of your temple, you should invite Jesus to assume his rightful position, that you might be the Christ-centered Christian you are called to be. **IT IS IN THIS ACT OF THE WILL TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR THAT YOU BECOME EVANGELIZED.**

And this is the proper frame of mind for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation: In being confirmed a person freely chooses to accept what it means to be Christ centered; freely invites Jesus to be Lord and Savior and determines to live a life of faith in him.

Following is a prayer of evangelization, a simple formula for accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior: Jesus, only begotten Son of our Father, I am sorry for all of my sins against you, myself and my neighbor. With your strength, I am determined to live one day at a time as you wish me to live it. At this moment I invite you into my heart to be my Lord and my Savior.



Holy Spirit, I recognize in me your abiding presence; and in the name of Jesus, I claim a greater freeing of you in my heart for your work of sanctification, that I may become the total person you have called me to be. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I praise and thank you for your goodness to me. Amen.

In application, therefore, to be successful in dealing with your daily trials and temptations, the Holy Spirit will bring to mind what you are to do or not do, say or not say so you can form your conscience in the liberating truth. However, because you have a fallen human nature, most of the time you will not feel like living the truth. But the Holy Spirit is also telling you *immediately* to live the Faith-Love Principle in order to follow through. Otherwise, “He (She) who hesitates is lost.” That is, at the first sign of the temptation *immediately* in your mind say, “No in the name of Jesus,” and retreat to Jesus on the throne of your temple as in faith you continue to breathe “Jesus” in openness to his victory on your behalf.

And remember, since “Jesus” means “Healer” as well as “Savior,” with every victory, you become more of who you are called to be and experience greater freedom in your oneness with JOY, Jesus Our Yearning.





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~ 3 ~

THE MEANING OF LOVE

The fellow said, “To prove my love for my fiancée, I climbed the highest mountain, swam the deepest river, crossed the broadest desert and sailed around the world. She married someone else because I was never at home.”

In addition to recognizing his imprudence, he should be asking himself if he really understands the meaning and nature of the love he was trying to prove. Let’s think about it.

Love is the most powerful and fulfilling of realities. Accordingly, in the Old Testament we are reminded that “Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away. Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love, he would be roundly mocked” (Sg 8:7). And in the New Testament, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear ... ” (1 Jn 4:18a).

However, love is also the most misunderstood, misused, abused and maligned of realities. For example, D. L. Steward tells of the startled reaction of a father when his twelve-year-old son said to him, “I love you.”

“For several long seconds all I could do was stand there and stare down at him, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Finally, I asked, ‘What do you want?’



“He laughed and started to run from the room. But I called him back. ‘Hey, what was that all about?’ I demanded.

“‘Nothing,’ he said, grinning. ‘My health teacher said we should tell our parents that we love them and see what they say. It’s sort of an experiment.’

“The next day I called his teacher to find out more about this ‘experiment.’ And, to be truthful, to find out how the other parents had reacted.

“‘Basically, most of the fathers had the same reaction you did,’ my son’s teacher said. ‘When I first suggested we try this, I asked the kids what they thought their parents would say. They all laughed. A couple of them figured their folks would have heart attacks.’”

In justification of his experiment the health teacher said, “The point is, knowing you are loved is an important part of health. It’s something all human beings require. What I’m trying to tell the kids is that it’s too bad we don’t express that love.”

Here are a few examples of why so many feel uneasy and even embarrassed about the use of the word love. Years ago on “60 Minutes” when a member of a very wealthy family was asked about expressing affection for other members of the family, she replied, “I think there is something rather vulgar about saying ‘I love you.’”

A prime-time TV show entitled “Love for Sale” was about prostitution.

An infamous divorced athlete publicly stated, “When it comes to making love, I want a whore for a wife.”

A newspaper account of a homicide reported that



“She was killed by her lover.”

Several years ago in Copperas Cove, Texas, a fifteen-year-old student won an art contest with the entry, “Love is Such a Hateful Crime.”

However, ballads generally tell of the enduring quality of love with sentiments as, “I’ll be yours until the sun doesn’t shine, until the winds don’t blow and every ocean is dry. I’ll still be loving you for a lifetime, my love. I’ll still be loving you.”

And although virtually all people who marry express similar sentiments in courtship, today fifty percent of marriages end in divorce, even though perhaps all of those involved were of good will.

On one occasion I had the following exchange with the young man of a couple wanting to get married. He began, “Hey, Father, we want to marry.”

And so I asked the first question I routinely ask any couple preparing for marriage. “How is your prayer life; your relationship with God?”

“Father, we are not here for a sermon. We want to get married because we love one another.”

“Do you really love one another?”

“Father, we wouldn’t be getting married if we didn’t love one another!”

“What is your definition of love?”

“Come on, Father, haven’t you ever been in love? You can’t define love; you just feel it, Father; you just feel it! Don’t you know that?”

“Let’s put aside the feeling for the fact. About 2000 years ago the only valid definition of love was not only



spoken but was also recorded in St. John's first letter: '... God is love' (1 Jn 4:8b). And the Holy Spirit through St. John further states, 'Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.... We love because he first loved us' (1 Jn 4:7, 19).

"What does that mean as far as your relationship to one another is concerned?"

To his credit he replied, "Well, if God is love and love is of God, I guess we are only able to love one another to the extent we are open to God's love for us."

"Right on!" Jesus says it this way: "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another... because without me you can do nothing" (Jn 13:34b; 15:5b).

LIKING AND LOVING

Today "love" is commonly misused for "like," which often results in lustful relationships which are unfortunately referred to as loving relationships. Therefore, let us consider the distinction between liking and loving.

Liking is integral to our human nature. However, since we have a fallen human nature, liking is inclined to be self centered, manipulative and selfish; tends to be asking, "What's in it for me? What pleasure can I derive from this object, circumstance or relationship?" For example, a guy can be telling a girl how much he loves her while only liking her and being an obstacle to both of them becoming more whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, lovers, Christ-like, who they are called to be.

St. Paul reminds us to "Avoid immorality.... Do you



not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:18a,19,20).

The late Cardinal Basil Hume of London said, “Genital sex outside of marriage has always been sinful; it is rapidly becoming suicidal.” As reported by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “There are 19,000,000 new cases of sexually transmitted disease each year in the U.S.” And as reported in the “Evansville Courier,” “High school students are the age group most likely to contract the HIV virus which causes AIDS.”

A teenage girl wrote to “Dear Abby,” “My boyfriend said to me, ‘If you loved me, you would have sex with me before marriage.’ And I said to him, ‘If you loved me, you would not entertain the idea.’”

Abby responded, “Right on, Honey!”

With liking, initially there is pleasurable feeling. But since liking is applicable to what is strictly of a limited nature such as good looks, car, clothes and money, one soon becomes bored. For example, in the last year of his earthly life during his only TV appearance, the billionaire J. Paul Getty expressed his disillusionment as follows: “I envy people who are happy. I am sad about the failure of my five marriages. The only times in life I have enjoyed did not cost me a single penny.”

Several years ago Mr. America married Miss Universe! A perfect marriage? It only lasted six months because, perhaps through no fault of their own, they were primarily likers and not lovers.



But since God is love and the Source of all love, there is no limit to the degree we can become lovers and be instrumental in helping others to become the lovers they are called to be. The song says it well: “I love you more today than I loved you yesterday, but not as much as I will love you tomorrow.”

The word love is most properly and effectively used when applied to love of God and neighbor—fulfilling the Two Great Commandments. Used in other ways compromises its effectiveness—its power to energize and transform. To illustrate, several years ago a magazine ad pictured an exuberant teen-age girl exclaiming that “She’s totally in love with Mike Valenti, the new guy at school. She’s totally in love with House of pizza, the new hangout. And she’s totally in love with Classic Caesar, the new salad dressing from Kraft.” If she had to choose, would it be Mike or Classic Caesar?

The frustrated wife complained to her husband, “Football, football! Sometimes I think you love football more than you love me!”

“Oh, I don’t know about that, but I still love you more than I love basketball.”

In the TV commercial, the lady boasted, “I don’t just like my car, I love my car!”

Contrary to liking, there is not necessarily pleasurable feeling with loving. If Jesus had been dominated by his feelings, we would not be redeemed. And certainly he did not like us for having crucified him by our sins. However, too many couples are being faked out by those “Wow! Wow!” feelings in courtship, failing to realize



those pleasurable feelings do not prove their love for one another; rather, they serve to attract a man and woman to a God-centered relationship to assume the serious responsibility of enabling one another as well as others to become lovers.

A love relationship is self-sacrificing, non-manipulative and not overly possessive; it gives one another the freedom to exercise an informed God-oriented conscience increasingly to realize the Fruits of the Holy Spirit—“... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22,23a). That is, a love-relationship is living the Two Great Commandments, the purpose for which we are being created.

Ann Landers expressed it this way: “Infatuation [simply liking] might lead you to do things you’ll regret later, but love never will. Love is an upper. It makes you look up. It makes you think up. It makes you a better person than you were before.”

Liking is natural, but love must be in control if we are to be true to our calling to enter the kingdom of heaven along the way, and finally graduate to the fullness of life where every tear will be wiped away.





YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 4 ~

THE TRUE NATURE OF LOVE

Realizing that God is the meaning and source of all love, we now further consider the true nature of love.

In a commercial a lady says, “I want to fall in love again.” Impossible. Notwithstanding that billions of times over the centuries people have eagerly talked about falling in love, no one has ever fallen in love. Rather, we readily fall into infatuation, into liking, into good feeling toward another, but we have to climb into a love relationship.

Have you ever wondered why we are *commanded* to love God and neighbor? The Incarnate Word was nailed to and raised up on a cross. And Jesus had exclaimed, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).

People say they don’t go to Mass because they don’t feel like they are getting anything out of it. Jesus didn’t feel like he was getting anything out of it either, but he arrived three hours early on the cross and did not leave until it was over. Accordingly, we refer to the “Sacrifice” of the Mass.

And if one has the faith to believe that in the Mass Jesus continues to offer himself to the Father on our behalf that we may become more of who we are called to be, one can



never, never, never leave the Catholic Church. And because it is through the exercise of faith in the reality of the Mass that one is receptive to the transforming love afforded, a person will be early rather than late, participate to the fullest, and not leave until the presider has completed the recessional.

God is not wanting us to live by feelings but by faith; people who are sure of things hoped for and certain of things not yet seen because the God of love is who he is for you and me (cf. Heb 11:1). For it is only through faith that we can express our love for God; and it is only through faith, as indicated above, that we are open to his transforming love that enables us to continue to mature spiritually—to be receptive to the Fruits of the Holy Spirit by which Jesus says people will know we are his disciples: “...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22b, 23a).

Sacrifice is the nature of love, and because we have a fallen human nature, we usually don't feel like loving. Also, it is repetitious to speak of “tough love.” “For stern as death is love, relentless as the nether world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away. Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love, he would be roundly mocked” (Sg 8:6b, 7).

Because sacrifice is the nature of love, to be able to fulfill one's commission to live the Two Great Commandments, one must be open to the Holy Spirit to be inspired, motivated, committed, focused and persevering by living the Faith-Love Principle. The optimism of the will must



override the pessimism of the intellect and the inclination of the wayward feelings. As emphasized, if Jesus had succumbed to his feelings regarding his passion and death, we would not be redeemed.

Again, we must make the act of the will to love one another. For example, several years ago during a retreat day for high school seniors at Holy Cross School in New Orleans, one of the participants startled his classmates by sharing the following: “I broke up with my girlfriend six weeks ago. You want to know why? Because I love her. Yeah, we got ourselves into a situation where I wasn’t helping her to become a better person, and she wasn’t helping me to become a better person. And although I still have this strong liking, this strong feeling for her, because I love her, I had to accept the strength of Jesus to back off.” One could hear a pin drop in that assembly.

Shortly after I heard that powerful tribute to the nature of love, I read the following confirmation entitled “One Perfect Friendship” by the late Holy Cross priest, Robert Griffin: “Friendships, please God, do not often involve the breakup of people who love each other, but if you care for someone, you have to recognize if the moment has come for letting go. If you can let go while the pain is killing you, if you can say good-bye when it breaks your heart—then maybe you can imagine, as I did, that your friendship is unselfish enough to be called perfect, because you have given your friend the most Godlike love you are capable of.”

