

**2.13.2021**

---

## **THE CROSS AND THE TOOTHPICK**

### **Remember Me**

The season of Lent is quickly approaching. It starts in Four Days! Some would argue that it's the time of year when Christians are most cognizant about the blessings they have and the things they should give up during the 45 day period. But before we struggle with the latter, perhaps we should first ask ourselves what we should be thankful for. The following questions might help put everything in perspective:



On Health...Am I physically handicapped? Can I speak, see, or hear? Am I suffering from a serious accident? Do I have cancer, heart disease, or some other crippling disorder? Am I addicted to smoking, drugs, alcohol, pornography, or gambling?

On Family...Are there any members of my family that have fallen victim to abandonment, addiction, violence, or mental illness?

On Economics...Can I put food on the table? Am I homeless? Do I have access to medical care? Am I employed or employable?

On Education...Can I read and write? Do I have a learning disorder?

On Fidelity...Do I suffer from infidelity? Do I know anyone who is lonely or has a broken heart?

On Safety...Do I live in a safe neighborhood? Is anyone in my family in danger because of where they live or the country they serve?

On Love and Friendship...Do I have friends I can trust? Have I lost someone in my family to violence, disease, misfortune, addiction, or the justice system?

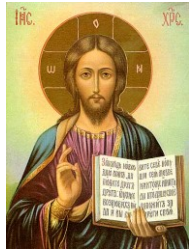
On Character...Would others say I have integrity, a strong work ethic, or a moral foundation? Does it matter that I don't look like a movie star, play professional sports, have an IQ above 130, or not listed in Forbes Magazine?



On Spirituality...Do I have a spiritual foundation to fall back on in times of stress, heartbreak, or peril?

What happens to our lives when we make a shift in our attitude and admit that Jesus is our Savior and invite Him into our heart of hearts? Let us listen attentively to the wisdom found in Holy Scripture, our Catechism and in Modern Comment.

## **Holy Scripture<sup>1</sup>**



### **James 5:7-11 – Be Patient in the Holy Spirit**

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and late rains.

You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brothers, about one another, that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing before the gates.

Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, because “the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”

### **1 Corinthians 10:10, 12-13 – Warning Against Overconfidence**

Do not grumble as some of them did, and suffered death by the destroyer. Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall.

No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

The Word of the Lord

## **Catechism**

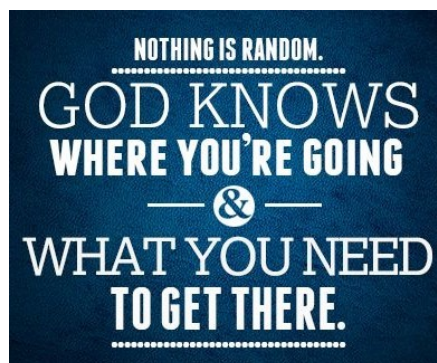
### **CCC 2616 - Jesus Hears Our Prayers**

Prayer to Jesus is answered by him already during his ministry, through signs that anticipate the power of his death and Resurrection: Jesus hears the prayer of faith, expressed in words (the leper, Jairus, the Canaanite woman, the good thief) or in silence (the bearers of the paralytic, the woman with a hemorrhage who touches his clothes, the tears and ointment of the sinful woman). The urgent request of the blind men, "Have mercy on us, Son of David" or "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" has been renewed in the traditional prayer to Jesus known as the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" Healing infirmities or forgiving sins, Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith: "Your faith has made you well; go in peace."



### **CCC 1505 - Acknowledge Christ Healing Us From Sin**

Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through his Passover.



<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: There are 51 Bible references regarding Complaining.

## Modern Comment

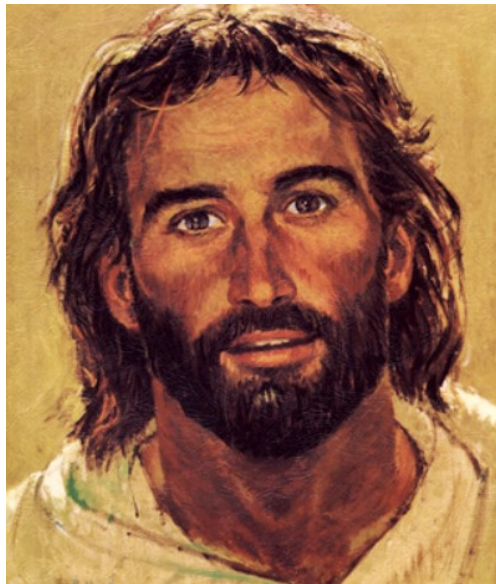
### REMEMBER ME



Play Video selection from *The Passion of the Christ* from Scene 21 where Simon the Cyrene is chosen to carry the Cross of Christ and end 12½ minutes later when Simon is pulled from Christ as Mary comes up Calvary Hill to the foot of the Cross.

