



# MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

APRIL 26, 2020 / FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## Spiritual Ponderings:

Growing Old Gracefully

Part IV

Using Richard Johnson's book: *A New Vision of Parish Ministry for Maturing Adults: How to Construct, Organize, and Sustain a Vibrant Faith Formation Program for the Second Half of Life*, we have been reflecting on what it means to grow old gracefully. Richard Johnson lays out 12 principals for developing a parish ministry geared towards older adults. Quotes from this book will be in bold. My reflections will be in the normal font.

### **Principal #10 Parish ministry for maturing adults is Christ-centered.**

Personal Goal #10: Is to keep myself and my attention focused on Christ and heaven.

**Successful parish ministry, for maturing adults is an extension of this mission of love. Learning as personal transformation is at the heart of this ministry. True learning, learning from the Lord that is genuinely life changing, involves some measure of re-shaping of self.**

The following passage from Scripture tells the story of Simon's mother-in-law: "Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. (Luke 4:38-39) It is also a brief description of how every disciple's life should be. Before Christ we are sick, Christ heals us, and then we serve others out of gratitude for what God has done for us. We are to keep in mind all that God does for us.

Every day we suffer from temptations will come our way. We may be tempted by fame, fortune, etc. It is important to keep Christ at the center of my life so I do not give into those temptations.

### **Principal #11 Successful parish ministry for maturing adult is developmental, ongoing, and lifelong.**

Personal Goal #11: I will finish strong.

**There is never a time in the Christian life when the person can claim, "Well, I guess I've grown spiritually as much as I can." Our lives are divided into stages that are hooked together by transitions.**

Spirituality is definitely a lifelong process: I love this quote from Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham book *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning*: "Spirituality is a lot like health. We all have health; we may have good health or poor health, but it's something we can't avoid having. The same is true of spirituality: every human being is a spiritual being. The question is not whether we "have spirituality" but whether the spirituality we have is a negative one that leads to isolation and self-destruction or one that is more positive and life-giving." Just as we all desire to remain healthy; we should always want to remain spiritual healthy as well.

### **Principal #12 successful parish ministry for maturing adults' honors diversity of age, stage, personality, ethnicity, and spirituality.**

Personal Goal #12: I will keep exploring new ways to grow in my faith.

**The Church is most healthy when it offers diversity.**

Theologically and liturgically speaking, I have a more conservative bias therefore I challenge myself to try to have dialogues with people who have a more liberal bias with a goal of walking away with a great appreciation of their point of view.

I like to think of a major league baseball pitcher. If all he can do is throw a fastball, he will not be a very good pitcher. Most really good major league baseball pitchers can throw two to three other pitches (like a curve or a slider).

The following is a prayer written by St. Thomas Aquinas that came to mind as I was thinking how to summarize my personal goals after these reflections.

**Prayer for a Good Life** - Grant O merciful God, that I may ardently desire, carefully examine, truly know and perfectly fulfil those things that are pleasing to You and to the praise and glory of Your holy name. Direct my life, O my God, and grant that I might know what you would have me to do and for me to fulfil it as is necessary and profitable to my soul.

Grant to me, O Lord my God, that I may not be found wanting in prosperity or in adversity and that I may not be lifted up by one nor cast down by the other.

May I find joy in nothing but what leads to You and sorrow in nothing but what leads away from You. May I seek to please no one or fear to displease anyone, save only You.

Grant to me, O Lord God,

– a vigilant heart that no subtle speculation may ever lead me from You;

– a noble heart that no unworthy affection may draw me from You;

– an upright heart that no evil purpose may turn me from you.

Give me a steadfast heart that no tribulation may shatter and a free heart that no violent affection may claim as its own.

And finally, grant me O Lord my God, a mind to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you. Give me a way of life pleasing to You; perseverance to trust and await You in confidence that I shall embrace You at the last. Amen.



**April 26 2020 Third Sunday of Easter Lectionary: 46 Gospel LK 24:13-35**

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened

and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

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**Spiritual Reflection:** Jesus joins us as we walk in sadness and explains the scriptures to us. But we do know that it is Jesus. We think of him as a stranger who knows less than we do of what is happening in our lives. And still—we know something, we sense something, we intuit something: our hearts begin to burn. At the very moment that he is with us we can't fully understand what is happening. We can't speak about it to each other. Later, yes later, when it is all over, we might be able to say, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" But when he walks with us it is all too close for reflection. – Henri Nouwen

**Spiritual Questions**

1. Am I in touch with God's plan for me?
2. How do I speak to those who are in desolation?
3. Where do I see Jesus at Sunday Mass?
4. What are we going to change in us this Eucharist?
5. What Scripture passages speak to you the most?



## *Thought of the Day*

**Sunday**

The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host. - Fulton J. Sheen

**Monday**

The Blessed Eucharist is the perfect Sacrament of the Lord's Passion, since It contains Christ Himself and his Passion. - Thomas Aquinas

**Tuesday**

When you approach the tabernacle remember that he has been waiting for you for twenty centuries. - Josemaria Escriva

**Wednesday**

Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honor, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth. - J. R. R. Tolkien

**Thursday**

When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you. When you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now. This is why you should ask your parish priest to have perpetual adoration in your parish. I beg the Blessed Mother to touch the hearts of all parish priests that they may have perpetual Eucharistic adoration in their parishes, and that it may spread throughout the entire world - Mother Teresa

**Friday**

By our little acts of charity practiced in the shade we convert souls far away, we help missionaries, we win for them abundant alms; and by that means build actual dwellings spiritual and material for our Eucharistic Lord. - Therese of Lisieux

**Saturday**

In the Eucharistic Sacrifice the Church venerates the memory of Mary the ever Virgin Mother of God and the memory of Saint Joseph, because he fed Him whom the faithful must eat as the Bread of Life - Pope John Paul II

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## PRO-LIFE



April 2020

We pray to you Lord who loves justice and righteousness may be the strength and guiding light of world leaders so all life may be considered sacred and all people may walk in the ways of life and peace. We implore you Lord.

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For all who have given into the temptation and doubt that the Lord may strengthen them and may enable us to assist them as they face the trials of their faith journey. May they come to know the Lord's mercy. -  
Amen



## St. Monica Society

*Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.*

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## Catholic Prayers

### I believe in the Eucharist Prayer

I believe in God the Father Almighty.  
I believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ.  
I believe in God the Holy Spirit.  
I believe in the Holy Trinity.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.  
I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Body of Christ, the Consecrated Bread.  
I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blood of Christ, the Consecrated Wine.

I believe that Jesus instituted the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church as His dwelling Home on earth.

I believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacred Tabernacles of the Catholic Church.

I believe that Jesus is truly present physically among us, over and above being spiritually present within us.

May this truth be known to all for the glory of God.

Amen..



## Humor

### One-Liners

1. I always wanted to be somebody, but I guess I should have been more specific.
2. I'm reading this great book on anti-gravity – I cannot put it down.