And so the young man beautifully illustrated how we know if we are in a love relationship: When we are



determined to respect one another as children of God made to his image and likeness; when we are willing to sacrifice, to go forward or back off when we don't feel like it that we may become more whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, lovers, Christlike, who we are called to be, we truly love one another.

Falling into infatuation, into liking, into good feeling regarding the other is the easy aspect of a new relationship. Climbing into love—making the act of the will to sacrifice in order to love the other—as did the high school senior—; to live the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction that promotes growth, freedom and happiness when tempted otherwise, is the challenge.

To paraphrase an episode from *Shenandoah*: “I want to marry your daughter because I love her,” the young soldier said to her father. “Son, I don't want to know if you love my daughter; I want to know if you like her, because I did not begin to love my wife until about two years after we were married. Yes, we liked one another, had a good feeling for one another; otherwise we would never have gotten married. But it wasn't until I had to go out into the fields and work when I didn't feel like it, that I began to understand the true meaning and nature of love.”

Jesus not only told us but showed us the true nature of love by his passion, death and resurrection that we might become the lovers we are called to be: “Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just personBut God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rm 5:7a, 8). Again, Jesus did not feel like



suffering and dying for us sinners, nor did he like us for our sinfulness, but he made the act of the will to love us. And it is by living the FLP that we are able to partake of his victory that we may prove our love for God, self and neighbor.

Therefore, to say “I love you” is to will only the best for a person—what God wills for all of us—and to be willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to promote the other’s welfare, as well as one’s own.

However, because the “Wow! Wow!” feelings are usually so strong in courtship, it is difficult for the couple to prove their love for one another because of their mutual desire to please one another. And because of this infatuation, this liking of one another, about the only way they can prove their love is by refraining from the sexual relationship that is reserved for marriage. After all, violation of a person’s conscience, causing suffering here and hereafter, risking serious disease, pregnancy, abortion, emotional and psychological problems and sleepless nights is hardly an expression of love, no matter how often the word is spoken. True love waits.

Therefore, for the courtship couple to be able to sacrifice to control the wayward feelings and passions of fallen human nature, the following considerations are paramount: (1) Both must place GOD first in their lives and relationship since, “God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. ... We love because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:16b, 19). (2) Both must know the true meaning and nature of love, and by living the Faith-Love Principle be determined to follow through.



(3) Because God helps those who help themselves, they must be prudent in planning their time and circumstances together. (4) The touchstone of their relationship must be, “How can we prove our love for one another?”

Finally, an axiom is a statement universally accepted as true. Unfortunately, the following statement has been accepted as an axiom for centuries, but has always been totally false: “All who love are blind.” Rather, since God is love and the source of all love, all who love share God’s vision. All who simply like are blind.





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 5 ~

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE

The people of Wales have this greeting: “Hail, guest, we ask not what thou art; if friend, we greet thee hand and heart; if stranger, such no longer be; if enemy, our love shall conquer thee.”

In experimenting with plants and animals, it has been proven that if they are only exposed to mellow, soothing music and kind words, they will grow and produce bountifully. But if the same plants and animals are subjected to hard, acid-rock music and harsh words, they will no longer grow and produce.

And speaking of hard, acid-rock music, a friend of mine complained that he never knew how bad some of today’s music is until he went to this nightclub. He said a waiter dropped a tray of dishes, and ten people got up to dance.

We give off vibes. If we radiate love, joy and peace, others are comfortable in our presence. For example, Blessed Mother Teresa’s entering a noisy gathering of people would have a quieting effect, even among those not immediately aware of her presence.

Many years ago “60 Minutes” featured a black woman from Harlem whose ministry was to accept abandoned



babies who were dying from lack of love. Through her own openness to God's transforming love, she loved them to good health.

A lady who worked in a home for wayward children said she would always greet a certain boy who would never reply. "But one day," she said, "as we passed on the stairway, I lightly touched him on the shoulder, and from that day he began to respond."

After these considerations, I am prompted to give you this free advice: Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.

Any time a person is patient with you, is kind to you, is forgiving of you, you are being loved and are becoming more of the person God is calling you to be. I am reminded that when I was four or five years old barreling head down on my tricycle, suddenly I ran into something which happened to be another person, a grown man! As I fearfully stammered an apology, he very kindly looked at me and said, "Hey, little fella, that's all right; nobody's hurt." To this day when I am mindful of his response, I continue to become more of who God is calling me to be. As Dr. Bernie S. Siegel states in his runaway best seller, *Love, Medicine and Miracles*, "The truth is, love heals."

Think of a time when you realized you were loved by another human being and of the transforming effect it had and is having upon you.

In my prison ministry sometimes it may be difficult or impossible for those confined to recall ever having been loved. But I remind them that if we have a personal relationship with the God of love and in faith are open



to his unconditional transforming love, we can become fulfilled without the love of another person. As the Holy Spirit reminds us through the evangelist John, “We are able to love God, ourself and our neighbor because God has first loved us” (cf. 1 Jn 4:19).

In about 1970 I wrote the following: “Saints are rightfully classified as the greatest of lovers. And because of their extraordinary ability to love, they have the best chance of converting the most hardened individual, the person who feels he or she is no longer worthy of love; but is able to discern the sincere and ardent love of the saint for him or her. In the presence of the saint, the confirmed sinner is more likely to say, ‘Hey, this person is for real; why shouldn’t I be?’ ”

Accordingly, St. Francis Xavier in the 16th century said, “Give me ten people filled with the love of God, and this world will be converted.” And so the Church has always grown the fastest during the martyrdoms. As Christians increasingly gave the radical witness of offering their lives in testimony of their belief in Jesus, even some of the executioners were converted and experienced martyrdom. As Jesus says, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (Jn 12:32).

Marilyn Thomsen said, “While it takes courage to achieve greatness, it takes more courage to find fulfillment in the ordinary.” And the late Bishop Sheen referred to being steadfast in living the ordinary—persevering in carrying the daily cross made up of the usual temptations and trials—as the dry martyrdom; which, he said, could be a more heroic testimony to one’s faith in Jesus than are



some of the swifter, more radical forms of martyrdom.

And as conveyed by Leo Buscaglia, “The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no tickertape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our encouragement; someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we have to give.

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which has the potential to turn a life around. It’s overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities to make our love felt.”

Therefore, we should be asking how we can best love God, self and neighbor in the daily circumstances in which we find ourselves; how we can be instrumental in transforming the lives of others by exercising our baptismal priesthood in fulfilling our commission to become lovers—how we can brighten the corner right where we are.

The couple who were thinking about getting a divorce agreed to go to a marriage counselor. The wife complained that her husband would not love her unless he came home to a house in perfect order.

He responded, “Yeah, I think that is the least I can expect after working hard all day.”

She exclaimed, “But I have to know I am loved to have the motivation to get the house in order!”



The marriage counselor responded, “Lady, you have spoken the truth.”

And the same is true for you and me. We have to know and accept that we are unconditionally loved to get our houses—our lives—in order, that we may become the fulfilled lovers we are called to be.

Blessed Mother Teresa says, “Each of us has a mission to fulfill, a mission of love. At the hour of death, when we come face to face with God, we are going to be judged on love; not how much we have done, but how much love we have put into our actions. The greatest suffering is being lonely, being unwanted, being unloved; just having no one.”

Lord, grant that we may be fully open to your transforming love, that we may effectively continue your mission of enabling especially those most in need to recognize and accept that they are made to your very image and likeness, are incalculably precious and are unconditionally loved, “as if there is but one to love.”





YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



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~ 6 ~

GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR LOVABLE YOU

If a person has been abused or rejected and is unaware of having been loved, the person is likely to live under the illusion that he or she is unloved and unlovable. But the reality is that everyone is loved unconditionally 100%, including the worst sinner in the world: “For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person.... But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rm 5:6,7a, 8).

“God is love” (1 Jn 4:8b). “If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself” (2 Tm 2:13).

“In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins” (1 Jn 4:9, 10).

“Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings he endured.... But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the



LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all” (Is 53:4a-6).

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned...” (Jn 3:16-19a).

“Even if my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me in” (Ps 27:10). “...for he has said, ‘I will never forsake you or abandon you’” (Heb 13:5).

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost” (Lk 19:10). And Jesus graphically illustrates this truth in Chapter 15 of St. Luke’s Gospel through the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. All three depict God pursuing the sinner who is lost or has run away to emphasize that in spite of the sin, he loves the sinner. The father doesn’t even wait for the return of the prodigal, but rushes out to meet him. Immediately the father embraces and kisses his son, and oblivious to the boy’s confession shouts to his servants, “Get the best robe, shoes for his feet, a ring for his finger and kill the fatted calf, for my son who was lost has returned” (cf. Lk 15:22)! And there is a great celebration.

The father could not care less that the only reason the prodigal had a change of heart for returning home was because he wanted something to eat; his only concern was that his son was returning home.

And our loving, compassionate God has the same unconditional love for you and for every person, because as is recorded in Chapters 1 and 5 of Genesis, the first



book of the Bible, you are made to the very image and likeness of God. Therefore, apply this freeing truth to yourself: You are so incalculably precious to the Lord that if you were the only person in the world who needed to be redeemed, the Word would have become flesh, Jesus Christ, and suffered and died for you alone. “God loves you as if there is only one to love.”

Too often people try to limit God by their own limitations; that is, they think they are so sinful and unlovable that he could never love them. But the Lord says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. ...As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts” (Is 55:8, 9).

Yes, we are all sinners, but God hates the sin and loves the sinner and wants all to share in his happiness. Just be patient because God is not finished with us yet. He can and will draw straight with our crooked lines, if we allow him to. A precious gem found buried in a field or at the bottom of the sea has become encrusted with the elements, but it is no less a precious gem. True beauty is within, and even though that beauty of being made to the image and likeness of God may be encrusted or tarnished by a wayward life of sin and/or the illusion of thinking we are unloved, and unlovable, God has depth vision; that is, he looks beyond whatever disguises our true beauty and worth and longs to bring forth our transformation so that we may become increasingly whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, lovers, Christlike, who we are called to be.



In the following chapter we will emphasize how you can readily become more of who you long to be. For at this moment, Jesus is saying to you, “Come to me with any doubts about your true worth, and I will refresh you—I will prove to you how precious and lovable you are” (cf. Mt 11:28).





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 7 ~

HOW TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE FOR LOVABLE YOU

In the early 1930s, a very poor family of a mother, father and a young son were crossing the Atlantic from Europe to live in the United States. Since they only had money to pay for third-class passage on the ship and virtually nothing with which to buy food on the ten-day voyage, they made enough cheese sandwiches to provide for their meals. However, on the morning of the last day of the crossing, the boy cried out in desperation, “I can’t eat any more cheese sandwiches! I’ve got to have something else to eat!”

Hoping their son might be able to purchase an apple or an orange on the ship, the mother and father finally decided to give the boy a quarter. Immediately he rushed out of their small cabin, and several hours later had not returned. As the anguished parents were expressing their concern, the son burst into their cabin and shouted, “You should have seen what I had to eat! I had steak, fish, pie, cake, ice cream...!”

The startled parents exclaimed, “How are we going to pay for it?! How are we going to pay for it?!”

“Pay for it?! Pay for it?! All of the food is free! It came



with the price of the tickets!”

If any person is determined to journey through this world expecting to be nourished on the love of another human being, he or she may end up starving to death, or at best having to survive on what is comparable to a diet of cheese sandwiches.

But God’s unconditional, transforming love is free, and it comes with our ticket to life. We simply have to know how to receive it. “All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus” (Rm 3:23,24). God loves us 100% just as we are; we do not have to achieve, nor are we able to achieve, a certain degree of goodness before he loves us. Again, we are reminded in John’s First Letter that we are only able to love God, ourself and our neighbor because God has first loved us (cf. 1 Jn 4:19).

A young man who became a monk in a very strict religious community did more penance than the other monks because he believed he was the worst of sinners. But convinced he was not doing enough penance to make reparation for his past sins, he determined to become a hermit. Taking a large crucifix, he went into the wilderness and began to live in a cave. Having placed the crucifix in a corner of the cave, daily he spent hours praying as he knelt before the crucifix.

One day during prayer he thought he heard Jesus say to him, “Do you see this wound in my side? That’s for you. Do you see these wounds in my hands and feet? They are for you. Do you see this blood and filth all over my body? I allowed that for you.”



