

Points to Ponder Week of June 28, 2020

This week Points to Ponder are taken from the writings of Dom Helder Camara (1909-1999). Dom Helder was ordained a priest in 1931. From 1946-1962 he was very active in Brazilian Catholic Action and became its national assistant. He was ordained a bishop in Rio de Janeiro in 1952. His concern for the poor led to his attempts to solve some of the problems in the slum Anua of Rio. In 1965 he became the National Brazilian Bishops' Convergence's director for social action. In 1964 he became Archbishop of Olinda and Recife at the same time the country experienced a brutal military coup. For 13 years he was banned from speaking in public by the military government and newspapers were not even permitted to mention his name. He opened his door to anyone who knocked. On one particular day it was a hired assassin who was undone by the sight of the frail and diminutive bishop that he abandoned his deadly mission. "I can't kill you," he said. "You are one of the Lord's."

Dom Helder once said, "When I feed the poor, they call me a saint; when I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

"I don't give myself up to penance and I don't scourge my flesh. Instead, I wake up every day at 2 o'clock in the morning to keep vigil. My vigil consists of talking with God-the speech of old friends which has no formality." It is from these hours of vigil, spent in friendly conversation with God that much of his writing emerged.

Sunday

Christ teaches us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

He wants to warn us against ever feeling perfect enough, holy enough...The sanctity of the Father is our goal. To live day and night, always and everywhere, in God. To think about God, as easily as breathing... The problem is that day and night, everywhere and always, we breathe (and we couldn't live without breathing), but how often we forget the air! Usually we only ever think about it when it is not there! The same danger exists in our relationship with our God and Father.

Monday

To be a saint does not mean never to sin. It means to start again with humility and joy after each fall.

Tuesday

The height of divine humility in creation was when God, from all his creation, chose the human creature and made it co-creator to complete the creation and to help nature express its full potential.

No doubt all other creatures, as well as being amazed and perhaps envious, were very curious to find out to what extent humans would be able to respond to such an astonishing divine plan.

If we look at human intelligence, it is easy to see how humans have helped to complete the creation initiated by God. This is evident not only when we consider the discovery of nuclear energy and flights into space, but also in the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel.

When it comes to selfishness, however, how primitive do human beings appear!

Wednesday

The psalms teach us to lend our voice to all creatures: to the mountains and the waters; to the trees and the birds; to the light that comes from above and to the earth that provides for us; to the creatures of the sea, from the tiniest fish to the whale.

Who has seen the same dawn twice? Who has seen the same sunset twice?

It is a pity that there are people who will go through life never having thought of watching the sunrise!

Or without thanking our dear friend at nightfall!

Ah, but would you like to have seen the splendor of the act of creation? Then just think, creation is made anew, instant by instant, at God's hands.

Thursday

Any time, day, or night, at home or in the street, wherever we are, we live bathed in God. If we always kept this in mind, it would be impossible to sin.

How could we be filled with hatred, if we live night and day in God who is love?

How could we be filled with pride, if we carry with us night and day the Creator of all the worlds?

And to think that often we do not stop even for a moment to greet him, to thank him.

We can think about all our faults and weaknesses and about our every sin, and we will come to the conclusion: All we need for a life without sin is to remember, as the apostle Paul teaches us, that "in him we live and move and have our being."

Friday

The Weight of Christ's Cross

A dock worker who was so strong that he was like a human crane, once told me discreetly, almost confidentially: "I hope God will forgive me for saying this, but when it came to carrying burdens, Christ was a weakling. He fell three times under the weight of the cross on the way to Calvary. That would be child's play for me."

Saturday

There are many people who pass through life without knowing that divine providence has thought about each one of us, that providence has a plan that can be upset by us or by others...

Vocation is a call—a call of God to the different states of life and to different professions.

But would you like to give Christ a special joy? Then work for an increase in religious and priestly vocations: Let them be numerous and holy.

There are those who say they have never felt a vocation, in the sense of a call from God. But God certainly calls. Only those who create silence within themselves will hear...the silence of hope, of generosity and of love.