

Jesus † Mary † Joseph
Chapter 27 - Holiness in Everyday Life

Christ:

My child, at times you hear people say that they are too busy to bother with religion. People who say such things do not understand Me, nor themselves, nor their daily life. They do not realize that religion is as necessary an activity as eating, sleeping and working.

2. I am far more than the air you breathe, the food you eat, and the rest which brings you renewed strength. All of these things, and everything else, come to you from My hand. Without My loving support each moment, these things would fail you, and you yourself would vanish from the face of the earth.

3. I am the center of your existence. You depend on Me more than you dream. Just as you give due attention to the people who come into your daily life, so too is it normal for you to give due attention to Me. To speak to Me, to try to please Me, to ask for My help, to express sorrow for your offenses, and to love Me for My goodness – these are normal acts for any intelligent human being. The more I show Myself to him, the more should he strive to please Me in his everyday life.

4. Religion is the bond which unites you to Me. To neglect it is as foolish as refusing to breathe, or eat, or rest. In fact, it is worse. These other things keep your body alive, but religion is necessary for the eternal life of your soul.

5. The man who neglects this part of his life is abnormal, that is, he is not what he ought to be. He is neglecting something which is natural and normal for him, something which perfects him more than he realizes.

6. There is no real opposition between laboring for your earthly needs, and laboring for Heaven. You have to work each day, but this work can be a glorious prayer. You must eat, work, sleep, and have recreation, but all of these can become holy actions, actions done for eternal life.

7. Whatever you do, do it as I want it done, and you will be doing it as perfectly as possible. Be reasonable in whatever you do, or say, or think. Refuse to violate My commandments, regardless of any earthly advantage or disadvantage. I made the things of this life for you, so that you may perfect yourself by using them intelligently. Let My words and example guide you in whatever you do. In doubt, consult My Church. Do this and you will be working for success on earth and all-satisfying glory in Heaven.

Think:

Once I get a full view of this earthly life, I will see how all-important a part God plays in it. Instead of living for the moment or for the next few years, I'll live for my highest and most important goal. I will see the unending importance of what I am doing today, I will understand how each act of this day helps me become a little more perfect, a little more ready for Heaven. Only sin is foolish. Only sin is bad. All else is good and pleasing to God, because it helps me in one way or another.

Pray:

My Father in Heaven, I desire to make the best use of this earthly life of mine. I want to live as full a life as possible. Therefore, in everything I think, do or say, I want You to be my Partner. Since You support me in all my thinking, speaking and acting, I want to please You in them. By living this way, I will be following your wisdom and my own highest good. I now join this daily life of mine to the earthly life of Jesus, Your divine Son. With His example and with the strength of His holy sacraments, I hope to please You every moment. Thus, my daily life will be my best preparation for eternal life. Amen.

November 26th

Saint John Berchmans, Jesuit Seminarian (†1599-1621)

Born in 1599 in Diest, a town of northern Belgium near Brussels and Louvain, this angelic young Saint was the oldest of five children. Two of his three brothers became priests, and his father, after the death of John's mother when he was eleven years old, entered religion and became a Canon of Saint Sulpice.

John was a brilliant student from his most tender years, manifesting also a piety which far exceeded the ordinary. Beginning at the age of seven, he studied for three years at the local communal school with an excellent professor. And then his father, wanting to protect the sacerdotal vocation already evident in his son, confided him to a Canon of Diest who lodged students aspiring to the ecclesiastical vocation. After three years in that residence, the family's financial situation had declined owing to the long illness of the mother, and John was told he would have to return and learn a trade. He pleaded to be allowed to continue his studies. And his aunts, who were nuns, found a solution through their chaplain; he proposed to take John into his service and lodge him.

Saint John was ordinarily first in his classes at the "large school," a sort of minor seminary, even when he had to double his efforts in order to rejoin his fellow students, all of excellent talent, who sometimes had preceded him for a year or more in an assigned discipline. He often questioned his Superiors as to what was the most perfect thing to say or do in the various circumstances in which he found himself. Such was the humility which caused the young to advance without ceasing on the road to heaven. Later he continued his studies at Malines, also not distant from Diest, under the tutelage of another ecclesiastic, who assigned to him the supervision of three young boys of a noble family. In all that John did he sought perfection, and he never encountered anything but the highest favor for his services, wherever he was placed.