Suddenly the young monk leaped to his feet, shook his fist at the crucifix and shouted, “God, you are crazy to have died for a sinner like me!” And at that moment, the Holy Spirit finally managed to convince him of the truth that set him free. For he was able to internalize what an elderly monk had said to him shortly after he had entered the monastery: “Young man, when you accept the fact that God loves you just as you are, then you will begin to experience God’s infinite love and mercy.”

How, then, are you able to receive God’s transforming love into your life? If I offer you a glass of water and say it is yours, it is not really yours just because I say so. It is only truly yours if you have faith in me that it is a good glass of water, and you take it from me and drink it. Only then will it free you from your thirst.

In John’s Gospel the person referred to on at least three occasions as the one whom Jesus loved is generally thought to be the Apostle John. But since God is love and offers the same love to every person, why is John apparently loved more than the others?

Who was the only Apostle at the foot of the cross? John. Who was the first Apostle at the tomb after Jesus’ resurrection? John. Who was the only Apostle in the boat to recognize Jesus on the shore after the resurrection? John. Because of John’s steadfast faith in Jesus, he was the most open to God’s transforming love especially to be recognized as the Apostle whom Jesus loved.

A shy, young girl attends her first singles’ dance. Sitting fairly hidden in a corner of the dance floor, she is hoping against hope that a certain young man will seek her out



and ask her for a dance.

Let's suppose the young man who has been looking for her finally sees her in the corner. With some apprehension he slowly approaches her and says, "Will you dance with me?"

Only if she says "Yes!" will she begin to blossom and become more of who she is called to be.

Through his unconditional, transforming love for you, God will enable you to become all of who you are called to be if only you are open in steadfast faith to say "Yes" to him—to his love and strength for you to overcome your daily trials and temptations in order to live the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction, that will set you free.

To further illustrate what is meant to be open in faith: When I was four, five and six years old, I used to go hiking with my dad in the woods. When we were deep in the woods I was lost, but dad was the reason I was never afraid; I was certain he knew the way out of the woods. And all he had to say was, "Come, follow me," and in childlike faith I would follow him back to the car. He was the way, the truth and the life—the way to the truth of getting out of the woods to a life of freedom to enjoy a good lunch.

And even if I had known the way out of the woods apart from my dad, it would have not done me any good. As a little child I was not able to get over the barbed-wire fences or across the streams without faith in my dad; only because I had faith in him was I open to his protective love and strength that enabled me to enjoy my journey through the woods with total assurance that all would turn out well. I was sure of things hoped for and certain of things



not yet seen because I had childlike faith in my father.

And so Jesus says the same to you: “Have no less faith in me, because I love you much more than any earthly father is able to love you.”

In our lack of faith we are not crowding God as he would like. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because we fail to let him love us as much as he desires; that is, too often in times of temptation and trial, we fail immediately to retreat in faith—as do little children to a loving parent when they encounter danger—to Jesus to be open to his protective love and strength to experience the refuge and freedom he affords us. Accordingly, we must program ourselves to live the Faith-Love Principle as is simply explained in the first chapter of this book.

A very easy way to be open to God’s transforming love even when not being tried and tempted is simply to breathe “Jesus;” that is, just silently to the rhythm of your breathing breathe in the first syllable and breathe out the second syllable. Since Jesus means “Savior” and “Healer,” your exercise of faith opens you to his ongoing salvation and healing.

Also, “... thus says the LORD, ... I have called you by name: you are mine” (Is 43:1b). Again, silently to the rhythm of your breathing, breathe in your first name and breathe out the words “I love you,” and in faith know that Jesus is saying that to you. “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment...” (1 Jn 4:18a). “Thus we may say with confidence: ‘The Lord is my helper, [and] I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me’” (Heb 13:6).



God wants to love you through others, but if they can't or won't cooperate, or if you have no human friendships, you can become independent in the Lord. Jesus is not only your God, Savior and Brother, but he is also your very best Friend. And because he is love and the source of all love, he has more than enough love to fulfill anyone who in faith accepts him as their Lord and Savior.

Finally, since God is always offering his love to us, even when we are sinning, the easiest prayer to pray is, "God, grant that I may be open to your love; grant that all people may be open to your love." "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (Jm 4:8a). Jesus is the YES Person—Your Eternal Savior. Say yes in childlike faith to YES, Your Eternal Savior, that you may become all you are called to be by following GOD—Good Orderly Direction that will enable you to say, "I am happy and free! I live the FLP!"





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 8 ~

LOVE IS...

In the following pages you have the opportunity further to consider the true meaning and nature of love in your daily life by living the Faith-Love Principle. In living “Love is ...” you will necessarily experience the kingdom of heaven more fully along the way, and finally graduate to the fullness of life where every tear will be wiped away.

1. Love is becoming more childlike as one continues to grow older: “Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it” (Mk 10:15).
2. Love is being optimistic in all circumstances: “We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rm 8:28).
3. Love is being thankful in all circumstances: “... giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father” (Eph 5:20).
4. Love is faithfully paying homage to God: “He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went



according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day” (Lk 4:16).

5. Love is being faithful to time spent in prayer which is totally lacking in consolation: “He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground” (Lk 22:44).
6. Love is avoiding or ending relationships that are an obstacle to growth, no matter how strong the feelings are to the contrary: “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, in opposition to the teaching that you learned; avoid them” (Rm 16:17).
7. Love is giving good example: “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Mt 5:16).
8. Love is being polite: “Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair’” (Lk 7:44).
9. Love is having a positive attitude; accentuating the good: “No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (Eph 4:29).



10. Love is taking the opportunity to affirm others: “Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him’” (Jn 1:47).

11. Love is giving the radical witness of upholding the truth in particularly challenging circumstances: “After recalling the apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:40, 41).

12. Love is being compassionate and forgiving toward the person who has failed: “Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She replied, ‘No one, sir.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more’” (Jn 8:10b, 11).

13. Love is having a forgiving attitude when others are hostile and/or fail to show appreciation for sacrifices you make on their behalf: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do’” (Lk 23:34).

14. Love is forgiving an offender who has not apologized: “When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father



may in turn forgive you your transgressions” (Mk 11:25).

15. Love is taking the initiative to apologize when you and another may be at fault: “...leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:24).
16. Love is affording a person a way to save face when the person has failed: After the resurrection Jesus said to Simon Peter, “...‘Simon, son of John, do you love me’” (Jn 21:16a)?
17. Love is saying “I am sorry” when you are at fault: “... ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son’” (Lk 15:21).
18. Love is graciously accepting an apology: Regarding the return of the prodigal son, “But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began” (Lk 15:22-24).
19. Love is being patient and kind when others are rude: “Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good” (Rm 12:21).



20. Love is being non-judgmental: “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven” (Lk 6:37).

21. Love is being sensitive to the sorrows of others: “As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow... When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’... he said, ‘Young man, I tell you, arise!’ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother” (Lk 7:12a, 13, 14b, 15).

22. Love is showing respect to all persons: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk 6:31).

23. Love is saying “I love you” to a loved one when you least feel like it: “So they went off in a boat to a deserted place... When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things” (Mk 6:32, 34).

24. Love is listening attentively to a familiar joke or story: After the resurrection Jesus approached two disciples on the way to Emmaus—their eyes were prevented from recognizing him—and asked them what they were discussing. “One of them, named Cleopas, said in reply, ‘Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who



does not know of the things that have taken place there these days?” And he replied to them. “What sort of things?”” (Lk 24: 18, 19a).

25. Love is defending the person who is being bullied or persecuted: “[Jesus] said to [her accusers], ‘Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her’” (Jn 8:7b).
26. Love is doing something for another without being asked: “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45).
27. Love is consoling another who is hurting when perhaps you are hurting even more: “He replied to him, ‘Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise’” (Lk 23:43).
28. Love is self sacrificing: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13).
29. Love is willingness to sacrifice unconditionally for another: “But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rm 5:8).
30. Love is all encompassing: “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood



over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. “Love never fails” (1 Cor 13:4-8a).

31. Love is persevering in living the truth no matter what the challenge: “When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit” (Jn 19:30).

32. Love is God: “God is love” (1 Jn 4:16b).





YOUR examples of LOVE IS...



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 9 ~

FREEDOM THROUGH FORGIVING

Let us consider one of the most formidable, prevalent and most misunderstood obstacles to good health, freedom and happiness. Of most importance, we will consider the solution, which is much easier than most people realize.

Unfortunately, a dominant fallacy regarding forgiveness is the belief that it may often take years to forgive, or that there are occasions when it may be impossible to forgive. If indeed it is this challenging to forgive, why did Jesus tell Peter we are not only to forgive our neighbor seven times, but “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times” (Mt 18:22)? And why did Jesus teach us the prayer we should in good conscience daily be able to pray; the prayer that says our disposition to receive God’s forgiveness depends on our having forgiven anyone who has offended us? Read on to relish the freeing truth.

LOVE YOURSELF

If a person asks why he or she should forgive, perhaps the best answer results from answering another question: How much do you love yourself? The doctrine of



forgiveness is said to be the most effective of therapies. One meaning of forgiveness in the Old Testament is to have a weight lifted. The late Father Leo Trese wrote in one of his syndicated columns: “There is nothing so corrosive to happiness as the nursing of ill will toward another. There is something suicidal about hatred. The hater destroys his own happiness. It is he who suffers rather than the person he hates. If we find in ourselves any degree of hatred toward another, we are fools not to spit out the poison.”

Terry Anderson was the longest held American hostage in the Iran contra crisis. Having credited his survival to the strength of his Roman Catholic faith, he said, “I have no room for hatred, no time for it. My hating them is not going to hurt them an ounce. It’s only going to hurt me, and I’m not going to do that.”

The American Medical Association maintains that 90% of sickness is psychosomatic—mind and emotions adversely affecting the body. The late Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote: “A New York physician says 70% of his patients reveal resentment in their case histories. Says the physician, ‘Ill will and grudges help make people sick. Forgiveness will do more toward getting them well than many pills.’ Another physician tells of a patient who died of ‘grudgitis’—a long-held hatred of another person. So it is healthy to forgive, to say nothing about it being the right way to live.”

After the end of World War II, the late Corrie ten Boom had a home in Holland for the victims of Nazi brutality. She said, “Those who were able to forgive their



former enemies were able to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.”

“Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the LORD? Should a man refuse mercy to his fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? ... The vengeful will suffer the LORD’S vengeance, for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbor’s injustice; then when you pray your own sins will be forgiven” (Sir 28:3, 4, 1, 2).

DO NOT JUDGE

“So speak and so act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. For the judgment is merciless to one who has not shown mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment” (Jm 2:12, 13).

Jesus says, “Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven....

“But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Lk 6:36, 37, 27, 28).

And what is the reasoning for God telling us not to judge the moral guilt of others? Every Sunday an elderly couple sitting in the front pew held hands during Mass. The pastor being much impressed, one Sunday upon greeting the couple said, “I am so impressed by the way



you express your love for one another by holding hands during Mass.”

Immediately the couple laughed as the wife said, “Father, love has nothing to do with it. My husband cracks his knuckles, and this is the only way I can get him to stop.”

And so the adage, “You can’t judge the book by the cover.” And with even greater reason, we can’t surely judge moral guilt by what a person says or does; only God knows the content. “But the LORD said to Samuel: ‘...Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the LORD looks into the heart’” (1 Sam 16:7).

ALL ARE CRIPPLES

Regarding the hidden problems, fears and hardships people experience, the late renowned Dr. Karl Menniger said, “It is difficult for a free fish to know what a hooked fish is going through.” And the late writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, “If we knew the secret histories of our personal enemies, we would find therein enough sorrow and suffering to disarm us of all hostility.”

None of us has it all together. Because of our fallen human nature, we entered this world as cripples; spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and physically we are all handicapped. And, for example, there are a far greater number of people outside of our mental institutions who are just as mentally ill as the people within. However, we often find it difficult to attribute irrational behavior to mental illness unless the person responsible is in a mental institution.



One day a businessman and a psychologist stepped into the elevator at the same time. The businessman got off at the 14th floor and the psychologist at the 17th. But just before the businessman got off at the 14th, he cursed and spit on the psychologist. Calmly the psychologist took out his handkerchief and wiped off the spittle as if nothing had happened. In utter astonishment the elevator operator exclaimed to the psychologist, “How could you let this guy do this to you!?” The psychologist replied, “Fellow, that is his problem.”

