

365  
DEVOTIONS  
— *for* —  
CATHOLICS

DAILY MOMENTS WITH GOD



Creative Communications for the Parish  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction .....	7
A Prayer of St. Paul.....	9
January.....	10
February .....	41
March .....	69
April.....	100
May .....	130
June .....	161
July.....	191
August.....	222
September.....	253
October.....	283
November.....	314
December.....	344
Prayers.....	375

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# INTRODUCTION

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**This is the day the LORD has made;  
let us be glad and rejoice in it.** Psalm 118:24

Words have power. They influence our thoughts, our emotions and our actions. A talented novelist can make us laugh or cry. An investigative journalist reporting on injustices can make us angry. But no words have more power than the Word of God. And no person is more powerful than Jesus, the Word Made Flesh.

By gifting us with his word, God invites us every day to walk with him, to seek him and to constantly better ourselves. In the pages that follow, you will find inspiring, challenging and thought-provoking devotions to accompany you each day of the entire year.

By reflecting on God's word, we can come to enjoy a greater prayer life and deepen our relationship with God, creating a bond that transcends language and logic. With *365 Devotions for Catholics*, our *Living Faith: Daily Catholic Devotions* authors are hoping that their everyday experiences—their joys, their sorrows, their struggles—can help readers on their own journey with God. What you will find here are some of the very best reflections that have appeared in the pages of *Living Faith* over the last several years.

As Catholics, we count the 40 days of Lent in anticipation of the joy of Easter, we count the 28 days of Advent and the number

of shopping days until Christmas. Some count the days until their retirement.

But in all of that “counting down,” let us take a few moments daily, through these devotions, to remember that each day is a gift. A day should not be something to simply count down or get through. It is precious—every single day that we are granted life is sacred. Every day, every hour, every minute, every second is a gift from God.

Let this book serve as a tangible reminder that what we do with our time really does matter—every day.

Enjoy the journey!

Terence Hegarty  
Editor, *Living Faith: Daily Catholic Devotions*

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# A PRAYER OF ST. PAUL

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I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-19, 21

# ‘IN MEMORY OF ME’

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**I remember the deeds of the LORD.** Psalm 77:12

If you're looking for a life-changing biblical verse to grab on to, here it is. Do this, and your life will surely be different.

To remember what God has done—his creating, his saving, his sending the Spirit—is to view our life in the context of reality. Only then can we see our way forward. If we forget what God has done, we neglect reality; inevitably, we go astray.

How do we remember? Above all, we remember in the Mass. Not simply a remembering of a past event, the Mass is the great remembering in which Christ's sacrifice again becomes present to us. We remember that God has created us, that he has sent his Son to us, that his Son has given his life for us and for all. But we each need our own ways of remembering. For the psalmist, it is a matter of meditating and pondering (Psalm 77:13).

What means will you or I use today to remember the deeds of the Lord?

Kevin Perrotta

# SHARING THE WEALTH TODAY

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**But God said to him, “You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?”** Luke 12:20

Who doesn't sympathize with the man who wanted to hoard his harvest to enjoy later? We've heard time and again of the need to save for the future.

But God also calls us to live in the present. Thinking you'll volunteer every week at a homeless shelter once the kids are out of the house? Volunteer an hour or two a month now. Thinking you'll spend an hour a day in prayer once you retire? Pray ten minutes on the way to work or the grocery store today.

The plans we make for the future have a way of being turned on their heads. Let's resolve to share our gifts responsibly and as fully as possible today rather than waiting for “someday.”

*Lord, help me be present to your will today and every day.*

Melanie Rigney

# NOTICING GOODNESS

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**He must increase; I must decrease.** John 3:30

This line of John the Baptist about Jesus can serve as powerful spiritual direction for us in these times that are significantly challenging for many, whether with economic and employment crises or with the other strains and losses of daily living. It is easy to be overwhelmed with the difficulties, constantly working the problems, feeling the fear close in. “He must increase; I must decrease” could be a mantra, as we deliberately focus in this moment on the immediate presence of God’s saving love rather than turning our attention in dread to the threat of what frightens us.

What helps me the most to do this is to try to notice any aspect of goodness right here in this moment—anything beautiful or peaceful or delicious or interesting or encouraging or kind. Noticing goodness makes my awareness of God’s presence increase and my fear-gripped sense of self decrease.

