

September 2009

Praying the Week

Fellow Pilgrims:

Last month, Gail and I had the privilege of worshiping at Weston Priory in Vermont. It is a Benedictine retreat center. St. Benedict formulated a rule that emphasized the idea of peace and organizes the day into regular periods of communal and private prayer, sleep, spiritual reading, and labor. St. Benedict wants "that in all [things] God may be glorified" (St. Benedict's Rule chapter. 57.9). In later centuries, intellectual work and teaching took the place of farming, crafts, or other forms of manual labor.

After the service, I picked up a small booklet entitled Prayers for a Peaceful World: Let Peace Fill My Heart (Benetvision/www.benetvision.org). It begins by saying, "Imagine . . . if we took a few moments each day to reflect and pray for peace in our hearts, our community, our nation, and the world." It then lists prayers for each day of the week. I want to share their prayers with you. I ask you to prayerfully consider starting each day with prayer, using prayers that are meaningful to you, and to pray throughout the day as the Spirit speaks to you. I usually begin each day with the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me a sinner). I then put the names of others in the place of the word me. Here are some prayers for each day of the week from both Weston Priory and other sources.

Sunday: "I bind unto myself today The Power of God to hold and lead, His eye to watch, His might to stay, His ear to hearken to my need. The wisdom of my God to teach, His hand to guide, his shield to ward; the Word of God to give me speech, His heavenly host to be my guard. Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in mouth of friend or stranger. I bind unto myself the name, the strong name of the Trinity; by invocation of the same, the Three in One, the One in Three, of whom all nature has creation; Eternal Father, Spirit, Word, praise to the Lord of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the Lord. Amen[LN1].'" (St. Patrick of Ireland)

Monday: "Keep us, O God, from all pettiness. Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done with faultfinding and leave off all self-seeking. May we put away all pretenses and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice. Grant that we may realize that it is the little things of life that create differences, that in the big things of life we are as one. And, O God, let us not forget to be kind. Amen." (Mary Stewart)

Tuesday: "O God, grant us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed, the courage to change what can be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen." (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Wednesday: "Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are changing. God alone is changeless. Patience attains the good. One who has God lacks nothing. God alone fills all our needs. Amen." (St. Teresa of Avila)

Thursday: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, Joy. Amen.” (St. Francis of Assisi)

Friday: “Thanks be to You, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which You have won for us, for all the pains and insults which You have borne for us. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, may we know You more clearly, love You more dearly, and follow You more nearly, day by day. Amen.” (Richard of Chichester)

Saturday: “Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill my heart, my world, and my universe. Amen.” (Universal peace prayer)

May your week unfold prayerfully in the grace of God. “May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back, may the sun shine warmly on your face, the rain fall softly on your fields; and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.” (Gaelic Blessing)

In Christ’s love,

Chuck Ellenbaum ><+>

Spiritual Director