



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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Dear Parish Family,

July 10, 2011

We are now one month into the summer. This week I begin a period of silent prayer. God speaks quite loudly in the silence. You can do this in your own daily lives by turning off the background noises of TV, radio, CD and MP3 players; and just listen to whatever it is God has to say to us. Prayer is more than talking - an enormous part of prayer is hearing God's voice in our lives. Unless we quiet the noises around us and in our minds - we may never hear what God is saying.

We have reached the end of our 2011 Catholic Services Appeal. It's never too late. Please stop by the parish offices to get a pledge card. It's not so much the amount you give; but that you provide support through prayers and return the card.

This week on Thursday is the memorial of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, a Native American girl who became Catholic. She suffered much for her desire to be baptized, and ended up exiled from her people because of her faith. Often, we take our faith and the sacraments for granted. Let us ask Blessed Kateri's intercession to give us a deeper appreciation for the gifts of God we so easily forget.

The Pope's general prayer intentions for the month of July is that Christ may ease the physical and spiritual sufferings of those who are sick with AIDS, especially in the poorest countries; and his missionary intention is that religious women in mission territories may be witnesses of the joy of the Gospel and living signs of the love of Christ.

Don't let summer vacation take you away from God! Please pray daily and attend Mass on weekends. If you're traveling, check out www.masstimes.org to find a Catholic church near wherever it is you're going. Pray for each other!

Fr. David

Sacred Signs and Symbols

The Ringing of Bells

Space enclosed within the walls of a church reminds us of God. It has been made over to Him as His own possession and is filled with His presence. Walled round, vaulted over, shut off from the world, it is turned inward toward the God who hides Himself in mystery.

But what of space unenclosed, that vast expanse that stretches over the level earth on all sides, boundless, high above the highest hills, filling the deepest valleys which those hills encircle? Has it no connection with things holy?

It has indeed, and the symbol of this connection is the tower with its bells.

The tower is an integral part of God's house, and rises out of it up into the free air, and takes possession of all wide space in God's name. And the sounds of bells coming from the tower, so beautifully ringing send out peal on peal in waves of good loud sound. High and quick, or full-toned and measured, or roaring deep and slow, they pour out a flood of sound that fills the air with news of the Kingdom of God in our midst.

News from afar, news of the infinitely limitless God, news of humanity's bottomless desire, and of its inexhaustible fulfillment.

The bells are a summons to those who desire - whose hearts are open to far-off things.

The sound of bells stirs in us the feeling of distance. When they clang out from a tower rising above a wide plain and their sound is carried to every point of the compass, and on and on to the hazy blue horizon, our prayers follow them as long as they are audible, until it comes home to us that there is no satisfaction of desire in far distant hopes, or indeed in anything outside ourselves.

Or, when the sounds of bells of a church flood the town with their clamor or send the sound straight out into the countryside, the listeners, straining to follow, feel their hearts expand beyond the usual narrow limits.

Or again, the bell tones in some green glimmering forest may reach us faintly, as from a great distance, too far off to tell from where, and old memories stir, and we strive to catch the sounds and to stir up recollections of whatever it is we remember.

At such moments we have a perception of the meaning of space. We feel the pull of height, and stretch our wings and try to respond to infinitude.

The bells remind us of the world's immensity and our still more immeasurable desires, and that only in the infinite God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - can we find our true peace.

-Romano Guardini

THIRTY ONE DAYS OF PRAYER FOR YOUR PASTOR

Day 1: Pray that your pastor will love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. Pray that God's Spirit will work in his heart in power and that he will value and follow biblical priorities. (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 6:33)

Day 2: Pray that your pastor will cultivate strong character and uncompromising integrity. Pray that his testimony will be genuine, and that he will never do anything that he would need to hide from others. (1 Tim. 1:5, 3:7; Eph. 6:10-12)

Day 3: Pray for his personal walk with God—that his soul and spirit will be nourished and strengthened in his quiet time with God, beyond his sermon preparation. Pray that he will spend more time in the presence of the Lord, and in Word of God. (Mark 1:35; 2 Tim. 2:15-16)

Day 4: Pray that your pastor will counsel and teach with discernment through the wise use of Scripture and faith in God's power to work. Pray that he will be protected from the effects of sinful or negative attitudes that he encounters as he counsels. (Mal. 2:7; James 1:5-6; John 17:15)

Day 5: Ask God to protect your pastor's friends and loved ones and keep them strong as a model of Christ's relationship with the Church. Pray that your pastor will tenderly cherish and lead his friends, and that they will respect and encourage him. (Eph. 5:23-33)

Day 6: Pray that God will protect your pastor's parents from bitterness when their son is criticized. Pray that their prayer and devotional life will be consistent, and that they will guard their mind and heart. (Heb. 12:15; Prov. 4:23)

Day 7: Pray for your pastor's relatives, and especially that the pressures of the ministry will not discourage or embitter them. Pray that your pastor will provide godly leadership to his relatives, not based on fear of what others will think, but according to scriptural truth. (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:20-21)