*Beloved God, please help me to live increasingly in trust, knowing ever more deeply that you are right here with me now and always.*

Patricia Livingston

# TRUE SATISFACTION

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**They all ate and were satisfied.** Mark 6:42

We're in the week of rude awakenings. Our lives are getting back to normal after thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas and New Year's. Many of us spent too much money trying to fill emotional and physical holes with family and friends. Now we've found the holes are still there, along with new ones in our bank accounts. No matter how noble or selfless our intentions, excess in this world doesn't satisfy long-term.

The disciples despaired at the cost of feeding the crowd, saying they'd need 200 days of wages. And yet, they learned that with Christ, five loaves and two fish were more than sufficient.

As we work on resolutions to spend, eat and drink less, may we also resolve to trust more in the Master's love, which feeds and satisfies like nothing else.

*Lord, I praise your name. True satisfaction begins and ends with you.*

Melanie Rigney

# WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

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**What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?** Luke 9:25

It's possible to accumulate so much of "the world" that you lose your own "self." We expend so much time, effort and psychic energy trying to fortify our lives with the things of this world; we would do well to be on guard that we don't gain too much of this stuff. We live in the world, of course, and everyone has a right to food, clothing, shelter, education, rest and restful recreation, personal safety and so forth. But it's possible to get to a point where these things smother our deepest and truest selves.

So be careful that you don't gain too much of a good thing. In this new year, pray for the wisdom to recognize when enough is enough. As long as there are people who don't have anywhere near enough, of course, there will always be opportunities to share because nobody deserves too much of a good thing.

*Lord Jesus, help me see when enough is enough.*

Mitch Finley

# BEING REBORN

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**Let your kindness comfort me,  
according to your promise to your servants.** Psalm 119:76

Being born occurs throughout our lives. We emerge from darkness many times. Like that first trip through the birth canal, we never make it on our own. We come from mothers and lots of others. Self-creation is the myth; everyone needs a push and prayer to reach the light. When we cannot see the way ahead, a word may find us. Groans give way to gratitude. Compassion is real. The unfolding of a life pauses at death and then moves onward.

Being here is the gift, but it's not always apparent. We fall down. Someone must be to blame, and perhaps it is God. We can dig ourselves in deep before we remember to look up. Every pit opens to the sky.

We wanted to have it all, and we failed. But it's surprising how well what is broken catches the light. God, bring me to life in the spirit of compassion.

Jeanne Schuler

# PAYING HOMAGE TO GOD

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**On entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.**

Matthew 2:11

A cherished Christmas tradition in our family was my father's reading aloud to us Henry Van Dyke's haunting story, *The Other Wise Man*. I have never forgotten the message of that tale of the fourth Magi, Artaban. He was to journey with the others, following the great star to pay homage to the King. On his way to meet their caravan, he stops to care for a dying stranger by the road. When he reaches the meeting place, they have left without him.

For thirty-three years he wanders, searching, feeling he has failed. In all his travels, he finds people needing rescue, healing, comfort, food, shelter. As he is dying, a tender voice assures him that whatever he did for the least of these, he did for the One he sought.

We, like Artaban, do not see the actual epiphany of the Divine. But on all the pathways of our journey, we meet and do him homage in our moments of compassion: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, reading children stories that touch their hearts forever.

Patricia Livingston



# WORDS THAT LAST

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**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.** Mark 13:31

Spoken twenty centuries ago, the words of Jesus have not passed away. They have been passed along from one generation to the next, from one country to another. His words have instructed millions in the ways of holiness, inspired the discouraged and consoled those who have faced pains and sorrows. Jesus can offer the eternal guarantee that his words will not pass away because he will not pass away. His words are the good news that neither time can diminish nor death destroy.

Some day earth and sky will disappear. The sun will make its last delivery of heat and light. The remnants of our beautiful planet will turn into stellar dust, but the words of the Lord will still exist. They promise life beyond comprehension, happiness beyond imagination and eternal security in the great beyond.

*We praise you, Lord, for your words give us spirit and life.*

Fr. James McKarns

# OUR STREAM OF LIFE-GIVING WATER

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**Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD...**

**He is like a tree planted beside the waters**

**that stretches out its roots to the stream.** Jeremiah 17:7-8

On our provincial house property, we have a huge oak tree estimated to be 300 years old. It towers so far above the other trees that you can't even see its top. Its trunk is so massive it takes about five adults with outstretched arms to encircle it. One secret to its longevity and size is the stream that runs nearby. This incredible tree has the good fortune of being rooted next to a generous supply of water.

