

Fr. Perozich comments —

I read these same readings from the breviary every year. Still I feel like the man in the letter of James who looks at himself in a mirror and quickly forgets what he looks like. The teaching of the readings that I so admired that day quickly fade from memory and practice. I guess that this is part of the human condition, a sort of “Alzheimers” where human beings forget everything but the grudges.

- *To pray is to converse with God.*
- *It is a union with God*
- *It requires some active participation to be intent on God*
- *It can be at fixed times and practices or continuous throughout the day.*
- *Prayer reaches out to God in the every day duties, a real devotion to God.*
- *It makes the soul cling to God.*
- *It is a longing for God with the pleading of the Holy Spirit.*

Perhaps my spiritual Alzheimers will fade a bit this year, and with sustained effort on my part, I'll be intent on prayer for a longer time beyond today, as St. John Chrysostom teaches, before I come back to this reading next year to remind myself to pray always.

John Chrysostum, bishop

(Supp. Hom. 6 De precatone: PG 64, 462-466)

Prayer is the light of the spirit

Prayer and converse with God is a supreme good: it is a partnership and union with God. As the eyes of the body are enlightened when they see light, so our spirit, when it is intent on God, is illumined by his infinite light. I do not mean the prayer of outward observance but prayer from the heart, not confined to fixed times or periods, but continuous throughout the day and night.

Our spirit should be quick to reach out toward God not only when it is engaged in meditation; at other times also, when it is carrying out its duties, caring for the needy, performing works of charity, giving generously in the service of others, our spirit should long for God, and call him to mind, so that these works may be seasoned with the salt of

God's love, and so make a palatable offering to the Lord of the universe. Throughout the whole of our lives we may enjoy the benefit that comes from prayer if we devote a great deal of time to it.

Prayer is the light of the spirit, true knowledge of God, mediating between God and man. The spirit, raised up to heaven by prayer, clings to God with the utmost tenderness; like a child crying tearfully for its mother, it craves the milk that God provides. It seeks the satisfaction of its own desires, and receives gifts outweighing the whole world of nature.

Prayer stands before God as an honored ambassador. It gives joy to the spirit, peace to the heart. I speak of prayer, not words. It is the longing for God, love too deep for words, a gift not given by man but by God's grace. The apostle Paul says: "We do not know how we are to pray but the Spirit himself pleads for us with inexpressible longings."

When the Lord gives this kind of prayer to someone; he gives him riches that cannot be taken away, heavenly food that satisfies the spirit. One who tastes this food is set on fire with an eternal longing for the Lord: his spirit burns as in a fire of the utmost intensity.

Practice prayer from the beginning. Paint your house with the colors of modesty and humility. Make it radiant with the light of justice. Decorate it with the finest gold leaf of good deeds. Adorn it with the walls and stones of faith and generosity. Crown it with the pinnacle of prayer. In this way you will make it a perfect dwelling place for the Lord. You will be able to receive him as in a splendid palace, and through his grace you will already possess him, his image enthroned in the temple of your spirit.