I have made it a point to watch Mel Gibson's, *The Passion of the Christ* on more than a few occasions. As always, I continue to be haunted by the way this award-winning director drew our attention to the temple guard who lost his ear in an altercation with Peter; or Pilates wife whose kindness was extended to the victim's Mother; and Simon of Cyrene the reluctant "volunteer" who ended up defending the Savior. I will forever remember the Roman soldier whose expression confirmed that he just executed the Son of God. And who will forget the condemned thief who pleaded, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

After seeing the film, I couldn't help but wonder how many "prodigal" sons and daughters would be affected by the experience. Was there a Catholic politician whose pro-abortion position fell apart when Mary starred into the camera holding her crucified Son? And did any parents suddenly recognize that their children were a gift from God? Were judges present who realized that civil union perversions come at the expense of the sanctity of marriage? One can only assume that Hollywood producers didn't attend because they were busy filming their next pornographic movie. And I wonder if there was a CEO who was uncomfortable with the corruption between Jerusalem's elite. Perhaps a newspaper critic assigned to cover the "event" struggled with the words, "What is truth?" Surely, Mary wasn't alone as she saw her son on the Cross. I am sure more than one lawyer must have squirmed at the same scene.



And did anyone notice a member of the clergy whose discomfort may have had more to do with what he failed to do? Could one draw a parallel with sports celebrities and their agents to the 30 pieces of silver? And let's not forget the intellectuals and scholars whose pride and arrogance were magnified in the role of the Pharisees. Were prostitutes, drug addicts, alcoholics, and abortion mill nurses present? Did they see themselves in the movie? And how many "fallen-away" Catholics will we see at Mass this Easter?

I suppose they were all there, just like I was: I who complain when asked to carry a cross the weight of a "toothpick;" or who fail to recognize the cross that others carry; or worse yet, condemn what others have done while forgetting what I have failed to do. Perhaps that's why the words, "remember me" represent not only what I ask of Jesus: But what the Son of God asks of me. Amen.





## Discussion Question & Comments:

1. From the list of blessings, (health, family, economics etc.) is there one particular category that resonates most with you?

---



---



---

2. Have you ever been guilty of complaining about the "toothpick" you have been asked to carry? Do you have any plans on how to avoid?

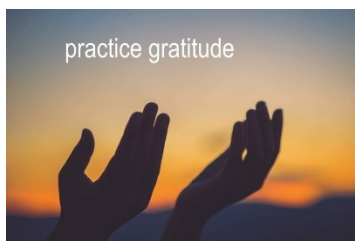
---



---



---



## Men's Group Calendar

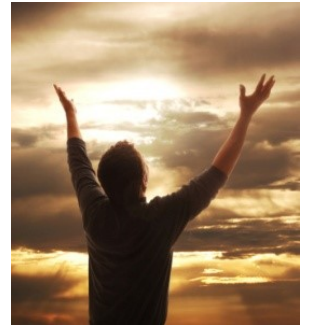
A Man who never quits is Never Defeated.

2/26/2020	Leadership Meeting	9:30 AM Meet Rooms 1 & 2
<b>3/13/2021</b>	<b>CMFNEO Conference</b>	<b>VIRTUAL ONLINE ONLY</b>
<b>3/20/2021</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
3/26/2020	Leadership Meeting	9:30 AM Meet Rooms 1 & 2
<b>4/10/2021</b>	<b>Men's Group</b>	<b>7 AM Mass</b>
4/23/2020	Leadership Meeting	9:30 AM Meet Rooms 1 & 2



## **A Prayer for Today**

Father God, today I open my mind and heart to You. I receive Your Word which directs my steps and builds my faith. Help me to hear Your Voice clearly so that I can pray bold prayers in line with Your will. In the Sweet and Holy Name of Jesus we pray. Amen. And AMEN.



Lord, God and Savior, by your love you draw me to yourself. Forgive me – the sinner that I am, and fill me with every good thing, not withholding even the gift of your most beloved son. Come dwell in my heart.

Send forth your Holy Spirit to guide me in your path. Make me worthy of your love, and teach me how to forgive as you forgave.

Thank you for your tender mercies. I ask you to bless my family, friends and those who I meet in my comings and goings.

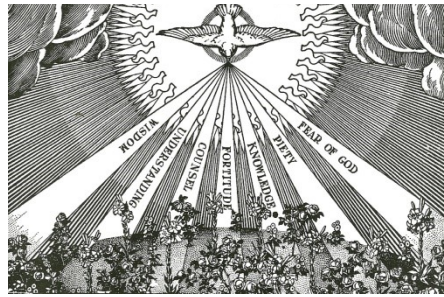
Where there is joy, give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them your peace and mercy. Where there is self-doubt, release in them a renewed confidence. Fill their every need with your Holy Grace.

You are indeed my Lord, God and Savior. Amen

---

**Lord Jesus, Be merciful to me, the sinner that I am. Amen.**

---



## **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

We stand before you, Holy Spirit, conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in your name. Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts.

Give us light and strength to know your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power, for you are God, sharing the glory of Father and Son. You desire justice for all; enable us to uphold the rights of others; do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favor. Unite us to yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in your name, may we temper justice with love, so that all our discussions and reflections may be pleasing to you, and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants.

We ask this of You who live and reign with the Father and the Son, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Opening Prayer by Saint John XXIII at the Second Vatican Council October 11, 1962

