

THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle

Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States

www.dmas-acc.org

The Rev. Peter Geromel OHI, Th.M, Rector

December 2021

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The Rector's Ramble (In and Out of Brambles)

Prayer Methods 1 - Jesuits & Ignatian Method.

As we work through some spiritual theology in our adult Sunday school class and, as I preach through the Lord's Prayer, I wanted to look at different methods of prayer. This is important because different personalities find different methods helpful. One of the skills of a spiritual director is to find the right method of prayer for the right person. A great example of this is Mother Angelica (that feisty Italian American lady who started EWTN) who, when she was looking to enter a convent, she went to visit one at the suggestion of her priest and spiritual advisor. After interviewing her, the convent wrote back to the priest that they would be willing to take her as a novice, if she wanted, but they didn't think that they were a fit for her and that she needed to be in a "contemplative" order. You see, the convent where she first interviewed was an "active" order - they cared for people who were sick, things like that. Can you imagine being so well in tune with human nature and to God through prayer that in one interview or so you can say to somebody, we think you belong in a different order, a contemplative one? (Contemplative means you spend the majority of your time in prayer rather than in active service, as in an active order). When the priest received this insight, it all came together for him, and he knew immediately where he should recommend that she go. That too is insight! It's the gift of discernment. (It is also very "Big" of *us* if we do the same for those who are visiting and looking for a spiritual home at our parish. Are we a good fit for you? Will you grow spiritually the best with us? - but that's to edge into a slightly different subject.)

What kind of prayer is right for us is important! When my father was the head of the Board of Examining Chaplains for the Diocese of the Holy Cross, he always insisted on a question in the canonical exams about what method of prayer worked for the candidate for Holy Orders. I went to a Forward in Faith assembly in 2014 (the first one I had gone to in over a decade) and it was on Prayer. Bishop Morales of Quincy, himself a Benedictine, was one speaker (whom I had gone to for spiritual advice in the past). Mother Gabriella of the Romanian Orthodox monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan (where I had gone on retreat while a student at Hillsdale College) was another speaker. Bishop Donald Parsons, a former Bishop of Quincy, said something that took a lot of "guilt" away from my spiritual life. He talked about how St. Theresa of Avila found reading helpful in her prayer life. This made sense to me! We all need to "prime the pump" when we pray, do something to kick-start it. Maybe an intercessory list does that for you or a Rosary. But until we're in that "zone," there's a sense in which, while God is still blessing us for spending time with him, something is lacking; we are still partly mentally somewhere else. A Baptist pastor I went to seminary with said one day, "There's the time when the worship starts, and there's the time when the worship starts." This is true in our prayer life. There's the time we start praying and there's the time we start praying.

For whatever reason, I want to begin with one of the later methods. Ignatius of Loyola started the Jesuit order as a former soldier. The Jesuits have become perhaps the most highly influential and controversial of orders, especially in the last fifty years. But even before then they were quite startling in their cocksure way of going about almost completely dominating the direction of Papal policy after the Protestant Reformation. St. Francis Xavier we celebrate on December 3rd and as a missionary order, of whom he was the example *par excellence*, they did exceedingly well. Key movies attest to their zeal: *The Mission* (1986), *Black Robe* (1991), and, perhaps the most shocking (is that even possible given the two movies that I just mentioned?) Martin Scorsese's *Silence* (2016). In the realm of academia, especially at the University of Paris (where there has been perhaps more theological ink dropped in controversy than any other University in Europe) they took theological controversy to new heights, especially when they fought the Jansenists (strongly Augustinian Catholics) for the right to direct policies theological and political in the kingdom of France. (Cardinal Richelieu, of the Three Musketeers novel, enjoyed dancing around these controversies played out between the Jesuits and the Jansenists.) Cardinal Bellarmine, a Jesuit, simultaneously oversaw Galileo being told that the Copernican world was not the real world, the earth didn't actually go around the sun, and providing the theology by which Jesuits were sent in to secretly attempt to make England

“Catholic” again. John Donne read Bellarmine when he was considering going over to Rome in his early days. He didn’t find him convincing and took to writing poetry. Earlier, Jesuit and Poet, Fr. Robert Southwell, was executed for his supposed connection with the Babington Plot to assassinate Elizabeth I. Fr Henry Garnet, SJ was executed for his supposed complicity in the Gunpowder Plot to blow up James I, his family, and Parliament. Today, they are just as controversial and the names Georgetown University, Pope Francis, and Anthony Fauci give rise to statements “It’s Jesuit,” “He’s Jesuit,” “He was trained by Jesuits” . . . “what do you expect!” But this is about methods of prayer, so, remembering that every Order or tradition of spirituality that we shall look at has issues, sinners, and occasionally needs reform, let’s return to prayer.

My father and my wife find the Ignatian Method helpful. Here’s how it looks.