The application should be evident: Anytime someone treats you in an irrational, unreasonable, uncouth, boorish, hateful, immature manner, you don’t have the problem; the other person does. Accordingly, without being judgmental, feel sorry for the offender. And as Jesus says, pray for the person; exercise your baptismal priesthood to help the person to become who he or she is called to be. As St. Paul says, “Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good” (Rm 12:21).

And concerning a family member or other relative, friend or person of whom we may be so critical, here are a few possible reasons why he or she may appear to say or do everything that is objectively wrong—to be a born loser: the person may have been traumatized even within the mother’s womb; was born with a fallen human nature; has been sexually and otherwise physically abused—persons I have so frequently encountered in my prison ministry; suffers from misuse of authority in the home, at school, work or by civil servants; suffers brain damage due to malnutrition, an accident, or even as a result of



injury from difficult delivery at birth; received little or no religious education; is the product of a broken home; cannot distinguish between freedom and license; blindly attempts to fulfill the desire for total satisfaction through creatures; is disillusioned by the bad example of those who fail to practice the good they preach.

Paradoxically, there is often more justice and reasonable consideration afforded in our civil court system than among Christians. For example, over television millions of people witnessed John W. Hinckley, Jr., attempt to assassinate former President Reagan. But with smoking gun in hand and bleeding bodies on the pavement, he was considered to be innocent until proven guilty. Why? Because in our application of civil law, it is rightly assumed that there may be extenuating circumstances which may deem an offender less culpable regarding the crime committed. Accordingly, Hinckley was found to be not guilty because of serious psychological problems. Subsequently, he was not sentenced to prison but confined to a mental institution, hopefully for rehabilitation.

On the contrary, sometimes among us Christians, someone can say the wrong thing and/or do something objectively seriously wrong, and we immediately judge the person to be fully culpable and see no reason to let the person explain. Without a trial, we condemn, mentally lock the person up and throw away the key.

LIVING THE RADICAL TRUTH

Shortly before the young Jewish girl Anne Frank departed this world from the Nazi concentration camp to



enter the fullness of life, she wrote in her diary: “In spite of everything, I still believe people are good at heart.”

When a Nazi concentration camp was liberated, this prayer by a Jew was found on a scrap of paper: “Peace be to men of bad will, and an end to all revenge and to all words of pain and punishment. So many have borne witness with their blood! O God, do not put their suffering upon the scales of justice, lest it be counted to the hangman; lest he be brought to answer for his atrocities. But to all hangmen and informers, to all traitors and evil ones, do grant the benefit of the courage and fortitude shown by those others who were their victims. May this be the ransom that restores justice. And all that is good, let it be counted; and all that is evil, let it be wiped out. May peace come once more upon this earth; peace to people of good will; and may it descend upon the others also.”

It is not difficult to imagine Jesus having spoken similar words. Having done nothing deserving punishment, much less death on the cross, as he looked down on those who crucified him, he said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34a). And so at this moment, Jesus is saying to each of us, “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you” (Jn 15:12). And as Paul says, “No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. [And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ” (Eph 4:29, 31, 32).



HOW TO FORGIVE

“But,” you may exclaim, “how to forgive!? If you only knew what was done to me!” Here is a hint. “To fail is human, to forgive is divine.” A fourteen-year-old Muslim boy became a Christian. Consequently, he was ostracized by his family and former friends. And on one occasion the young Christian was being taunted by a former companion: “You sap. You stupid person. What has this Christianity done for you for which you now suffer so much?”

“My Christianity,” he replied, “my Christ enables me to forgive.”

So at this moment, if you find it difficult or even impossible to forgive, Jesus is saying to you, “Bring your burden to me, and I will strengthen you; I will give you my ability to forgive” (cf. Mt 11:28).

NOT A MATTER OF FEELING

At this juncture let us consider an especially relevant truth I believe most people in our “be guided and ruled by your feelings” society fail to realize. To have forgiven we do not have to like or feel good toward the one who has hurt us. Certainly Jesus did not like or feel good toward those who crucified him. One might have the attitude, “If he is going to be there I am not going; I never want to see or speak to him again!” and still have forgiven.

The late Corrie ten Boom who witnessed her sister being beaten to death in the concentration camp said, “Forgiveness is not a feeling or an emotion; it is an act of the will. And a person can make the act of the will



regardless of the temperature of the heart.” As Jesus says, “...bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Lk 6:28).

AN ACT OF THE WILL

Therefore, because the essence of love and forgiveness is in the act of the will and not dependent upon the feelings, when we have made the act of the will to pray for the offender, we have proof we have forgiven, notwithstanding feelings to the contrary.

Again, anyone who says it may take years to forgive an offender contradicts Jesus having taught us the Lord’s Prayer, that we in good conscience should be able to pray daily—being forgiven as we forgive those who have offended us. As Jesus emphasizes, “When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions” (Mk 11:25). In other words, love yourself.

But how are we able to make the act of the will to pray for the offender when hateful feelings are so overwhelming? The answer of the young Muslim boy converted to Christianity—to Christ—is just as applicable to all of us. And so Jesus continues to say, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:28, 30); “But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:33); “...because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5b).

Therefore, the successful way to achieve the victory is as follows: By living what I refer to as the FLP, the Faith-



Love Principle, we are always able to forgive: As a little child at *the very first moment* of encountering any danger *immediately retreats* to a loving parent, so must you in your mind *immediately retreat* to Jesus at *the very first moment* of the temptation to hate and to be unforgiving. That is, at that *very first moment* mentally, not on your lips, say, “No, in the name of Jesus” to the temptation to hate and to be unforgiving; then *immediately* say, “Jesus, with your strength I ask you to bless so-and-so and anyone else who has hurt me.” Having made that act of the will with the strength of Jesus to pray for the offender, you have proof you have forgiven, even though your emotions may convey the opposite.

However, because “Jesus” means “Healer” as well as “Savior,” every future time you exercise the Faith-Love Principle when you are tempted to hate and be unforgiving, the emotions will begin to wane, to calm; to be in accord with the freeing truth that if someone has mistreated you and failed to respect your dignity in your having been made to the image and likeness of God, that person has the problem and needs you by your prayer to exercise your baptismal priesthood on his or her behalf. Then you will indeed realize that living the truth sets *you* free.

HOW TO FORGIVE SELF

But if it is especially difficult to forgive yourself for having lived such a sinful life, here are several additional helps: In James 5:16 we are told to “Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” The Sacrament of Reconciliation affords the



optimum opportunity for following through.

Also, be mindful that your reason for finding it difficult to forgive yourself is limited, because you are limited. The good news we celebrate in the Mass is that every sin that will ever be committed is already potentially forgiven, and that God loves you 100% just as you are; just as he loves at this moment the most callous sinner committing the worst sin. The problem is the failure of a person to be receptive to God's forgiveness and transforming love. Since "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8b), he only loves. "If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tm 2:13). "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8). And that you may come to life and be renewed, Jesus says, "...I came so that you may have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10b). "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (Jn 11:25, 26). Stop trying to limit God by your own limitations.

Furthermore, since "God is love ... We love because he first loved us" (1Jn 4:8b, 19). "But now, thus says the LORD, who created you Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine" (Is 43:1). It is important to hear your name and the words, "I love you." Therefore, as you inhale, mentally hear your first name, and as you exhale hear the words "I love you"; and in faith, as Scripture says, know that God is saying that to you. Through that breathing exercise, which can be done at any time, increasingly you will realize how forgivable and lovable you are. And, once you have accepted God's



forgiveness, any time you are tempted to doubt, mentally hear your first name and the words “All is forgiven; I love you.” Then mentally respond, “Thank you, Lord, for your forgiveness and love.”

In addition, because the God of love only wills what is best for you, pray for yourself: “God, grant that I may always be open to what is best for me, that I may become the person you want me to be.”

FORGIVENESS AND HEALING REGARDING OTHERS

Finally, how to forgive yourself and experience inner healing for having hurt others: Anytime you think of someone you have mistreated, pray, “God, bless that person and anyone else I have hurt, including myself.” Also, at any given opportunity speak kindly about anyone you have harmed by word or action.

Because the sight of you or the sound of your voice may greatly upset the person who has something against you, making it difficult or impossible for you to apologize, send a letter. In doing so you are able to state any possible extenuating circumstances without emotional interference. However, if you are totally at fault, in writing the letter, do not make excuses. Keep it honest, simple and brief. For example, “Dear..., I am very sorry I hurt you. I was so wrong. I want you to know I love you, and I pray that you may be healed of any sorrow I have caused you. Please pray for me to become a better person. Most sincerely,....” Even if you receive no reply, your initiative will promote inner healing for you.



However, if you do not know the location of the person you owe an apology, or if the person has left this world for good, apologize through imagination. That is, in the most appropriate manner imagine yourself apologizing to the victim; and then picture Jesus embracing both of you as you hear your name and the words, “All is forgiven; I love you.” Then mentally respond, “Thank you for your forgiveness and love.” Do this any time in the future your failure comes to mind, and you will increasingly know the healing God wills for you. And since to relive the hurts and mistakes of the past only causes the inner wounds to fester and prevent healing, the Holy Spirit reminds us, “Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new” (Is 43:18)! Again, Jesus says it is necessary that we become as little children if we are going to enter the kingdom of heaven. What you have been considering is simple and not simplistic.

NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME

Only God knows our day of final departure. If we fail to forgive in time, let us not presume we will have the opportunity hereafter. “Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2b). The following prayer will confirm your assurance you have forgiven everyone, including yourself: Jesus our Savior, with your strength and your unlimited Spirit of love, compassion and forgiveness, at this moment in time, I pray for myself and anyone who has offended me in any way. Please help me and all who have offended me to be



healed, and to become fully who we are called to be. Jesus, in your name, I claim the openness to accept on the part of all concerned. I praise and thank you for this. Amen. Alleluia!





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 10 ~

THE JOY OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The preacher asked his congregation, “How many of you have ever stolen anything?”

Half of the people raised their hands.

Then he said, “All right, today’s sermon is for you. ‘Thou shall not steal.’ Next Sunday’s sermon is for the rest of you. ‘Thou shall not tell a lie.’”

Yes, “...all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus...” (Rm 3:23, 24). And, of course, we celebrate that ongoing justification in the Mass as Jesus continues to offer himself to the Father on behalf of you, me and everyone. Accordingly, the good news is that forgiveness is always available to the sinner who is repentant and open in faith to God’s forgiveness.

But failure to repent has very undesirable consequences. In *Love, Medicine and Miracles*, Dr. Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., says, “Peace of mind sends the body a live message, while depression, fear and unresolved conflict give it a die message.” And the American Medical Association maintains that 90% of sickness is psychosomatic; that is, the adverse effect of the disturbed mind and emotions over the body.



“When you’re on top of the world your mental faculties are at peak performance,” says psychologist Arthur R. Jensen of the University of California. “Likewise, your ability to think is really on the skids when you are worried, depressed, or in a black mood.”

Evil binds. As Jesus says, “...everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin” (Jn 8:34b). Evil spelled backwards is live. We have to break the bonds of evil to be truly alive.

Freedom and healing require that we are sorry for our sins, that we confess them and determine with the strength of Jesus to live the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction, by living the Faith-Love Principle as presented in the first chapter of this book.

But why is it important that we confess our sins to another human being? “‘Often what causes stress and tension are things we keep inside,’ says Jerilyn Ross, associate director of the Round House Square Psychiatric Center in Alexandria, Virginia. Ross suggests confiding in someone who really listens and has your best interest at heart.”

On the Resurrection Day Jesus said to the Apostles, “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained” (Jn 20:23). And in the Letter of St. James, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (Jm 5:16a).

Because all of the priests in the Catholic Church are bound by the seal of confession, it is possible for the faithful to confess their sins with complete confidence to another and have the spoken assurance their sins are



forgiven. Because of this, I have had several Protestants come to me to confess their sins.

But, a person may be living under the illusion that because he or she is such a terrible sinner, it is impossible for God to forgive him or her. However, such an attitude fails to consider that since we are created, we are limited in our sinfulness, no matter how sinful we may be. Through his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus has far surpassed our limitations; and, as has been stated, his ongoing offering of himself to the Father on our behalf in the celebration of the Mass continues to afford forgiveness to every repentant sinner.