What about us? Do we stay close to our "spiritual water supply," that is, Scripture, the Eucharist, prayer, family, friends, nature and our loving service of others? If so, thank God! If not, what draws us away?

*God, help me to stay rooted in you.*

Sr. Melannie Svoboda, S.N.D.

# SETTLING INTO THE ARMS OF GOD

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**God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.** 1 John 4:16

This verse is one of the best doorways for me into the mystery that is God. It helps me understand that in all my experiences of love, I have actually been shown God: in the tenderness with which my mother wiped my face when I was very sick, in the delight of a grandchild running toward me with her arms out, in the way friends and family have stood with me, heart and soul, in times of trouble and of rejoicing.

Remaining in love is remaining in God, John tells us. I recently read that the Greek word translated here as “remain in” can also be translated as “settle in for a while and relax.” In these challenging times, I am grateful to be reminded to settle in for a while into all the ways that love is in my life and feel myself relax, knowing that I am settling into the arms of God.

Patricia Livingston

# SING PRAISE TO THE LORD

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**Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done wondrous deeds.** Psalm 98:1

Sometimes gratitude and earnest devotion just aren't enough to express how we feel about our relationship with God. Only singing praise seems adequate. Music is powerful. Every year when I bring carols to folks in a nursing home, I see song break through and touch hearts where words cannot.

St. Augustine is credited with saying, "A person who sings prays twice." Beautiful music itself is prayer, and when wedded to words of praise, the result is a foretaste of the new Earth to come. This can be true whether it is plainchant, choral music or a modern composition (though we all have preferences).

Except for a few holiday events, do you sing joyfully or do you just listen to the choir or mouth the words timidly at Mass? Christmas carols are behind us, but let us continue to "sing joyfully to the Lord...break into song; sing praise."

Phil Fox Rose

# TAKE GRIEF TO THE LORD

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**... but a double portion to Hannah because he loved her,  
though the LORD had made her barren.** 1 Samuel 1:5

Barrenness can be defined in many ways, not just the inability to have a child. Barrenness can mean brokenness, unfulfilled dreams, empty parts of your heart, dashed hopes, neglected passions, anything that hasn't turned out the way you'd planned. Like Hannah, we all grieve the areas of our life that aren't showing signs of growth.

The important thing about grief is to know where to take it: to God. He can handle the full weight of our grief, the total measure of our frustration and disappointment. Go ahead, vent. But in the wake of that expression of emotion, it is crucial to maintain an open, trusting heart. Barrenness is not always a permanent state for those who trust in the Lord; Hannah later had a son named Samuel.

Pour your heart out to the Lord and dedicate your future fulfillment to him. Have faith as each chapter of your story is written. Our God specializes in the impossible.

Kristin Armstrong

# LOVING JESUS

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**Everyone is looking for you.** Mark 1:37

When we begin relationships, they are sometimes based on what an individual does for us. For example, we might have a connection with someone who helps us at work or assists in carpooling our children. But if the relationship stays on this level, it remains limited. Friendships deepen when we begin to appreciate individuals for themselves. When we start to value a person for who he or she simply is, the relationship moves to a deeper level.

So, too, our relationship with Jesus. In this gospel, “everyone is looking” for Jesus because he healed people. Such miracles were exciting, and a large crowd began to follow him. But eventually, Jesus asks a demanding question: “Do you love me?” The saints eventually came to love Jesus, not for what he did for them, but simply for who he is.

Today, when you have a quiet moment, “look” at the Lord in your heart and “see” his radiant beauty...and love him, just for himself.

Msgr. Stephen J. Rossetti

# SOMETHING BETTER

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**Does the LORD so delight in holocausts and sacrifices  
as in obedience to the command of the LORD?  
Obedience is better than sacrifice... 1 Samuel 15:22**

Obedience may well be better than sacrifice, but it's also a whole lot harder. To write a check, spend a few hours of service to a cause or even open my house in hospitality is a small sacrifice compared to trying to love my neighbor or pray for those who persecute me. (Okay, I'm not really persecuted, but I am mightily annoyed at times.)

When obedience is required by Church laws and regulations, it's easy to chafe under the restriction. Can't I just tithe, and then do what I want? No, says Samuel, you can't—not if you want to delight the Lord.

And not if you want any relationship that isn't merely one-sided. Obedience means yielding our will, a most prized possession, for the sake of a demand that comes from outside of us. That, in itself, can be a healthy exercise in acknowledging something greater than ourselves.

*Lord, help me to live, not just hear, your word.*

Mark Neilsen