

Jesus † Mary † Joseph
Chapter 11 - An Honest Daily Effort

Christ:

My child, so often your thoughts are on unimportant things. You do not center them enough on Me nor on your greatest need. After a few moments of recollection, your thoughts go right back to useless distractions. As a result you rarely get a good look at yourself and your actions. You hardly know your real worth because you take so little notice of your desires, motives, and intentions. You fail to be impressed by your many faults because you are blind to what is going on within your heart. Your interior motives are often selfish and corrupt. Consequently, your external actions are very imperfect and unsatisfactory. From a pure heart comes the fruits of a good life, but from an imperfect heart there can only come an imperfect life.

2. External activity proceeds from internal vigor. If you serve Me only by external observances, you are no true follower of Mine. You must apply the ax to the root of your troubles. Learn to control this selfish nature of yours, and you will possess My peace. I daily offer you My grace for this divine purpose. Do not keep looking at your weakness. Do not be afraid to make the attempt. Nothing is impossible to Me. Fix your eyes on Me and make a sincere effort to follow My Will. Your difficulties will gradually vanish.

3. Try as you will, you will always make a number of unavoidable mistakes. Still, with a little violence to yourself, you will gradually be able to serve Me with more ease. If you rooted out of your life one single fault each year, you would soon become a perfect man. Nowadays, however, people seem to be at their best at the beginning of their conversion. They consider it a great accomplishment if they do not become worse with time.

Think:

Many admit that they have faults. When, however, any particular fault of theirs is pointed out to them, they will immediately justify themselves. They simply refuse to come face to face with any particular fault of theirs. As a result, they live a lifetime with little progress in virtue. To better my life I must see and admit what is wrong. Then I can proceed to improve myself.

Pray:

My God, make me brave enough to face my faults, honest enough to acknowledge them, and strong enough to fight them. I think of many things each day, but so many of my interests are unimportant and useless. Give me the strength and the generosity to make definite resolutions against definite faults. May I never be so selfish as to stop trying to please You more each day. Though my faults seem to continue, still my efforts must remain firm and I must go on trying to become daily a better man. If I will go on trying, I cannot help becoming better each day. A continued effort will slowly destroy my selfishness, and my faults will gradually weaken and die. Lord, on You I depend for the light and strength for this daily battle. Amen.

November 6th

Saint Leonard - Hermit, Patron of Prisoners - (†second half of the 6th Century)

Saint Leonard was born towards the end of the fifth century of illustrious parents, residing in the part of the province of Gaul which was then beginning to be called France. Several historians believe that with his brother Saint Lifard, his origins can be traced to the castle of Vendome in the region of Orleans. He belonged to the nation of the Franks, and at the court of Clovis his relatives were dignitaries, baptized at the same time as the king by Saint Remi. That monarch himself stood as sponsor in Baptism for this child of predilection.

As Leonard grew he was so moved by the holy examples of the bishop of Rheims that he renounced the world in order to lead a more perfect life. When Saint Remi had trained Leonard in virtue and conferred on him the tonsure, he began to exercise his charity on behalf of prisoners. Clovis, in response to a prayer of Saint Remi, had already issued an edict that prisoners in Rheims might be freed whenever his royal highness would pass through that city. Leonard asked the kind monarch to grant him personally the right to liberate prisoners whom he would find worthy of it, any time at all.

The reputation of Saint Leonard's goodness and sanctity soon spread, and the sick came to him for healing and alms. He did not fail to teach them also the value of Christian patience and to console them by the divine doctrine. The king desired to attach him permanently to his court, but Saint Leonard, in a discourse brilliant by its humility, replied that he preferred to live in the obscurity Christ had chosen for Himself for so many years, and he retired to a monastery. Saint Maximin, its abbot, saw to it that he was ordained a deacon, which office he accepted out of obedience, but he did not aspire to any additional ecclesiastical dignities. He recognized that his role was not to remain always in the monastery, and departed to preach to the pagans of the province of Limoges. He found on a nearby mountain a forested solitude where he decided to remain, and there he built a cell of branches and considered himself rich in the possession of God, joyous in his freedom to devote himself to meditation, prayer and mortification.

He continued to obtain miracles when solicited by the suffering members of Jesus Christ. The spouse of a king living nearby had a successful delivery of a child by his prayers, when her very life was despaired of; and the king in gratitude gave him a part of the forest to dispose of as he wished. He then built an oratory to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Two disciples joined him in this sanctuary, continuing to pray without interruption when their master went on pilgrimage to the tombs of the Saints.

Soon the sick came to Saint Leonard here also, and prisoners who invoked him from their cells saw their chains break before their eyes. Many came to him afterwards, bringing their heavy chains and irons to offer them in homage. A considerable number wished to remain with him, and he often gave them part of his vast forest to clear and make ready for the labors of the fields, that they might have the means to live an honest life. He continued to be their guardian and father and preached the religion of our Saviour to them; and those who had once been malefactors were transformed by prayer and labor.

Seven families of persons who were his relatives in the north heard of his reputation and decided to come to him and remain with him. He was surprised but encouraged their good resolutions, saying: "A fare of dry bread, eaten in the joy of a pure conscience, is of more worth than a house abundantly furnished, where quarrels and divisions prevail." After increasing in holiness until his last days, he died on the 6th of November in the oratory he had dedicated to Our Lady, after having himself transported there, sometime during the second half of the sixth century. Miracles on behalf of prisoners and the sick followed, as they had preceded, his death. The cult of Saint Leonard has remained extremely popular in France ever since; and throughout all of Europe churches and monasteries have been placed under his invocation.

Source: Les Petits Bollandistes: Vies des Saints, by Msgr. Paul Guérin (Bloud et Barral: Paris, 1882), Vol. 13.

Daily Thoughts and Prayers For Our Beloved Dead - Sixth Day

The Souls in Purgatory are powerless to help themselves. They cannot do penance, nor offer satisfaction, nor gain indulgences, nor receive the Sacraments. They cannot pray for themselves. We, who are still on earth, can share with them the Graces which God so generously and abundantly give us.

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

Most beloved Jesus, by the merits of Thy five Wounds, hear the pleas and release from the torments of Purgatory the faithful soul that did the most good on earth. Place it today at Thy heavenly throne that it may join in honoring Thee and in guiding me to live according to its dictates.

Ejaculation: Mary (300 days)

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

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