And when I give this presentation at a penance service, I say to the congregation, "If anyone here has made such a mess of his or her life that you believe you cannot be forgiven, please come up here to be congratulated because you must be greater than God." Again, we are limited; God's mercy is unlimited. In fact, the only sin that cannot be forgiven is to lack faith in God's mercy; to be closed to the forgiveness he is offering to every repentant sinner. "If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (1 Jn 1:9).

Regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the late beloved Msgr. Conway wrote in one of his syndicated question and answer columns: "You cannot make a bad confession when you honestly wish and try to make a good one; you cannot make a bad confession without willing it." God is looking for warm bodies with good will. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save what was lost" (Lk 19:10).



But a person may object that because he or she cannot feel sorry for sins committed, how can he or she be forgiven. We do not have to feel sorry for our sins to have them forgiven. As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, forgiveness is not a matter of feeling but is manifested by an act of the will. And with the strength of Jesus we can make the act of the will regardless of the temperature of the heart; that is, of inability to feel sorry for our sins. In fact, one can have great feeling of sorrow without being sorry if the person is not determined to avoid sin in the future. Therefore, the absolute assurance that we have valid sorrow for sin is referred to as purpose of amendment.

However, one may object, “I am discouraged by my weak purpose of amendment.” Unfortunately, the person has a lot of company. The little boy confessed his sins to the priest. And the priest asked, “Is there anything else?”

“No,” he replied, “but I’ll have more for you the next time.”

In a conversation between a Christian and a Jew, the Jew said, “About everything you Christians have in your religion, you stole from us Jews. For example, you stole the Ten Commandments from us.”

“We may have stolen them from you,” replied the Christian, “but you cannot accuse us of having kept them.”

So how are we able to have an increasingly firm purpose of amendment resulting in fewer sins to confess? Most importantly, we must acknowledge that our sins are not the problem, but, rather, only symptomatic of the



problem all of us have to a greater or lesser degree: our failure *immediately* to do what Jesus says we must do when we realize we are being tempted. The simple answer, the Faith-Love Principle, is clearly stated in the first chapter of this book. If we program ourselves to live the FLP, we will joyfully experience that “all things are possible for God” as we exercise steadfast childlike faith in Jesus to accept the victory he has won for us.

Also, being mindful that God helps those who help themselves, insofar as possible we must avoid the occasions of sin. For example, as the Holy Spirit cautions us through St. Paul, “Do not be led astray: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’” (1 Cor 15:33). We do not judge the moral guilt of bad companions, but we exercise prudent judgment that they are not a positive influence, and we in turn seek companions who are living the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction.

Regarding the importance of discipline for a firmer purpose of amendment, “Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one” (1 Cor 9:25). In this regard, it is important occasionally to “go the extra mile” when we don’t have to and to refrain from unnecessary legitimate pleasures from time-to-time. As always, this discipline is possible by living the FLP.

In overcoming a bad habit, divide and conquer. Jesus tells us just to be concerned for the day and not to worry about tomorrow (cf. Mt 6:34). After all, most people depart this world for good having worried about tomorrow. “Oh Lord, if only for a day I can be really good, be always



ready to obey and do the things I should, just for a day.

“Oh Lord, if only for a day I can do this, then when each new morning comes, I’ll pray for grace to persevere again, just for a day.”

And remember, by living the FLP, since Jesus means “Savior” and “Healer” with every victory we grow stronger. Therefore, as St Paul says, “...whatever is honorable, whatever is just..., if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil 4:8). In application, when we succeed by living the FLP in overcoming a temptation or in arresting a bad habit, we should think about the victory, for “Nothing succeeds like success.”

Furthermore, because there is greater suffering in giving in to a temptation than in resisting it, if we offer the lesser suffering in achieving the victory for greater openness in faith to God’s strength and transforming love, our purpose of amendment will more readily grow stronger.

Also, Jesus says, “Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). And at the Last Judgment, since we will be reminded that what we have done for the least person we have done for Jesus, we should be aware that we cannot outdo God in generosity; that is, if we treat others as we would have them treat us, we will increasingly be one with the mind and willpower of Jesus.

As a very dear friend of mine, Sister Mary Nativity, HM, who is now a saint in heaven, so beautifully expressed in one of her many poems, “When I said ‘Yes’ to God,



I knew the Word would come alive in me, and I would carry him to all humanity. I knew the deprivation and the pain would one day bring about his reign! I'd carry him to all the world wherever it was found his voice was small, or where his light was dim!"

Finally, as Grace L. Naessens succinctly shares in "The Difference," "I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day. I had so much to accomplish, I didn't take time to pray. Troubles just tumbled around me and heavier grew each task. Why doesn't God help me, I wondered, and he answered, 'You didn't ask.'

"I got up early this morning and paused before entering the day. I had so much to accomplish, I had to take time to pray."

Or, as Tom Shively, a strong person of faith insightfully relates, "Prayer doesn't take time from your life; prayer gives life to your time." And since we are totally dependent upon God for every heartbeat and breath at every moment of time, our faithfulness in prayer attests to our belief in that reality.

Beautiful person made to the very image and likeness of God, in your living the Faith-Love Principle, all that you have just considered will enable you increasingly to be victorious in Christ Jesus, as you find JOY in having fewer sins to confess in the beautiful Sacrament of Reconciliation.





YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 11 ~

DEATH, THE BIG LIE

It was said at the wake of the deceased, “He was so optimistic that he bought a burial suit with two pairs of trousers.”

After his physical, the patient was told he had only six months to live. “Doc, is there anything I can do?”

“Well, as a matter of fact there is. Get rid of all your possessions, move out into the boondocks into a shack without plumbing, electricity, or heating, and marry a woman with twelve kids.”

“Doc, will this give me more time?”

“No, but it will be the longest six months of your life.”

The prospect of death does not make the following Scriptures any less applicable: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice” (Phil 4:4)! “Rejoice always. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thes 5:16, 18). “We know that God makes all things work for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rm 8:28).

But some people have not forgiven God for the death of a loved one. For example, a lady wrote to Ann Landers, “Last January it was two years since our daughter Karen died. Don’t tell me God never makes a mistake. You mean he did this on purpose!?”



If the mother believes in a better life hereafter, hopefully she will finally realize God has already called her daughter to receive what is best for her. There is death that we may have life to the fullest. And even though accepting the truth may momentarily cause a bit of pain, if with the strength of Jesus we persevere, we will eternally reign.

We don't ask ourselves if some day we are going to die, because it seems all too evident. However, in the dictionary one can find this definition of "die": "To stop living; to pass out of existence." Fact: Only the body finally ceases to function, has the demise. Bodies, not people, are buried in cemeteries. In the cemetery adjacent to the Old Cathedral in Vincennes, Ind., is the perfect tombstone inscription: "Here lies the body of Janne Boneaux who departed this world at age 28, Nov. 15, 1800."

At wake services it is not unusual to hear comments regarding the deceased such as, "He looks good, doesn't he?" "She looks so peaceful." Since the embalmed is not a living person but a lifeless body, the expression of peace is not surprising.

On one occasion the corpse had a smile on its face, and someone asked a relative of the deceased, "Why the smile on his face?"

"Well, he wasn't too bright. He was climbing a tree during a thunderstorm and was struck by lightning."

"But why the smile on his face?"

"He thought they were taking his picture."

In the first preface for the Mass of the departed we pray, "Life is changed, not ended." We in truth speak of the faithful "departed." We graduate to the fullness of



life. “But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace” (Wis 3:1-3).

“For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. ...

“So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord” (2 Cor 5:1, 6-8).

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one. ...

“Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one. ...

“And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (1 Cor 15: 42-49,54). “He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body...” (Phil 3:21a).

In Boston I was in the seminary with a Father Edmund Dunn who writes a question and answer column for his diocesan newspaper. When asked, “What do we mean by



resurrection of the body?” he replied, “Resurrection does not mean a reviving of the physical body as we know it. Our belief in resurrection of the body is based on what occurred in Jesus being raised to a new life. The Gospel writers stress two basic points concerning the resurrected Christ; he was radically changed—they didn’t recognize him at first—and yet he was definitely the same, the one they had followed. He appeared and disappeared, not limited by time and space, and yet he ate with them and even showed them his wounded hands. Our belief in resurrection is based on the conviction that we could not be who we are without our bodies. And yet our bodies will be radically transformed—glorified, as St. Paul suggests.”

Therefore, “Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art to dust returnest was not spoken of the soul. And so, do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep. Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there, I did not die.”

This does not mean we are not to shed tears at the final departure of a loved one. Jesus wept at the departure of Lazarus. And the late writer Washington Irving wrote, “There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than 10,000 tongues.”

But if we accept the fact that only the body has the demise, we will not be overwhelmed at the “death” of a loved one. For example, if after being employed for many years you finally receive a promotion and raise, and then excitedly share the good news with your best friend, it would be ridiculous for your friend to respond, “Gee, I’m



certainly sorry to hear that.”

It makes much less sense to be devastated when a loved one receives the greatest possible promotion and raise to the fullness of life. As St. Paul reminds us, “We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ... Therefore, console one another with these words” (1 Thes 4:13, 14, 18).

In our daily living, how can the truth that only the earthly body will cease to function help us along the way to our final graduation day? (1) We will not unduly mourn over the final departure of a loved one. (2) No matter how heavy our daily cross, we can be mindful that time is brief, especially relative to the eternity of perfect happiness. (3) The brevity of time should remind us to be serious about fulfilling our commission to live the Two Great Commandments. (4) Being mindful of the hereafter, we should be motivated to live a life of childlike faith in Jesus in anticipation of the mansion reserved for us. (5) The fact that life is changed and not ended should help us overcome the fear of dying. (6) With confidence we can pray for healing knowing that God will grant us whatever healing is best for us right up to our final graduation moment. (7) We can look forward to being reunited with our departed loved ones.

After a serious operation, the patient opened his eyes and asked, “How did it go, Doc?”

“What do you mean ‘Doc?’ I am St. Peter.” (I hope you realize that is good news.)



In the Letter to the Hebrews we are exhorted, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden of sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us... “ (Heb 12:1). Among the angels and saints that form the cloud of witnesses are our departed loved ones. And they are saying to you and me to get serious about the little time we have left to realize, “...‘What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him’ this God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1Cor 2:9,10). Or as the two ladies who entered heaven together said, “Wow! Just think, if we hadn’t eaten all of that oat bran, we could have been here five years ago!”

But how to get serious? Jesus says, “Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me” (Jn 14:21a). And St. John reminds us, “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 Jn 5:3b). But if a person is not familiar with and living the Faith-Love Principle, one will be encountering the same dilemma that plagued St. Paul during a period of his life. That is, he cried out in anguish that although he wanted to live the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction, he wasn’t able to. It was only after he realized, acknowledged and accepted his total dependence on God through childlike faith in Jesus, that he was able to live the truth that set him free.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit reminds us, “But without faith it is impossible to please him...” (Heb 11:6a). Therefore, we grow strong “...while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith” (Heb 12:2). Accordingly,



Jesus tells us, “Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5b). And so Jesus assures us that if we live the Faith-Love Principle in relation to him, the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, “...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22b, 23a) will flourish in our lives.

Regarding your final graduation day, it is paramount that you know how to react if you are conscious when the time has come. St. Peter reminds us that “Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith...” (1 Pt 5:8b, 9a). And concerning your faith in Jesus, Peter says, “Cast all your worries on him because he cares for you” (1 Pt 5:7).

Therefore, even though the devil will be roaring the loudest at your final departure time, Jesus has the victory over the devil and wants you to share in his victory. Again, no matter what the temptation, immediately mentally respond, “No, in the name of Jesus,” and then mentally continue to repeat the word “Jesus” to the rhythm of your breathing.

Also, remember that Holy Mother Church teaches that if you have any doubt as to whether or not a sin you committed was a mortal sin, and/or any doubt about whether or not you properly confessed a mortal sin, simply treat those doubts as temptations and be at peace about them. But if you are certain you have committed unconfessed mortal sins, to attain the state of sanctifying grace simply make an act of perfect love or contrition; that is, an act of sorrow because you have offended God who is worthy of all your love, and have the intention



of confessing the mortal sin(s) if given the opportunity. And be aware that in making the act of perfect love or contrition, even though it may be difficult or impossible to formulate words, all that is necessary is for you to make an act of the will regarding your sorrow.