1. Find a quiet place where you can be alone for ten or fifteen minutes.
2. Take two or three minutes to practice rhythmic breathing – sometimes incorporating small, short prayers, that go with that breathing pattern.

Thus far we have been “priming the pump”

3. Take a passage of Scripture (or spiritual reading, lives of saints, or a sacred object to meditate on). With the Scripture you use your senses to imagine yourself in the story.
4. Close with a couple of minutes of contemplation, resting in Christ, silently in the presence of God.

Next, there is a method I’d like to cover from St. Ignatius Loyola and that is called the Examen. This is a basic Christian concept, but Jesuits focus on this at noon and at the end of the day.

1. Place yourself in the presence of God. Give thanks!
2. Pray to see how God is working in your life.
3. Review specific events – taking stock of your emotions. What was best about them? What was worst?
4. Did your responses draw you closer to God or further away?
5. What about tomorrow? How will you work in coming closer to God tomorrow, especially in the midst of what will likely be similar scenarios. He will help you!
6. End with the Lord’s Prayer.

There are many versions of this, and I invite you to do some research. I find that in my family life and work life the same things tend to happen every day. The same pitfalls, miscommunications, stresses. How will we get better tomorrow? God will help us if we let Him!

I was struck by how another pastor with whom I meet for coffee (who was raised Roman Catholic and is still deeply developed in his insight and depth as an evangelical minister because of that foundation, I think) talked about how he was required growing up to sit at table with his parents for at least twenty minutes. Many of you can relate to similar rules or enforcing similar rules in your homes. But he was asked by his parents, very much developed in their spiritual lives as Roman Catholics, “What was the best thing that happened today?” “What was the worst thing that happened today?” It sounds sitcom – but it is, actually, Ignatian Spirituality at work in a home, not just for priests, not just for Jesuits. What a blessing!

News and Information

Vestry meets December 8th. There will be mass at 7 PM followed by the meeting.

Annual Meeting on December 12th will be following the 10 AM service.

Advent Lessons & Carols: December 19th - 6 PM. Never seen one before? Come check it out. Bring a friend.
St. Thomas the Apostle will be celebrated Thursday, December 23rd at 12 Noon.

Christmas Services: December 24th: Family Service - 6 PM. Midnight Mass - 11 PM.

December 25th: Morning Prayer and Mass - 10 AM. Evening Prayer - 5 PM.

Sunday, December 26th: St. Stephen’s Day - 8 & 10 AM masses.

Monday, December 27th: St. John the Evangelist - 7 PM Mass.

Tuesday, December 28th: Holy Innocents - 12 Noon Mass.

DECEMBER, 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&HU – Prayers and Holy Unction			[1]	[2] 12 noon HC	[3]	[4] 5:00 p.m. HC
[5] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS ADVENT II	[6]	[7]	[8] 7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[9] 12 noon HC	[10]	[11] 5:00 p.m. HC
[12] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE Annual Meeting ADVENT III	[13]	[14]	[15]	[16] 12 noon HC	[17]	[18] 5:00 p.m. HC
[19] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS 6:00 p.m. Advent Lessons & Carols ADVENT IV	[20]	[21]	[22]	[23] 12 noon HC ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE	[24] 6:00 p.m. Family Service 11:00 p.m. FHE CHRISTMAS EVE	[25] 10:00 a.m. MP & HC 5:00 p.m. EP CHRISTMAS DAY
[26] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS ST. STEPHEN'S DAY	[27] 7:00 p.m. HC ST. JOHN EVANGELIST	[28] 12 noon HC HOLY INNOCENTS	[29]	[30] 12 noon HC	[31]	

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

Week beginning Sunday →	December 5	December 12	December 19	December 26	January 2
Altar Guild	B. Higginbotham	V. Williams	M. Slayton	V. Williams	B. Higginbotham
	J. Butterfield	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	J. Butterfield
Coffee Hour	S. Darby	C. Pappas	V. Williams	E. Paisley	TBD
Ushers	M. Slayton	P. Pappas	M. Slayton	G. Terrell	D. Drysdale
	G. Terrell	M. Slayton	D. Drysdale	P. Pappas	P. Pappas
Epistoler 8 a.m.	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	G. Mauney	A. Butterfield
Epistoler 10 a.m.	C. Von Claparede	T. Paisley	G. Terrell	C. Von Claparede	T. Paisley
Server	P. Williams	P. Williams	T. Paisley	P. Williams	P. Williams
Crucifer	W. Paisley	C. Von Claparede	W. Paisley	W. Paisley	W. Paisley

2021 Vestry (term end): Allen Butterfield (‘21), Dan Drysdale (‘23), Phil Pappas (‘21), Marnie Slayton (‘22), Clemens Von Claparede (‘22), Phil Williams (‘23)