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OUR PIUS UPDATE
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God knows
what a 'mess' I am,
and I trust that
he loves that mess
and uses it
as he sees fit.



SHOWING UP FOR GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Something clicked with me recently about the Jesuit motto: ***Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam - For the Greater Glory of God***. I was having a difficult time transitioning to a new job role, feeling the weight of my responsibilities and the desire to quickly produce results. Then I was led to an online Ignatian blog post that referenced AMDG. I knew the motto, had prayed and even journaled about it, but something shifted inside me this time.

I reframed my perspective and thought, what if I truly made every action an opportunity to serve God with my talents? Respond to every email and request with a positive spirit and kindness? Approach each project thanking God for the abilities he has blessed me with? I felt myself led more and more, becoming encouraged and energized. The perfectionist in me was able to let go, and I really started sowing! Wherever you are struggling or feeling pressure, ask yourself, "What would it look like to really show up for my day in every way for God?"

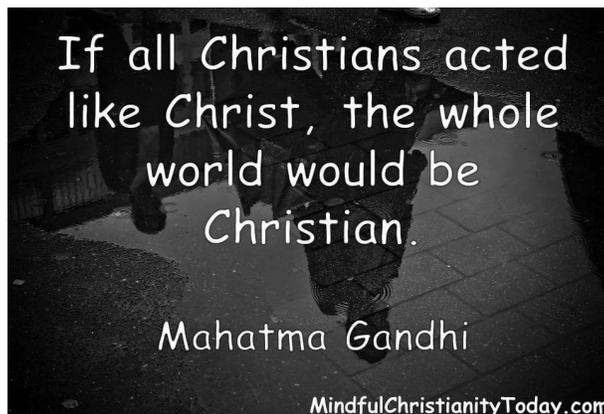
-Anne-Marie McLeod helps lead the After the Exercises group at St. Peter Catholic Church, the Jesuit parish in the Diocese of Charlotte, NC.

PRAYER

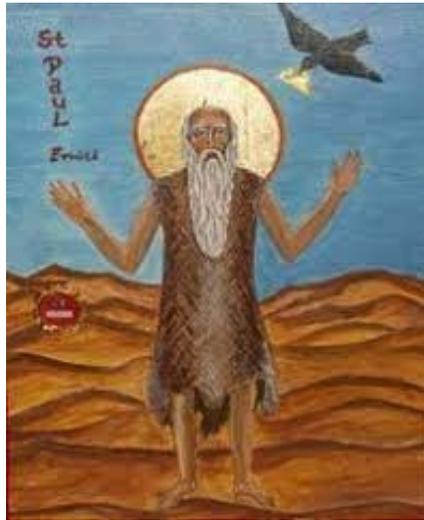
*Jesus, I feel within me
a great desire to please you
but, at the same time,
I feel totally incapable of doing this
without your special light and help,
which I can expect only from you.
Accomplish your will in me -
even in spite of me.*

-St. Claude La Colombière, SJ

SOURCE: www.JesuitPrayer.org



PAUL THE SIMPLE



It couldn't have been much simpler for Paul. After the sixty-year-old Egyptian found his wife with another man, he left her and decided it was time for him to become a monk. So, he went into the desert to inform the man we know as **St. Anthony of Egypt** of his decision. Anthony was, however, less than convinced of Paul's vocation, due in so small part of his age. But every test Anthony gave him, Paul passed, whether it was fasting, praying, or working. As a monk, Paul also became known for his healing powers. He became known as "*the simple*", because of his childlike innocence.

Sometimes, we make life harder than it needs to be. Paul could have come up with all kinds of reasons not to go into the desert. He could have argued with Anthony about why the tests were necessary. But instead, he just said "yes". And we can do the same.

INSPIRATION

The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.
(Psalm 119:130)

CHALLENGE

Be simple today.
Trust in God.

IS YOUR SMARTPHONE MAKING YOU SIN MORE? CONSIDER A TECHNOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE



August is a fallow season, that moment in the year when many of us step back from the hurly burly of our lives to lay on a beach somewhere, hike in the mountains or read a good book. It is a time when we replace tight schedules with open spaces, our normal intensity with rest and reflection.

For me, such times always bring with them new insight into my use of technology. There is nothing like a week away from **Twitter** to make me realize just how much time and energy I have been giving it.

In the most recent episode of his eponymous podcast, **Ezra Klein** interviews **L.M. Sacasas**, who writes a Substack newsletter called **The Convivial Society** and recently published a list of 41 questions we might ask ourselves about our use of different technologies. His first question: *“What sort of person will the use of this technology make of me?”* This is followed by: *“What habits will the use of this technology instill?”*

Part of what I like about Mr. Sacasas’s work is his acknowledgment that different technologies can have different effects. My answer for what sort of person **Facebook** makes me is entirely different from the effects of my **Kindle**, my interoffice messages on **Slack** or texting on my phone. After thinking that social media would eventually turn me into a digital version of an angry dude shouting on street corners, last year I discovered **Discord**, which is sort of like **Slack** but for interest groups; for the non-techies, it’s like a church knitting group, but instead of knitting we chat about the X-Men or the former New York Times columnist Charlie Warzel’s latest newsletter. The warmth and camaraderie of those communities has unexpectedly brought out the same in me.

Where most of our technologies tend to create a deeply personal, me-and-Jesus type relationship, Mr. Sacasas’s questions also keep calling us back to our broader web of interdependent relationships. Alongside the Marie Kondo-like *“Does the use of this*

technology bring me joy?”, we get “How does this technology empower me? At whose expense?”

Alongside the Marie Kondo-like *“Does the use of this technology bring me joy?”*, Mr. Sacasas asks, *“How does this technology empower me? At whose expense?”*

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The question of how a given technology might impose limits upon me is likewise married to how it might impose limits on others. Much like *St. Thomas Aquinas*, Mr. Sacasas reminds us that every choice of our lives, whether it’s what technology we purchase, when we use it or how, has a moral and ethical dimension to be considered. Every action is a moral one.

One could easily take a week with each of these questions and learn a lot about how our technologies are forming us. But our August respite is fleeting. By mid-September we will once again be whirling dervishes of deadlines, after-school events and appointment TV.

So in this precious liminal time, here is my brief, Ignatian-themed adaptation for Catholics of Mr. Sacasas’s work. Think of it as a spiritual examination of conscience for technology.

1. I call to mind a particular kind of technology that I like to use, asking God to bless my reflection, that I might see my experience of that technology more clearly.

2. What kinds of feelings does use of this technology generate in me? How do I feel while I use it, and after?

St. Ignatius says the consolation of God is like a drop of water soaking gently into a sponge, whereas the temptations of evil spirits are like water hitting a rock: harsh and confusing. Does this technology leave me feeling consoled or confused?

3. What sort of habits or desires does this technology instill in me? Do I find it inviting me into greater generosity, openness, hopefulness, charity, curiosity or friendship?

4. What vision of the kingdom of God does this technology promote? Who is given a seat at the table? Who is erased or excluded? Who is derided?

5. What is this technology teaching me about myself and others? Are those lessons accurate—do I know myself and others better as a result of this technology? Do I love myself and others more?

6. How does this technology affect my relationship with God? Does it feed my spiritual life in some way? My imagination? My sense of hope and gratitude, possibility and delight?

7. Take a moment to gather up the graces of this prayer. Give thanks for the gifts you have received via this technology, and ask God to help you with anything you need to change.

SOURCE: Jim McDermott, *America: The Jesuit Review*

LIFE PURPOSE

The
meaning
of life is
to find
your gift.
The
purpose
of life is
to give
it away.
-Picasso