Don't try to limit God's infinite love and mercy. "God is love..." (1 Jn 4:16b). "If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tm 2:13). "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save what was lost" (Lk 19:10). In other words, God is looking for warm bodies with good will. Accordingly, you don't have to ask God for what is best for you. As the God of infinite love and mercy, he can only will what is best for you. Therefore, simply pray to be open in faith to what God wills for you.

When the 100-year-old man was asked what he attributed his longevity to, he replied, "I just keep breathing." To emphasize: No matter what the temptation, as you continue to breathe the word "Jesus," you are exercising steadfast childlike faith in your Savior and Healer. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:16b), and "...perfect love drives out fear..." (1 Jn 4:18a). Be positive: Thank God that you are going to graduate to the fullness of life to experience the eternal "Wow!"

Regarding the final departure of a loved one, with the shortage of ordained priests, one may not be available to minister the Sacrament of the Sick. Regardless, you can effectively exercise your baptismal priesthood. Even though the beloved may not appear to be conscious, being aware that the person may still be able to hear, you can minister to him or her as stated above as you would



minister to yourself at your time of final graduation. Above all, remind the person to apply the Faith-Love Principle and to continue to breathe “Jesus.”

Finally, one day when I was in the 4th grade at St. Benedict elementary school in Evansville, Ind., the Benedictine Nun was reading to us the life of a martyr. Being so overwhelmed by the suffering the martyr had endured, I frantically raised my hand before Sister had finished reading. “Charles,” she exclaimed, “what is it?”

“Sister, I could never put up with that suffering.”

“Charles,” she said, “right now you don’t have to, but if the time were to come, Jesus would be there with you for all you would need to persevere.”

And so, regarding final departure day, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him” (Rm 8:31b, 32)?

Just when a caterpillar thinks it’s going to die, it becomes a butterfly. “...‘I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die’” (Jn 11:25, 26a). “You changed my mourning into dancing ... and clothed me with gladness ... O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks” (Ps 30:12, 13b). “...‘Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor 15:54, 55, 57).





YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 12 ~

RELEASING YOUR BURDENS

During a flood a few years ago I was living in a farm house completely surrounded by water. And as I looked out the window at some cows standing knee deep in the water, I got to hankering for some catfish. So I put on my hipboots—you had better put yours on—and began to wade out until I came upon those cows. And sure enough, it was just as I had suspected. Some catfish—all cat relatives like milk—were nursing off of those cows. All I had to do was reach down, take the catfish from the udders and drop them into the bucket. I want to tell you, it was an udderly fabulous catch of fish!

Now you know that story is true because it is a fish story. But what you are about to consider is more fabulous than any udderly fabulous catch of fish.

This fellow phoned a psychologist friend to complain that his next door neighbor was driving him nuts; he was singing loudly day and night thinking he had a part in an opera.

“Send him to me,” said the psychologist.

Two weeks later the fellow again phoned the psychologist and said, “I don’t hear my neighbor singing any more. Did you cure him of his illusion?”



“No. I just assigned him a much smaller part.”

Although because like everyone else you will always have burdens to carry, the Lord wants to lighten your load, assign you a smaller part.

When I was teaching at St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, one afternoon after school, as I stood next to Coach Joe Figler during wrestling practice, I was fascinated by the agility and finesse of our light heavyweight contender for the State championship. Turning to Joe, I said, “This kid looks terrific!”

Joe’s response was, “Yeah, this kid looks terrific even when he’s losing.”

GETTING RIGHT WITH THE LORD

“When all earthly props give under and life seems a restless sea, are you then a God-kept wonder, satisfied, calm and free?” You can and should be. Let’s see.

“Our eyes seldom met as we talked. Her body language, twisting fingers and shifting posture shouted her anxiety. ‘Peace,’ she said. ‘I’ve got to find some peace of mind!’

“‘What must happen if you are to have peace?’

“The question froze her nervous movements. Only her eyes melted. ‘Things must change. Circumstances must be different, if I am to have peace.’

“We waited in eloquent silence. Along the path of easy fantasy, she dreamed of another world. I waited at the door of reality, knowing she must return that way. Circumstances would not change. Would she? Peace is not the magic of changing circumstances. It is the happy



discovery of maturing persons. Getting things right is not the secret. Getting me right is the elusive key to peace” (Rev. Browning Ware, First Baptist Church, Austin).

“Two people looked through the prison bars; one saw mud, the other saw stars.” Everyone has the daily challenge of carrying the cross. It is how we respond to the challenge that determines whether we see the mud or the stars, no matter what the circumstance.

Merlin Carothers was a wayward youth who quit school and roamed the streets until he was old enough to join the army. After being booted from the army, he ended up in jail looking through the bars seeing the mud. But his cellmate was seeing the stars; out of desperation he had repented and had accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. And eagerly wanting to share his exhilarating joy and freedom with his disgruntled cellmate, he perseveringly pursued Merlin who had no place to hide.

“Fella, you are driving me crazy! What do I have to do to shut you up?”

“Merlin, get rid of the garbage; tell Jesus you are sorry for your sins, and ask him to fill your emptiness with his love and peace. Invite Jesus into your heart to be your Lord and Savior.”

Starved for the love and peace his cellmate was experiencing, Merlin acknowledged his sinfulness, committed his life to Jesus, and in that cell began to realize the inexpressible freedom and joy he had never known.

After his release from jail, Merlin studied to become a minister, and as a chaplain was accepted back into the army. And his ministry continues to be inspired by these



challenging words recorded by St. Paul: "...giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Eph 5:20), for "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rm 8:28). When, for example, he was approached by a distraught soldier with the news his wife had terminal cancer, Chaplain Carothers' immediate response was, "Knowing that all things work for the good of those who love God, and in all things give thanks, before further consideration, we must praise and thank the Lord."

FIRST STEP

Accordingly, concerning the release of your burdens, the first of the four steps is to have that spirit of resignation inspired by the Holy Spirit and manifested by Jesus; that is, you are willing to carry your cross as is, if God so wills.

SECOND STEP

In the following words Jesus reminds us that anyone who has committed his or her life to him need not worry about self, relatives, friends, bad habits, poor health, financial problems or whatever: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). And so, "Commit your way to the LORD; trust that God will act..." (Ps 37:5a).

However, some who do go to Jesus when challenged needlessly suffer, which maybe was true of the Apostles when the storm arose with Jesus asleep in the boat. Since most of them were fishermen, they may not have been



inclined to seek the help of Jesus who they supposed knew nothing about sailing through stormy seas. They were the sailors; they would be in control. As is so often with many of us when challenged, it was perhaps only as a last resort that they frantically retreated to Jesus, who immediately calmed the raging sea and admonished the Apostles for their lack of faith. But previously Jesus had told them to “...seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:33). Assuming they did not, if they had first gone to Jesus when challenged by the storm, they could have avoided needless consternation.

Therefore, the second step for releasing any burden is immediately to take it to the Lord and to claim the victory in the name of Jesus.

THIRD STEP

Regarding the third condition, Jesus says, some people “look but do not see, and hear but do not listen or understand” (Mt 13:13b). Also, Jesus wept over Jerusalem and said, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Lk 19:42). That is, in childlike faith you must be open to the release of your burden in the time and manner in which God determines. Accordingly, after taking your burden to Jesus and claiming the release in his name, also claim openness in the name of Jesus on the part of yourself and anyone else who might be instrumental in the relief you are seeking.



FOURTH STEP

The final step is for you, at least with a general intention, to offer your suffering of carrying your daily cross for that greater openness in faith to accept whatever relief God wishes to grant. Subsequently, any time the burden comes to mind, simply praise and thank God for the victory, for the relief, for the healing he wills for you.

TRUST IN GOD

“As children with tears brought their broken toys for me to mend, I brought my broken dreams to God because he is my friend. But instead of leaving him in peace to work alone, I stayed around and tried to help with thoughts that were my own. Finally I snatched my burdens back and cried, ‘Why are you so slow?’”

“‘My dear child,’ he gently sighed, ‘what could I do, you never did let go?’”

As stated in a “Christopher News Note,” “The inner peace that comes from trusting God helps us deal calmly with whatever life brings. Freed from needless anxiety, we can experience the joy of life. Pray for the faith that brings peace which not only heals, but helps us heal others.”

If in steadfast childlike faith you let go and let God, you will not be anxious or afraid; you will have the peace he bequeaths to you. “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1) because the God of love is who he is for you and for everyone.



PERSEVERANCE IN FAITH

On one occasion ten lepers called out to Jesus that they might be healed. But Jesus did not immediately heal them. Rather, he told them to go show themselves to the priest, which was what he ordinarily told those he had already cured to do. However, rather than be discouraged, the lepers exercised their faith in Jesus that resulted in their being healed on their way to see the priest.

In 1949 I had an emergency appendectomy. Three days after the operation I was in such intense pain that I thought the doctor had botched the operation. The truth was that even though the symptom of pain had not subsided after three days, I was in the process of being healed. Likewise, sometimes you may give a burden to the Lord and matters seem to get worse. Jesus is testing your faith, which is the only way you can prove your love for him; that is, to be willing to trust he only wills and allows what is best for you no matter how he may disguise the reality.

The longer you persevere in faith, the more you prove your love and increasingly become more whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, a lover, Christ-like, who you are called to be. “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Jm 1:2-4).

If tempted to “snatch your burden back,” just interiorly say, “No, in the name of Jesus,” and praise and thank the Lord for the victory. Also, be mindful that time is brief



and look for the ultimate victory: “Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him” (Jm 1:12) through steadfast faith in him.

INTERCESSORY FAITH

For example, occasionally I have distraught parents come to me regarding a daughter or son who is incorrigible and/or has run away. After hearing them out, I tell them they have no reason to worry if they will accept the truth that our God of infinite love necessarily loves their child more than they, and only wills what is best for him or her. Also, that through their anxiety, often expressed by constant nagging, and perhaps lack of unconditional love—“We want nothing to do with you unless you abandon your evil ways!”—they themselves may be obstacles to their child’s being open to reform. In other words, although it is important to let the wayward child know they disagree with his or her lack of conformity with objective truth, it is equally important to convey the unconditional love Jesus has for every person: “We love you, and we will always be here for you.”

Accordingly, it is necessary to let go and let God and have intercessory faith in Jesus on behalf of the loved one, the faith that is often manifested in the Gospels: The centurion comes to Jesus on behalf of his servant; the parents approach Jesus on behalf of their daughter who has died; others bring a person on a pallet to Jesus. The people who were raised up may never have heard of Jesus, but the intercessory faith of loved ones was their way to



the healing power of Jesus.

It is recorded in the book of Acts that Paul and Silas were in prison in Phillippi. After a severe earthquake shakes open the prison doors and everyone's chains are pulled loose, Paul prevents the jailer from committing suicide. Full of fear and trembling he brings them out and says, "... 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved'" (Acts 16:30b, 31). Then he and his whole household are baptized. Again, it was a manifestation of intercessory faith that resulted in the salvation of others.

As always, no matter what the nature of the burdens, Jesus tells us to bring our burdens to him to be refreshed (cf. Mt 11:28). Therefore, even if a wayward loved one apparently continues to be unrepentant, if you persevere in steadfast childlike faith in Jesus on his or her behalf, you will finally be united with the loved one in heaven to experience the eternal refreshment that Jesus promises through your intercessory faith.

"She waited for the call that never came. Searched every mail for a card or letter that bore his name. And on her knees at night and on her feet all day, she stormed heaven's gate in his behalf.

"'Be still and wait,' the word God gave. And so she knew that he would do with, in and for him that which she never could. Doubts ignored, she went about her chores with joy, knowing his word is true: 'Come to me with your burden, and I will refresh you.'

"No, the prodigal had not returned. But God is God and God is love; and there was work to do."



In summary, as you exercise your unconditional love through steadfast childlike faith in Jesus, no matter what burdens you release to him, you will be refreshed. And as your faith continues to grow stronger by daily praying for an increase, by practicing it in living the Faith-Love Principle, and by meditating on your success; increasingly you will be able to experience and witness to others that there is no such thing as a personal crisis because “We know that all things work for good for those who love God...” (Rm 8:28a).





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 13 ~

WHY SUFFERING?

The owner of the dog with the itch, took the dog with the itch to the vet. But as the vet was examining the dog with the itch, the dog with the itch ran out the door and across the street to a big parking lot. The vet ran after the dog with the itch, and while he was on his hands and knees looking under the cars for the dog with the itch, a parking attendant came over and inquired, “Fellow, can I help you?”

“Have you seen my itchy poochie?”

“Fellow, I’m sorry, but I can’t tell one Japanese car from another.”

Now that story was all about suffering: The dog suffered with an itch; the owner of the dog suffered because his dog had an itch; the vet suffered because he could not find the dog with the itch; the parking attendant suffered because he could not identify the dog with the itch; I suffered writing about itch; and you suffered reading about itch.

So while we are properly disposed, let us make sense out of suffering. Everyone has suffering. Jesus says to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23). But the cross, our daily temptations and trials—the things



we complain about—is not to punish; Jesus has paid the price of our sins: “He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness” (1 Pt 2:24a). Therefore, to help us make sense out of suffering, let us consider the following:

(1) *Our suffering of taking up the cross enables us to prove our love for Jesus as he proved his love for us.* “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). “Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you” (1 Pt 4:12).

Talk is cheap. Although Peter proclaimed he would never abandon Jesus, he later denied him three times. And after the Risen Christ asked Peter three times if he loved him, Jesus told Peter he would later be confronted with the opportunity to prove his love: “...‘Amen, amen, I say to you, ...you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.’ He said this signifying by what kind of death he [Peter] would glorify God” (Jn 21:18, 19a).

(2) *Suffering is meant to enable us to change and to become more of who we are called to be.* As Dr. Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., says, “It is only through pain that we change.”

Muhammad Ali was perhaps the greatest prize fighter of his generation and appeared to be equally self centered. However, having suffered from Parkinson’s disease for many years, he says, “It’s a blessing. I always liked to chase the girls—Parkinson’s stops all that. Now I might have a chance to go to heaven.” Spending his time aiding



various charities, he says, “With everything I do, I ask myself, ‘Will God accept this?’ One day you’ll wake up and it’ll be Judgment Day, so you need to do good deeds. I love sick people. I don’t worry about disease.”

Jesus says, “...whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Lk 9:24b). Sometime do your salvation history regarding those circumstances that caused you suffering and complaint, and you will be made aware of many blessings in disguise.

(3) *Suffering is meant to promote discipline of the will to enable us to mature.* We need the discipline of the will immediately to live the Faith-Love Principle—to immediately retreat to Jesus—when tempted to cave in to the wayward inclination of our fallen human nature.

“Endure your trials as ‘discipline’; ...At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it” (Heb 12:7a, 11). “Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rm 5:3-5). “Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude (for whoever suffers in the flesh has broken with sin), so as not to spend what remains of one’s life in the flesh on human desires, but on the will of God” (1 Pt 4:1-3).

Muhammad Ali comes to mind. And in personal application, on a couple of occasions when I thought I



was on my final departure bed, I had no inclination to sin, but only to be open to God's mercy.

(4) *Our suffering is meant to be redemptive.* “For to this you have been called, because Christ has suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps” (1 Pt 2:21). “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, ...” (Col 1:24).

Jesus wept over Jerusalem and over us because of lack of faith in him as our Savior and Healer. Therefore, we can offer our unavoidable suffering for greater openness in faith to God's transforming love we celebrate in the Mass for ourselves and for others. For example, if we offer the suffering involved in resisting a temptation or overcoming a bad habit, we will be that much more open to Jesus' victory on behalf of all concerned.

(5) *Our patient bearing of suffering can afford encouragement to others.* “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God” (2 Cor 1:3,4). We are commissioned to be wounded healers. “Just so, your light must shine before others...” (Mt 5:16a).

To the degree radical witness is manifested on behalf of truth, as moths to a light, people are attracted, encouraged and inspired to live in like manner. The Church has always prospered most in the time of persecution; the more people



who gave their lives for Jesus who is the Truth, the more people, including executioners, converted to Christianity.

And although we are living at a time when perhaps you and I will not face martyrdom, every day we are afforded many occasions to give witness through good example; good example that requires the suffering of inconvenience, sacrifice, or even perhaps of peer pressure to respond in favor of living the lie rather than in witnessing to the liberating truth.

St. Paul refers to the Book of Proverbs when he says, "...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.' Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good" (Rm 12:20, 21). Of course, the good is the burning that hopefully will elicit the reaction, "She had every reason in the world to be upset with me, but she was kind to me, patient with me. Why can't I be that way?" Jesus reminds us that it is by the Fruits of the Holy Spirit—"...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22b, 23a)—that we are identified as his followers.

Being confronted with the temptation to contribute to gossip appears to be increasingly prevalent today. But the Holy Spirit reminds us through St Paul, "Say only the good things people need to hear; things that will really help them" (cf. Eph 4:29). Peer pressure can cause much suffering in this regard, especially when you are called to live the Faith-Love Principle to excuse yourself if you are unable to change the conversation.

A lady wrote to Dear Abby to express how mortified



she and her husband were when hosts at the dinner party showed porn films after the meal. But they remained and watched them. Yes, a bit of suffering to speak up, “Can’t we watch something else?” and if not, “I’m sorry, we will have to be leaving.”

What will the hosts think? Rather, ask what Jesus will think who says, “Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (Mk 8:38). However, through the “radical” witness of living the truth, hopefully the consciences of the hosts would be energized to be more thoughtful and sensitive in the future.

Over several decades, the late Norman Rockwell captured the pulse of America like no other artist with his “Saturday Evening Post” covers. And, overwhelmingly voted his most appreciated cover was one from the early 1940s. The setting is a small cafe in a factory town. Looking through the cafe window at the smoke billowing from the stacks of an adjacent factory, one is reminded of the smoke within the restaurant since all but two of the patrons are smoking cigarettes or cigars.

The two people not smoking could not find an empty table, so they are seated immediately opposite two young men, perhaps ages 21 and 22. One has a cigarette dangling from his lips, and the other holds one in the fingers of his right hand. And all in the cafe have their eyes intently focused on the two non smokers, especially the young men seated immediately across from them.

Who are the two who have merited all of the attention?



A grandmother and her grandson who have their eyes closed and their heads bowed in prayer. The title of the “Post” cover is “Saying Grace.”

And what might be going through the minds of those seemingly transfixed by this simple, beautiful witness of acknowledgement and gratitude to God for the gifts before them? Perhaps the conscience of one or the other of the two young men is being energized in this vein: “I used to pray; I used to go to church; I really tried to be a good boy. Maybe I can get back to being the person I used to be, the person I long to be.”

Yes, if you find it a challenge publicly to make the sign of the cross and give thanks for food and countless other gifts God provides, be motivated by the power of *your* witness.

Whether it be at home, school, work or play, we may often be challenged to bear suffering in living the truth. For example, at school a student may encounter much peer pressure to live the lie rather than the truth. “Hey, everybody is doing it! Don’t be a drag!” Living the truth can result in not being accepted, being made fun of and being bullied even to the point of physical abuse. But if the one being confronted lives the Faith-Love Principle, he or she can give the radical witness that can change lives and also increasingly experience that “... the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32b).

(6) *Suffering assures us that no matter what our age or disability, we are never useless.* On the contrary, the more incapacitated we become, the greater our potential to be salvific, to exercise our baptismal priesthood effectively.



To illustrate, in his travels through Europe several years ago, a Father Bernard tells of arriving at a small village in which he immediately sensed an unusual atmosphere of peace and harmony. He said he went to the rectory of the village church and inquired of the pastor, “Father, the atmosphere of peace in your village is overwhelming, what do you attribute it to?”

The pastor led him to a small cottage of an elderly woman with crippling arthritis who had been bedridden for 25 years. “She,” said the pastor, “is responsible for the blessing you are experiencing in our village.”

Father said, “She was aglow with faith!”

In their brief conversation she said, “The Lord has given me so many blessings all my life. I figured that the least I could do was offer my pain for my Church. It is a small return for the Lord’s goodness to me.”

And for us, the suffering we cannot avoid, the hardship of no longer being able to do the things we would like to do, being unable to attend church services or even to pray at home as we once did, all are examples of the hidden sacrifice we can unite with Jesus to “...filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church...” (Col 1:24b); just as the Little Flower did and other contemplatives continue to do in their cloistered lives of prayer and sacrifice.

(7) *How are we able to carry the daily cross of suffering and still realize interior peace and joy along the way?* “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect,



so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Jm 1:2-4).

“...‘But my just one shall live by faith...’” (Heb 10:38a). “...have faith also in me” (Jn 14:1b). “...‘your faith has saved you’” (Lk 17:19b). “...Jesus said in reply, ‘I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, you have revealed them to the childlike ...Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest’” (Mt 11:25, 28).

Obviously, faith is the means available to you and me: FAITH in JESUS CHRIST that we celebrate in the MASS—Find All It Takes Here in Jesus Eternally Serving Us Salvation, for Christ Has Risen in Saving Triumph that we celebrate in the Messiah Always Serving Salvation.

In personal application it is simply living the Faith-Love Principle as a little child to partake of the victory of our Victorious Savior.

(8) *Several other significant considerations regarding suffering:* Concerning the relevancy of time, on one occasion I asked God, “Is it true that with you a minute is as a million years?” God replied, “Yes.” “And,” I asked, “is it true that with you a dollar is the same as a million dollars?” Again, “Yes.” Well, God, give me a million dollars?” He replied, “Wait a minute.”

As Jesus emphasized by his passion and death, sacrifice is the nature of love. Likewise he asks us to prove our love through faith in him to be steadfast in our carrying of the cross, knowing that sometime during the “minute” he will lighten the burden.



The Arabic proverb is, “The farther you go into the desert, the closer you come to God.” God did not lead the Israelites through the desert to punish them, but so they could prove their love for him by faithfully following him when they did not feel like it. But as is true for you and me, he was leading them to the Promised Land. After all, having to carry the heaviest possible cross during this one “minute” of time is less than a second compared to the eternity of incomparable JOY!

Also, we should not seek pain. God knows and wills what is best for us and only asks us to have faith in him when we are confronted with suffering, and to freely take legitimate measures to alleviate pain. However, if we have a migraine headache and take medication—all part of God’s creation—to lessen the suffering, the relief will not come immediately. Therefore, at least with a general intention, we can offer the suffering for greater openness in faith for ourselves and our loved ones to accept God’s transforming love that we may become more of who we are called to be.

And as Blessed Mother Teresa has said, “Speak of challenges, rather than problems. There is no such thing as a problem; everything is a gift.” In fact, a challenge only becomes a problem rather than resulting in a gift when we fail to live the Faith-Love Principle, no matter what the challenge.

If after serious consideration of what you have just read you find suffering a mystery, meditate on the following two Scriptures: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above



your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts” (Is 55:8,9). “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways” (Rm 11:33)!

In other words, accept in faith that the God of love can only will what is best for everyone, even though in our limited comprehension we may not be able to fathom the “why” of the suffering that often occurs as a blessing in disguise.

(9) *Finally, what is our reward for persevering in trial and suffering through childlike steadfast faith in Jesus? We will continue to become more whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, lovers, Christ-like, who we are called to be on the way to our final graduation day to our heavenly mansion.*

“For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross ...and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2b). “But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly” (1 Pt 4:13). “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us” (Rm 8:18). “Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him” (Jm 1:12). “But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction, and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.” (Wis 3:1-3).



In summary, I want to emphasize that because of our fallen human nature, most of the time we do not feel like living the GOD, the Good Orderly Direction, that sets us free. Rather, we are inclined to live by our wayward feelings; for example, not to be faithful to daily prayer and Sunday Mass participation. As is often said, “We are inclined to take the path of least resistance.”

The only way we can fulfill our commission to live the Two Great Commandments to become who we are called to be; the only way we can persevere in living the freeing truth when we don’t feel like it; the only way we can increasingly experience the JOY and the other Fruits of the Holy Spirit along the way to the fullness of life; the only way we can “look through the bars and see the stars” no matter what the circumstance or challenge, is to program ourselves to react in the time of trial and temptation the way little children in time of danger react to a loving parent: *Immediately* live the Faith-Love Principle: “Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of heaven like a child will not enter it” (Mk 10:15).

Finally, the cross Jesus tells us to daily carry after him is simply what we tend to complain about—our trials and temptations. Therefore, if we are determined to live the truth that promotes our freedom, happiness and growth, and that of others, we will not complain about the opportunities the cross affords. On the contrary, we will be intent on “...giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father” (Eph 5:20), for “We know that all things work for the



good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rm 8:28). Accordingly, we will be set free with the assurance there is no such thing as a crisis for the person who lives the Faith-Love Principle, because every challenge will be experienced as a gift of JOY—Jesus Our Yearning!!





YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION



Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 14 ~

THE ACRONYMS OF LIFE

LIFE (Life Is For Eternity). TIME (This Is My Eternity). In time we are already living in eternity. *The Book of Life* is comprised of only two chapters: The chapter of “Time” and the chapter of “The Rest of Eternity.” The question we should be asking is, “How am I living this extremely brief chapter of ‘Time’ in preparation for the never-ending chapter of the *Book of Life*?”

When this extremely brief chapter of “Time” ends for us, all we will take with us to our final chapter of the *Book of Life* is our character reflecting our success or failure to have fulfilled our commission to live the Two Great Commandments.

How are we able to LOVE (Live On Victoriously Eternally)? Well, KISS (Keep It Sanctifyingly Simple). Jesus tells us we must become as little children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, steadfast childlike faith in Jesus Christ is the key: FAITH (Find All It Takes Here) in JESUS, for (Jesus Eternally Serves Us Salvation), for CHRIST (Christ Has Risen In Saving Triumph) that we celebrate in the MASS (Messiah Always Serving Salvation).

Accordingly, if we have the faith of a child in Jesus,



we say yes to YES (Your Eternal Savior) who is GOD (Good Orderly Direction) that is found in the BIBLE (Best Information Before Leaving Earth), and we say no to EGO (Edging God Out); we no longer WORRY for (Worry Only Reduces Resources within Yourself), and we fulfill our role as an APOSTLE (A Person Officially Sent To Love Everyone).

And when we are on our final departure bed, GOD (Good Orderly Direction) will lead us to the fullness of LIFE (Life Is For Eternity), and we will abound in JOY (Jesus Our Yearning) forever. Yes, we will truly LIVE (Live In Victory Eternally) if we live the FAITH-LOVE PRINCIPLE!





Holy Spirit, grant that we may be fully open to your inspiration; Jesus, to your strength to live it; Heavenly Father, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

~ 15 ~

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit, present within my heart, Sanctifier of my spirit, I adore you. In the Name of Jesus, I claim total openness to the Word of Truth you wish to bring forth in me and in all persons. Enlighten and sanctify us. With the strength of Jesus, I promise to live this day as you wish me to live it, and to be submissive to everything you permit to happen to me; only grant that I may always know your will. For this, with all of the angels and saints, I praise and thank you.



“Prayer doesn’t take time from your life; prayer gives life to your time” (Tom Shively).



MORNING PRAYER

All praise and thanks to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Lord, Jesus, in union with the Mass being offered throughout the world this day, I continue to offer you my every thought, word, deed, joy, suffering—my entire self—in adoration and thanksgiving; and for an increase



of faith and of all the virtues, gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control—that we may become the lovers you have called us to be; for a total healing of spirit, soul, emotions and body, not only for myself but for all persons; for the end to all violence and for world peace; and that we may most effectively accomplish this day all you wish of us through openness, most Holy Spirit, to the truth; and to your strength, Lord Jesus, to live it; that your will, Heavenly Father, may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen. Alleluia!



HEALING PRAYER AT BEDTIME

“When we pray this prayer, our Lord gently and gradually removes layers of emotional scar tissue while we sleep, allowing us to be happier people. Each night we pray it, we are making a deposit in an account with fantastic dividends.”

“Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, go back into my memory as I sleep. Every hurt that has ever been done to me—heal that hurt. Every hurt. that I have caused to another person—heal that hurt. All the relationships that have been damaged in my whole life that I’m not aware of, heal those relationships.

“But Lord, if there is anything that I need to do—if I need to go to a person because he or she is still suffering from my hand, bring to my awareness that person.

“I choose to forgive, and I ask to be forgiven. Remove



whatever bitterness may be in my heart, Lord, and fill the empty spaces with your love. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

“(I hope my little prayer brings you rich blessings. Please pray for me.)” Phyllis Devereux, Garden Grove, CA.



PRAYER FOR HEALING

Jesus, in your love you fill our beings with the healing stream of life. It flows freely through our spirits, our souls, emotions, through every nerve and cell in our bodies; cleansing, vitalizing and healing and making us every bit whole.

Jesus, in your Name in childlike faith we continue to claim openness to accept. For this, with all of the angels and saints, we praise and thank you.



BE A FIVE-ALIVE PERSON— SANCTIFY YOUR BREATHING

Ordinarily we take three meals a day to nourish the body; with greater reason we should take three meals a day to nourish the soul: *BE A FIVE-ALIVE PERSON!*

In Isaiah 43:1, God says, “I have called you by name.” Inspired by the Holy Spirit, St. John reminds us that “God is love” (I Jn 4:16). Jesus says, “And behold, I am with you always” (Mt 28:20).

Through baptism Jesus, the God of Love, dwells in your heart and calls you by name. Therefore, for five



minutes at least three times a day, be comfortably seated, relax, and for about the first three minutes simply silently in your mind to the rhythm of your breathing breathe in your first name and breathe out the words “I love you;” and know in faith, as is attested to by Scripture, that Jesus in your heart is calling you by name and saying, “I love you.”

“Harvard researchers back healing value of prayer... Repeating a prayer can lower the heart rate, breathing rate and brain activity, and sometimes even can help someone avoid surgery, according to medical experts who are sharing their techniques at a conference this week” (*Sarasota Tribune*, 12/95). And so for about the last two minutes of the five-alive break, breathe in the first syllable of the word “Jesus” and breathe out the second syllable.

End the five-minute break by praising and thanking the Lord for his healing love within you. Incorporate this simple spiritual breathing exercise into your schedule at least three times a day, and you will increasingly realize the Fruits of the Holy Spirit—“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self control” (Gal 5:22, 23)—in your life. Jesus says, “My Father [has been] glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” (Jn 15: 8). ***BE A FIVE-ALIVE PERSON!***



“When you turn back to him with all your heart, to do what is right before him, Then he will turn back to you, and no longer hide his face from you.

“So now consider what he has done for you, and praise



him with full voice. Bless the Lord of righteousness, and exalt the King of the ages” (Tob 13:6a).



“God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress. Thus we do not fear, though earth be shaken and mountains quake to the depths of the sea, Though its waters rage and foam and mountains totter in its surging. The LORD of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob” (Ps 46:2-4).



Each day St. Benedict would ask himself, “Benedict, why are you here?”



“We must seek the God of consolations and not the consolations” (St. Teresa of Avila).



“Faith is a star for charting your course through the dark night of the soul. May it shine brightly to lead you out of fear and pain into the arms of a loving God” (Dr. Roger Branch).



“Faith gives us an anchor in a raging sea, calm in the midst of chaos, vision to know right from wrong, and the courage to express it.”





APPLICATION OF THE FAITH-LOVE PRINCIPLE (FLP)

At the first sign of any temptation, immediately one time say in your mind, “No, in the name of Jesus,” and then in your mind immediately begin breathing the word “Jesus.” Continue breathing the word “Jesus” until you have overcome the temptation. “Jesus” means Savior and Healer. You grow stronger with each victory.



“I shall pass through this world but once. If there is any kindness I can show or good that I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.”



“Let my life be such that others will say, ‘If this be the servant, how must the Master be’” (Pope John XXIII).



“...when you come to serve the LORD, prepare yourself for trials. Be sincere of heart and steadfast, undisturbed in time of adversity. Cling to him, forsake him not; thus will your future be great. Accept whatever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient; For in fire gold is tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation. Trust God and he will help you; make straight your ways and hope in him” (Sir 2:1-6).



“It is by spending yourself that one becomes rich.”





“God loves each one as if there is but one to love.”



I KNOW SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT YOU

“Wouldn’t this world be better
If folk we meet would say,
‘I Know something good about you.’
Then treat you the same way?

“Wouldn’t it be fun and dandy
If each handclasp fond and true,
Carried with it this assurance, that
I Know something good about you?

“Wouldn’t life be lots more happier
If the good that is in us all,
Were the only thing about us
That folk bothered to recall?

“Wouldn’t life be happier,
If we praised the good we see?
For there is lots of goodness
In the worst of you and me.

“Wouldn’t it be nice to practice,
That fine way of thinking, too?
You Know something good about me
I Know something good about you.”

By Louise C. Shimon





ENLIGHTENMENT

“One night when the sky was so black that the brilliance of the city seemed to leap out at us, the old man told me that each person was a human light. Strong and bright in our young years, we find it difficult to see the other lights. But as we grow old, and our brightness dims, we can, for the first time see the world around us.” Anonymous



PRAYER FOR PEACE

“Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

“O Divine Master, grant that we may seek not so much to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen”

We can live this prayer through faith in Jesus.



A MEDITATION

“God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission.

“I am a link in a chain; a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing: I shall be an angel of peace.



“Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain . He knows what He is about. Therefore I will trust Him” (Cardinal Newman).



“Have no fear for what tomorrow may bring. The same loving God who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day. God will either shield you from suffering or give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations” (Francis de Sales).



IN THE BEST COMPANY

And Jesus says, “I will not leave you orphans... the kingdom of heaven is within... I am with you always.”

On your word, Jesus, at this moment I call to mind your abiding presence within me and will continue to do so, especially when I am tempted to believe I am alone. For it is true: you are with me always, at all times, as my God, my brother, my savior, and my very best friend.

It is to you I can speak, knowing you will without fail respond to me with your love and strength—your rest. And at this moment you are saying to me, “Come to me you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Jesus, help me more fully to accept and live according to this saving and fulfilling reality of your abiding and loving presence within.



ST. TERESA'S BOOKMARK

“Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing affright you.
All things are passing. God alone is changeless.

Patience obtains all things.

Who has God wants for nothing.

God alone suffices.”



“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good
work in you will continue to complete it until the day of
Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:6).



“May he support us all the day long till the shades
lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is
hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging and a
holy rest, and peace at the last” (Cardinal Newman).



“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in
God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there
are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have
told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And
if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again
and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may
be” (Jn 14:1-3).





As previously emphasized, all you and I are going to take with us when we finally depart this world is the results of our commission to become lovers—to love God with our entire self and our neighbor as ourself. Therefore, as the late Léon Bloy reminds us, “There is only one tragedy in life: not being a saint.”

And so, once again and finally, as Jesus reminds us, the only way it is possible for us to fulfill this commission is to become as a little child of faith in him who is saying to you and me at this moment, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:28-30).

Accordingly, let us program ourselves to live the Faith-Love Principle to experience JOY—Jesus Our Yearning.

Please pray for me. I renew my intention daily to celebrate Mass for you who have read this.

May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit come upon us and remain with us forever. Amen. Alleluia!



**YOUR THOUGHTS REGARDING
GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION**



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Especially since I have not written this book for profit, as the price indicates, but to make it as accessible to as many people as possible, including those in my prison ministry; better to enable them to experience that “His commandments are not burdensome;” where I was unable to identify and/or locate the source of any briefly quoted material, I applied poetic license and presumed permission. Accordingly, I am grateful for understanding and indulgence on the part of all concerned.





*There is only one
tragedy in life;
not being a saint.*

~ Léon Bloy



If you have found this book helpful, please tell others about it and/or gift them with a copy.

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When you read this book, be mindful of the PRACTICAL HELP herein that will better enable YOU to experience that “HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT BURDENSOME” (cf. Jn 5:3b); how YOU are better able to become more whole, holy, happy, human, free, mature, in control, a lover, Christlike, who YOU are called to be; how YOU are better able to experience the continued growth of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit—“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control”—in YOUR life.



Father Charles Van Winkle is a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Generalate, Rome, Italy. Before being received into the Congregation, he experienced two years of college life, serving as vice-president of the leading campus fraternity in his sophomore year.

Fr. Charlie’s life in ministry has spanned many areas; he was a missionary in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh); taught school for eighteen years; was chairman of the Board of Theology Teachers of Greater Cleveland, as well as for the Greater Cleveland Biafran Campaign; and helped establish and direct “Teen Challenge of Greater Cleveland,” a live-in drug abuse rehabilitation program.

After a particularly enriching experience as a Trappist monk, he has primarily spent the last thirty-plus years directing retreats for college, university and high school students and presenting missions in the United States and overseas. And for many years, he has also been involved in prison ministry — a primary reason for having written this book.