He found his vocation through his acquaintance with the Jesuits of that city, and manifested his determination to pursue his course, although his father and family opposed it for a time. It had been decided that he would continue his studies at the Jesuit novitiate of Malines, with about 70 other novices. With another young aspirant, he was waiting in the parlor to be introduced, when he saw in the garden a coadjutor Brother turning over the ground in the garden. He proposed to his companion to go and help him, saying: "Could

we begin our religious life better than with an act of humility and charity?” And with no hesitation, both went to offer their assistance. How many young persons in that situation would have thought of such an offer? This incident reveals the profound charity and interior peace which characterized this young religious at all times.

As a novice he taught catechism to the children in the regions around Malines. He made his instructions so lively and interesting that the country folk preferred his lessons to the ordinary sermons. The children became attached to him, and in a troop would conduct him back to the novitiate, where he distributed holy pictures, medals and rosaries to them. At the end of his novitiate in 1619 he was destined to go to Rome to begin serious application to philosophy, but his superiors decided to send him home for a few days first. A shock awaited him at the train station of Malines, where he was expecting to meet his father; he had died a week earlier. John was given time to take the dispositions necessary to provide for the younger brothers and sister. When he departed, it was apparently with a premonition that he would perhaps never see them again, for he said in a letter to the Canon of Diest with whom he had dwelt, to tell the younger ones for him: “Increase in piety, in fear of God and in knowledge. Adieu.”

With a fellow novice he began the two months’ journey on foot to Rome, by way of Paris, Lyons and Loreto, where the two assisted at the Christmas Midnight Mass. Both of these two young Jesuits would die within three years’ time, his companion in a matter of several months. John had time during these three years to give unceasing proofs of his already perfected sanctity; nothing that he did was left to chance, but entrusted to the intercession of his Heavenly Mother, to whom his devotion continued to increase day by day. He made an extraordinary effort during an intense heat wave in the summer of 1621, participating splendidly in a debate, which took place at a certain distance from the Jesuit residence, despite the fact he did not feel well. Two days later he was felled by a fever, which continued implacably to mine his already slight resistance, and he died in August of that year, after one week of illness. The story of his last days is touching indeed; in a residence of several hundred priests and students, there was none who did not follow with anxiety and compassion the progress of his illness. When the infirmarian told his patient that he should probably receive Communion the next morning — an exception to the rule prescribing it for Sundays only, in those times — John said, “In Viaticum?” and received a sad affirmative answer. He himself was transported with joy and embraced the Brother; the latter broke into tears. A priest who knew John well went to him the next morning and asked him if there was anything troubling or saddening him, and John replied, “Absolutely nothing.”

He asked that his mattress be placed on the floor, and knelt to receive his Lord; when the Father Rector pronounced the words of the Ritual: “Receive, Brother, in Viaticum, the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ,” all in attendance wept. Their angelic, ever joyous and affectionate young novice was called to leave them; no clearer tribute than their tears could have been offered to the reality of his sanctity, his participation in the effusive goodness of the divine nature. Devotion to his memory spread rapidly in Belgium; already in 1624

twelve engraving establishments of Anvers had published his portrait. He was canonized in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII, at the same time as two other Jesuits who lived during the first century of that Society's existence, so fruitful in sanctity — Peter Claver and Alphonsus Rodriguez.

Sources: Saint Jean Berchmans, by Hippolyte Delehaye, S.J. (J. Gabalda: Paris, 1922); Saint Jean Berchmans: Ses écrits, by Tony Severin, S.J., (Museum Lessianum: Louvain, 1931).

Daily Thoughts and Prayers For Our Beloved Dead
Twenty-Sixth Day

It costs us very little to help the faithful departed. We are obliged to pray – to assist at Mass, to receive the Sacraments – to give alms, and to fast on the days appointed. If we are in the state of grace, and offer these works for the Holy Souls, they are acceptable to God and speed their relief.

Prayer: Our Father. 3 Hail Marys. Glory Be. De Profundis.

Most merciful Jesus, release the Souls in Purgatory from the results of their imperfections, especially the soul suffering there through my bad example. Take him today to Thy Heavenly Throne, that he may join the Saints in praise of Thee and will intercede for me in my hour of need.

De Profundis (Psalm 129)

- 1 Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord:
- 2 Lord, hear my voice. Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
- 3 If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it.
- 4 For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Thy law, I have waited for Thee, O Lord. My soul hath relied on His Word:
- 5 My soul hath hoped in the Lord.
- 6 From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.
- 7 Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption.
- 8 And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Source: Douay Rheims Bible, Imp. 1899

Ejaculation: O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament have mercy on us. (300 days)

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