

Column020220

Companions on the Journey

February 2, 2020

Dear Friends,

Have you ever wished you knew how to pray better than you do? Ever wished that you had a deeper appreciation of the Scriptures or knew how to pray with the Scriptures? Ever struggle with just being able to talk to the Lord like you talk to your best friend? Many of us have. One of the things though is that each of these wishes is connected to something very possible, something very real. The Lord wants us to pray better, to love the Scriptures more and find meaning in them for our lives, to be able to speak with Him as if he were right there with us.

But He is right there with us. In the Eucharist. And actually, the Lord does speak to us and will speak to us, and in a way we can understand and appreciate. But it doesn't often happen while we are actually praying or at Mass. The Lord does hear though. He does listen. He does respond. In his time. In his own way. In the manner He chooses. Sometimes it is via a prompting that emerges from somewhere deep inside of us. At other times it will be while we are reading something and we are struck by a word or passage. There are moments when we see something—in human life or in nature—that moves us or touches us deeply. God is right there in that moment.

Sometimes it is something that we hear or something we observe. God reveals himself. At other times it is in the quiet of the moment or the quiet of our own inner thoughts. There is suddenly a grasping of meaning or a question bursts forth from within my heart. God is in all of this. But here's the thing. There really aren't any short cuts in any of this. There just is no substitute for spending time with Our Lord. Spending time with those we love—there is no substitute for this. Not spending time with those we love will have a deleterious effect on the relationship we say we want to cherish. Same is true in our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Years ago I remember reading a rabbi who said in a very succinct way: The secret of effective prayer is showing up! There is something very necessary about spending time with our living and loving God. This weekend we begin Forty Hours Devotions here at Saint Anthony's. I know you have a lot of things on your plate. I know that Sunday is Super bowl Sunday. I know that Monday begins another workweek. But I also know that if you come to spend some time with Our Lord—in worship and in prayer—it will go well for you. Dr. Antone Raymondo will speak about faith, forgiveness, healing of family wounds and brokenness. He will give his own witness. You will have an opportunity to hear Our Lord speak to your heart in his words. But in order for this to happen, you must leave your comfort level, the comfort of your own homes, the camaraderie of the super Bowl party and come to sit in quiet—and to pray.

Why don't you come to devotions Sunday night anyway? If you blow somebody's mind by choosing to tell them you are going to go spend some time in prayer rather than watch the Super Bowl, so be it. This is the 54th Super Bowl. How many memorable ones have there been? Last year's surely wasn't. Wishing you had a better relationship with Our Lord can be remedied by your gift of time. But it is sometimes at moments that aren't convenient. Yes, it is. But worth it.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry