



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021

SEEING GOD AS OUR FATHER

By Craig Denison

www.1st15devotionals.com

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THE EDITORS OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE CONSISTENT QUALITY AND ACCURACY OF THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER'S 1ST SATURDAY NEWSLETTER AND AS SUCH RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REJECT OR EDIT THE CONTENT OF ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION. EDITING MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, CHANGES TO GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND STYLES, REMOVAL OF OFFENSIVE CONTENT AND REMOVAL OF PERSONAL NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION. SUBMISSION OF YOUR ARTICLE SIGNIFIES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS AFOREMENTIONED.

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Seeing God correctly is essential to centering your life around him and his presence. Many of us have a tainted view of earthly fathers, but today God wants to renew your view of him as your perfect heavenly Father. As we grow in understanding of God's perfect love and relation to us, may centering your life around his presence come naturally.

DEVOTIONAL

If there's one name for God that has the power to dramatically transform the lives of believers, it's that we can call God "Abba" or "Father." To see God as our Father changes everything. In Brennan Manning's book, *The Furious Longing of God*, he asks a pertinent and powerful question:

Is your own personal prayer life characterized by the simplicity, childlike candor, boundless trust, and easy familiarity of a little one crawling up in Daddy's lap? An assured knowing that the daddy doesn't care if the child falls asleep, starts playing with toys, or even starts chatting with little friends, because the daddy knows the child has essentially chosen to be with him for that moment? Is that the spirit of your interior prayer life?



When I first read these questions, I thought to myself, "Surely it can't be this simple. Surely this can't be all God expects of me." We've missed the mark on what it truly means to be children of a good, near, and loving Father. We've projected our own insecurities, perspectives, and experiences on a God who is love embodied. There is nothing we can ever do to make God love us any more than he already does. And there is nothing we can ever do to make him love us any less. God loves us because he loves us. He enjoys us because he enjoys us. He wants to be with us because that's how he is, not because we somehow earn his desire for us.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Even while we were in sin and separation from God, he loved us enough to pay the highest price to have us. So great was his depth of love for us that Jesus laid down his own life as the atonement for our mistakes, failures, weaknesses, and frailty. If God loved us then unconditionally, he loves us now unconditionally. If God would choose us then, he chooses us now. If God desired us then, he desires us now.

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FEASTS FOR JULY

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of July are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Junipero Serra (USA); St. Oliver Plunket, Opt. Mem. | 20 Apollinaris, Opt. Mem. |
| 3 Thomas the Apostle, Feast | 21 Lawrence of Brindisi, Opt. Mem. |
| 4 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | 22 Mary Magdalene, Feast |
| 5 Anthony Mary Zaccaria; Elizabeth of Portugal, Opt. Mem. | 23 Bridget, Opt. Mem. |
| 6 Maria Goretti, Opt. Mem. | 24 Sharbel (Charbel) Makhloof, Opt. Mem. |
| 9 Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions, Opt. Mem. | 25 Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday |
| 11 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | 26 Joachim and Anne, Memorial |
| 13 Henry, Opt. Mem. | 30 Peter Chrysologus; Solanus Casey, Opt. Mem. |
| 14 St. Kateri Tekakwitha (USA), Memorial | 31 Ignatius of Loyola, Memorial |
| 15 Bonaventure, Memorial | |
| 16 Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Opt. Mem. | The feasts of St. Benedict (July 11), St. Camillus (July 18), and St. James (July 25) are superseded by the Sunday liturgy. ☐ |
| 18 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | |

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

I thank God for a successful annual wellness exam at my age!

- Debbie Lorenzo

OUR CENACLE CORNER

Seeking a deeper relationship with God
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures

Looking Back is Not Really a Lost Opportunity

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. Genesis 19:25-2

GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

"BE MY EXTENDED HANDS FOR EVERY CREATURE AND MY BEADS WILL DRAW YOU CLOSER TO OUR GOD OF LOVE"

[EXCERPT FROM THE MESSAGE OF MOTHER MARY AT MEDJUGORJE]

By Aps

*Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,
so that He may exalt you at the proper time, having cast
all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.*

1 Peter 5:6-7

"Don't use it as a necklace." My mother reprimanded me for placing the red beaded rosary around my neck. A rose-like scent coming from the rosary tickled my nose as I began to examine the intricacies of the foreign object. Both my parents and I gathered on their queen size bed covered with sheets that always seemed to lull anyone to sleep. After my mother gave me an aggravated look, I immediately removed the rosary from my neck and watched my mother use it to pray. That night was the first time I ever prayed the rosary. At the young age of five, I never fully understood the importance of prayer. But little did I know that the red beaded rosary would change my life.

Many years later after my parents introduced me to praying, my father became ill. He continuously suffered from dizziness and severe stomach pain. Also, he lost his appetite, something that never happened to my father before. My father's body started to change, along with my relationship with him. Growing up as an only child, my father and I spent a lot of time with each other. I was always a daddy's girl. But during his sickness, our relationship went from close and comical to distant and serious. He seldom talked to me and when he did, he was either yelling or reprimanding me. I watched my father's strong robust body wither into a lost and confused corpse of a man. It was difficult for a young 10-year-old girl to watch her once strong-willed father transform into a timid weak stranger.