Day 8: Ask God to protect your pastor from the evil plots of Satan. Pray that he will not be corrupted as he rubs shoulders with the world in the course of ministry. (John 17:15; Is. 54:17; 2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:12; Ps. 9:9-10, 91:9-11)

Day 9: Pray that God will build a hedge of protection around your pastor's vows, and that he remain committed to prayer, chastity and obedience. (Ezek. 22:30a; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Matt. 19:6)

Day 10: Pray that your pastor will use discernment in use of e-mails, the Internet, and the media. Ask God to guard his heart concerning the use of free time. Pray that he will be morally pure and that he will wear the armor of God so that he will not fall into

temptation. (Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:16; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:4)

Day 11: Pray that God will bring godly friends and encouragers to your pastor, to strengthen him for the ministry and provide meaningful fellowship and times of rest. (Phil. 2:19-25)

Day 12: Pray that your pastor will be humble and authentic in his faith, not given to pride or hypocrisy. Pray that he will have pure motives and give God glory for every gain or victory. (Micah 6:8; Gal. 6:14; John 7:17-18; 1 Cor. 10:13)

Day 13: Pray that your pastor will make wise lifestyle choices in order to protect his health, especially in the areas of exercise, eating moderately, and getting sufficient rest. Pray for times of relaxation and renewal to balance the stress of ministry. (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:27, 10:13, 6:19-20; James 3:1-2)

Day 14: Pray that your pastor will focus on the Word of God and walk in the fear of the Lord—rather than fear of man—as he prepares his messages. Pray that he will seek to please God rather than men, and pursue holiness rather than the praise of men. (Acts 6:4; Prov. 19:23; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 11:6; 2 Tim. 4:1-2)

Day 15: Praise God for your pastor's leadership and pray that he will make godly decisions. Pray that he will lead with a shepherd's heart, and that he will always speak the truth in love. (1 Kings 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:2; Rom. 12:6-8; Jer. 3:15)

Day 16: Pray that your pastor will be courageous in the pulpit in proclaiming Christ, and confident in his use of the Word of God. Ask God to help him preach with insight, transparency and humility. (Col. 1:28, 4:3a; Eph. 6:19)

Day 17: Pray that your pastor will be a man of the "Great Commission"—committed to personal evangelism and the equipping of the saints to seek the lost. Pray that he will have a heart to develop a thriving missions program in his church. (Rom. 10:15; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 19:10)

Day 18: Pray that your pastor will be a man of prayer and worship, and that he will lead by example—teaching the congregation how to walk in a close relationship with God the Father. (1 Thess. 5:17; Acts 1:14a; Matt. 4:10; Mark 1:35; Luke 22:46)

Day 19: Pray that your pastor will use wise time management, and that he will seek God's perspective for his schedule, guarding his time against unnecessary interruptions. (Eph. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5; Ps. 90:12; John 9:4)

Day 20: Pray for a fresh divine anointing on your pastor's ministry. Pray that God's working will be powerfully evident both in his personal life and the spiritual life of the

congregation. (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 15:18-19a)

Day 21: Pray that your pastor will not give in to discouragement, but will deal with inevitable criticism and conflict by committing himself into the hands of God, who judges righteously. (1 Pet. 2:23)

Day 22: Pray that your pastor will practice servant leadership, edifying the congregation with wisdom and serving with God's "agape" love. (Gal. 5:13b; Eph. 6:7; Luke 10:43b-45, 9:23-24; John 13:5-9; Phil. 2:3-4)

Day 23: Pray for spiritual unity in the church staff and among the spiritual leadership of the church. Pray that the enemy will not be allowed to create divisions, strife, or misunderstanding among the church leaders. (Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 12:25)

Day 24: Pray that God will give your pastor a clear, biblical vision of what your church can be and should be for His glory, and that he will communicate that vision clearly and confidently to the church. (Prov. 29:18; John 15:16, 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:5; Mal. 3:11)

Day 25: Pray that your pastor will seek God for personal revival, and revival in your church and community. (2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 69:32)

Day 26: Pray that your pastor will think with the mind of Christ, and the mind of the Church. (1 Cor. 2:16; Col. 2:6-8; Eph. 4:17)

Day 27: Pray that he will earnestly seek God's will and be committed to instant and complete obedience—ready for God to work powerfully in and through his ministry. (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Luke 9:23-24)

Day 28: Pray that he will strive for personal excellence and will believe God for all He wants to do in the parish. (2 Pet. 1:3; Col. 3:23-24)

Day 29: Pray that your pastor will be a man of faith and passionate love for God, not giving in to worries, fears, or an uptight and anxious spirit. (1 John 4:18; Prov. 3:5-6)

Day 30: Ask God to provide for the financial needs of your pastor and the parish. Pray that he will be a wise steward of both personal finances and church funds. (Phil. 4:19; Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:11; Ps. 37:25)

Day 31: Ask God to heal any hurts that your pastor has suffered in the ministry. Pray that he will serve the Lord with gladness, and encourage the parish to worship God with a joyful, surrendered spirit. (Is. 61:3)


WITHOUT CEASING