

October 17, 2021

## Learning to be the Lord's PAL!

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

First I want to thank you for all the prayers and Mass intentions that Dad received from all of you during his recent recovery. I am grateful that our Lord is helping him heal and recover well from the unexpected surgery and I know it was in no small part due to the additional prayers. I am so profoundly grateful.

Since Dad's surgery, I have been very good about trying to connect with my folks via Messenger or telephone each day, but last week I had a couple of particularly full days and there was a day that I didn't touch bases with Dad. He called me in the evening and said, "Hi, Sis, what are you up to? I hadn't heard from you today, and I just wanted to catch up!" We proceeded to have a nice visit, I got the latest on his progress and how he was feeling and what he was doing. When I hung up the phone, I couldn't help but think of a couple of things; first, I love that my Dad called just to catch up and secondly, it made me think about how God must feel when He doesn't hear from me on a regular basis. The relationship between a father and a child is so strong and it requires daily nurturing to keep it healthy. We have a Father in Heaven that loves us and wants to catch up and be in a relationship with us and that is what ***falling into the habit of prayer*** helps us to do.

I know we all pray in different ways, but I was recently watching a presentation by a couple of my favorite Franciscan Friars, and they were discussing how to develop the habit of prayer. They had several really good suggestions including get up in the morning and set morning time aside for prayer. Doing this allows you to invite the Lord into your life at the beginning of the day and be part of your day with you. I know how difficult that can be sometimes, especially if you have overslept or you burn your eggs in the morning or spill your coffee on the front of your shirt and need to change, but I know that when I do start my day with prayer, everything (even those morning disasters) are just easier for me.

The friars also suggested having a special place to pray. Maybe you like coming to church to pray or maybe you have a special prayer space at home. I just know that having a special place for prayer helps to dissolve distractions of the world so that I can really concentrate on my conversations with God.

The friars came up with an easy acronym to help us with our prayer habit based on our desire to have a deep friendship with the Lord. We want to be the Lord's **PAL**. A little corny, I know, but I liked where they were going with it: ***Praise, Ask, Listen***. Each day we should give PRAISE and thanksgiving to the Lord. By starting our day with praise for the beautiful sunshine or rain that waters our plants, for the ability to get out of bed, for our health, our family, our friends, our work. There are so many things in our lives that we can give praise and thanksgiving for each day and by starting with a word of gratitude toward God, our hearts are naturally lifted by the

many blessings that we have acknowledged. The second part of being the Lord's PAL is ASKING. We all have so many things that we want to ask the Lord for, but these Friars suggest that we begin by asking the Lord for help. Help with developing our prayer habit, help with overcoming sin, or help loving someone who may be difficult to love. Or perhaps asking for help to be a witness to our faith. The third one, and the one that I know I struggle with the most is LISTENING. Relationships require listening and trying to listen to what our Lord is telling me can often be frustrating as I feel like we don't always speak the same language or He is elusive about what he is telling me. The friars suggest that listening begins with God's word, scripture. They challenge us to read, even just a small scripture verse, each day and really think about what the Lord is trying to tell us. Sometimes it is easier than that and you can hear in your heart what the Lord is asking for you, but certainly keeping our eyes fixed on Christ and listening to his desire for us is key in being his *pal*.

I like that acronym (as silly as it is) and I am going to try to work on being a better PAL to our Lord!

Peace+

Lorrie