His doctors had no idea what was wrong with him, let alone know why he was losing weight. At his final doctor's appointment, his doctor asked, "where do we go from here?" At this point, my father realized that he had hit rock bottom! With no one else to turn to besides his family, he sought refuge in someone more powerful than any doctor: God. At exactly 6:30 in the morning each and every day, my father would drag his emaciated body out of bed and

to our parish church. He made a sincere effort to go to mass and receive the body and blood of Christ at least once a day. In the course of several months, his relationship with God grew. I saw him lay prostrate in front of a miniature image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus while whispering, "Lord, have mercy on me. Give me the strength to go through this. I know you created me for a purpose."

Late one night, I walked into his room and saw that his eyes were bloodshot from crying. Hurt and confused I asked, "why are you crying, daddy?" He simply said, "nothing, my daughter. I leave it up to the Lord and I surrender everything to him. Now I realize that I am not in control of my life". Soon after he said this, my father started to get his appetite back. His plate started to look like how it did before, a plethora of different Filipino delicacies overflowing from the edges. And eventually, my father got his sense of humor back. Instead of worrying about him, I was laughing with him again. After more than a year of darkness, I finally got my father back.

During my father's sickness, I used the same red beaded rosary to pray for him. I never prayed so much for a single person before. When I realized how much my prayers really helped my father, I learned that the rosary was not just a "necklace", but a spiritual symbol for so much more. It was a sacramental ladder (often misunderstood by Catholics and non-Catholics alike) that I climbed [and continue to do so] to bring life and hope to my father or to anyone during times of desolation, depression and suffering. It helped me see the power of prayer in action and the effect it has on a person. Most importantly, I saw how much it draws me closer to him helping me to be a faithful child to my God of love, dependent only on His boundless and unfathomable ocean of mercy and compassion. □

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

LOOKING BACK IS NOT REALLY A LOST OPPORTUNITY

BY VICTOR ARANETA

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. Genesis 19:25-26

When we work hard, the flow of natural causality is good opportunity and success. Our experience in this world comes from this kind of cause and effect. We sometimes wonder why our hard-working attitude does not necessarily result in success to our endeavors. But why?



Our objectives and paths that we transverse maybe right but our mind is set to one and one alone - ourselves and no one else. Is that wrong? It's a yes and a no answer.

Yes, because the totality of one's life is not just a focus on one person but to many other persons who contribute to our success. No, because no one can be successful if that one person who is YOU will focus on the path that you want to take and others who are involved will not be as focused as the one whose goal is determined to succeed. A focused goal is one that only has one path: STRAIGHT AHEAD. This statement is proven right in all parts of the Bible. Abraham was determined to follow God to leave his hometown Ur from Mesopotamia. Along the way he brought his nephew Lot. Both were determined to succeed - go speed ahead, until they reached the land of Canaan. Again, the end game is to get richer and richer. Abraham went to the east and Lot to the west to avoid conflict.

Did Abraham ever consider going back to Ur or changing His mind about the division with Lot? NEVER. What about Lot? Yes, for a short while he thought he made a wrong choice. The land he picked was inhabited by pagans in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah! But little did he know that these people will be assisting him with their new techniques in harvesting and new ways of farming. WHAT A JACKPOT! As a matter of fact, Lot even married a woman local to the region. He stayed there and it seems like his opportunity and success are much better than Abraham.

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Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

1ST FRIDAY DEVOTION

JULY 2, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM

IN LAS VEGAS:

CENACLE HOUSE AT THE ENCLAVES

1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION

JULY 3, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM

IN LAS VEGAS:

CENACLE HOUSE AT THE ENCLAVES

1ST SUNDAY DEVOTION

THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS

LOS ANGELES, CA

DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS BEGIN

AT 10:30 AM FOLLOWED BY

MASS AT 11:00 AM

PLEASE RSVP TO

ALICE.A@SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG

ST. SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

LAS VEGAS, NV 89183

MASS AT 9:30 AM FOLLOWED BY

DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS AT THE CHAPEL

800 OUR FATHER DEVOTION

JULY 17, 2021

IN LOS ANGELES: VIA ZOOM

IN LAS VEGAS:

CENACLE HOUSE AT THE ENCLAVES

FEAST DAY OF THE FATHER OF ALL MANKIND

AUGUST 1, 2021

DETAILS TO FOLLOW

SEEING GOD AS OUR FATHER

If we're going to center our lives around meeting with God, we must understand the nature of his love for us. We must begin to relate to him as our good and loving Father above all else. We must cast aside any notion that he is angry with us, far from us, or void of affection or desire for us. We will only be drawn to our heavenly Father to the degree that we take him at his word and trust in his love for us. Take time today to receive the overwhelming, unconditional love of God for you. Allow his love to reorient your perspectives and beliefs. And respond to his great love by opening your heart and having fellowship with your Creator, Sustainer, and all-loving heavenly Father.

PRAYER

1. Meditate on the goodness of God being your perfect Father. What does it mean for your relationship with him if you would truly see him this way? How are you to reorient your perspectives in light of his word?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven." Matthew 23:9

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." James 1:17

2. In what ways have you viewed God other than a loving Father? In what ways have you seen him as a taskmaster, distant Creator, or angry or passive Father?

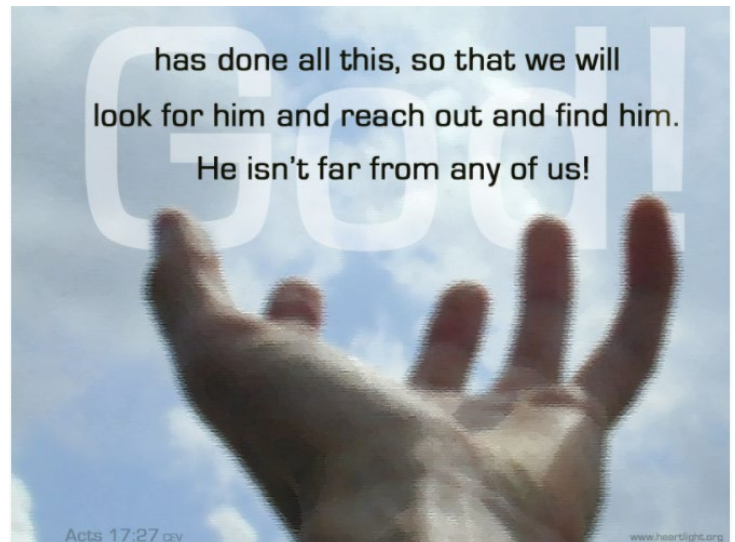
"Is your own personal prayer life characterized by the simplicity, childlike candor, boundless trust, and easy familiarity of a little one crawling up in Daddy's lap? An assured knowing that the daddy doesn't care if the child falls asleep, starts playing with toys, or even starts chatting with little friends, because the daddy knows the child has essentially chosen to be with him for that moment? Is that the spirit of your interior prayer life?" Brennan Manning, *The Furious Longing of God*.

3. Ask God to help you encounter the depths of his love today. Take time to receive his presence and rest in his goodness. Open up any parts of your life that aren't bearing the fruit of his unconditional love and receive all the affection he has to give.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Ephesians 1:3

Go

You are the child of a good, near, and loving Father. Seeing God as your Father not only impacts your perception of him, but also of yourself. You are loved.



You are liked. You are enjoyed. The God who only thinks, feels, and says truth values relationship with you enough to send his only Son to die for you. Never let the world or the enemy shake the foundational love of your heavenly Father. No failure, weakness, or sin could ever change the fact that you are loved, accepted, and valued. May you find peace today where there has been only loneliness, pressure, and dissatisfaction. ☐

Editor's Note: A copy of the Holy Octave of Consecration to God the Father is in our website: www.spiritualarmyofgodthefather.org/prayers/devotionals.

First day of this Consecration Prayers starts on July 25, 2021, and ends on August 1, 2021, the Feast Day of the Father of All Mankind.

LOOKING BACK

Abraham, on the other hand, chose a virgin land and will take him for a little while before his herds doubled if it even did.

Now the reality strikes. Sodom and Gomorrah are cities of perversion and sin and were on God's destruction list.

Even in its last days, Lot never considered leaving the place until the two archangels of destruction showed up. Then he changed his mind. They started marching out of the gated city but still thinking of the lost opportunity had they traded more and brought a lot of their earned revenues with them.

Have you ever wondered why the angels of destruction warned them not to look back or they will turn into salt? We thought it's just the wife of Lot who wanted to go back but a lot of theologians are of the opinion that Lot and some of her daughters were considering taking a route back to the great cities of opportunity! It just happened Lot's wife was more magnetized by the cities she grew up! The cities that brought her milk, honey and lots of opportunity! Turning into a pillar of salt is the opportunity you're holding on when success becomes the real end by itself and NOT THE GRACE THAT COMES FROM OUR GOD EVEN WHEN IT MEANS destruction of those tools to achieve prosperity and SUCCESS. St John of the Cross, the doctor of the church, once said "God is success and success is God even at times of LOST OPPORTUNITY!!!

Prayer: God, we know you are there watching us every day. We ask you to provide us with clear mind and heart that our opportunity will always come from you and our success will always come from the graces we look forward to as your creature who you love and hold dearly in your heart, in Jesus' name. Amen. ☐



“ . . . I am your Mother Mary.

*Turmoil and chaos will come my children.
It's brewing and the devil is firing them
with force. Pray my children. Pray, pray
and prepare for the battle for spiritual
attacks and your armor of faith must be
worn.*

*Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary
061921*