

A play to say a way to pray today With the Apostleship of Prayer

(to be used in meetings, masses and such, for AP promotion) (hopefully, but not necessarily, the one who explains about the AP should be a man (or both), so as to favor the idea that this is not a thing only for ladies)

Hello!

Hello, how have you been?

Fine, and you?

Better than ever! I have discovered something very interesting for my spiritual life that is helping me live a happier and fuller life.

Really? I think I need that too.

It is called the Apostleship of Prayer.

Please tell me about it.

The Apostleship of Prayer offers you a simple, profound way of life, rooted in our Baptism and in the Eucharist, and united with the heart of Jesus Christ.

OK, that sounds interesting, how do I practice this new way of life?

Very simply, it means offering yourself and every day of your life to God. That's all.

Tell me more. How do I offer myself?

As you begin your day, you make a prayer of offering from your heart. This can be in your own words or by means of a standard Daily Offering prayer. With this prayer you offer your day to God and ask that every moment be united to the perfect offering of Jesus that is celebrated in the Mass. You begin your day by saying and praying that you will do everything in him and with him. With this daily practice, your own life, along with the lives of millions of other people making the same offering, is taken into Jesus' heart.

That sounds beautiful, but how will offering myself to God change my life?

The Daily Offering prayer is mainly a *desire*, an act of the will. You are simply saying that you want your day to be his. You sincerely ask for the grace to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than by your own self-centered tendencies. Since we are always susceptible to our weaknesses, we cannot guarantee

the results. Yet through this prayer of offering we can consciously express our *desire* to unite our lives with Jesus' life, to place our hearts into his heart. This offering is an expression of your desire to be generous and to lead a saintly life.

But I am not a very religious or holy person, I have sins like everybody. How does God receive my offering?

Gladly, no doubt! He sees the sincerity of your offering, and will always welcome you into his loving heart. Despite your limitations, your life, when united to Christ in this way, plays a role in the salvation of all people. By your heartfelt offering and by the love you put in it, you take part in his mission of bringing about the Kingdom of God.

What does all this have to do with the Eucharist? Is there a connection?

Actually, we call this spirituality a way of "living the Eucharist" because it unites us to Jesus' way of life, which was always Eucharistic.

I don't understand, can you explain this better?

Jesus was always giving his life to others, in all he did. He is the exact opposite of a selfish person. His death was the fullest expression of his giving of himself to us, for us. At the Last Supper, he represented this self-giving in his words and gestures: "Take this all of you, and eat it: this is my body, which will be given up for you". Then he invited us to do as he does: "Do this in memory of me." Do what? Make in each Eucharist an offering of our own lives for others. Each time you offer your life to God for others you express Eucharistic spirituality.

I see, so we should try to live always in this attitude. But won't this be difficult for us?

Good point there. In fact, it is not only difficult, but impossible. Yet!... yet miraculously possible in the same way that a piece of bread and a sip of wine can become God's living presence for us. It is not something we achieve by ourselves. We need to understand that this way of life we call *Living the Eucharist* is indeed a gift.

It is the gift of the Father who gives us his Son.

It is the gift of the Son who comes to us and invites to be his friends.

It is the gift of the Holy Spirit who transforms the bread and wine into Christ

and transforms the community into the body of Christ,

and sends us out to help him transform the world into his likeness.

Ok, now I'm starting to get it. So we could say that our daily offering prayer is a humble plea asking for this gift.

Perfect! You ask for it, you receive it, you live it, you give it to others. To offer your life united to Jesus in the Mass is to ask the Holy Spirit to unite your life to his, so you may be transformed into Christ for others. In this way, you learn to live your whole life as Eucharist. The Mass will begin for you in the morning when you awake, and will continue all day long as you offer everything to the Father, united with Jesus' perfect offering.

You have mentioned that Apostleship of Prayer is rooted in the heart of Jesus. What does this have to do with the Eucharist?

Living the Eucharist by means of the daily offering aligns your life with the self-giving attitude that was always in Jesus' heart. In the Eucharist you receive the Holy Spirit that transforms your heart to the likeness of Jesus' heart. But there is more.

Jesus gave his life, his body and his blood, for love of us all. He died to bring together the entire family of God. In his heart we all meet; we all fit; we are all welcome. Here he offers the whole of humanity to his Father along with himself. As we pray our daily offering, we bring our family, our neighbors, our work, the poor... in short, all of humanity, into his heart. The Eucharist is the foretaste of the heavenly banquet of all nations, of all peoples, gathered and sheltered under God's loving protection.

I like this idea, it shows how big and generous Jesus' heart is, and how we can find it right here in the mass.

Yes, we find him here, but it doesn't stop there. The Eucharist is also the place where we bring the whole world into Jesus' heart. We in turn are sent from the Eucharist back to the world, with Jesus, taking his heart to all who need him. Jesus is present in every mass giving his life for the salvation of the world and for the prayer intentions of the whole world. These intentions are symbolized and made concrete for us in the Pope's monthly intentions.

I have seen those monthly intentions in some catholic publications. Can you tell me more about the Popes intentions, and why we should pray for them?

The Apostleship of Prayer teaches you to unite your personal mission with the whole Church's mission. How is this? Well, as you should know, by baptism you are a priest. By intercession you bring your brothers and sisters before the Lord. By your daily offering you give your life to God, willing to collaborate in his mission. By praying for the Holy Father you join your life and your prayer to the whole Church's mission and prayer. Each month he proposes two of his main concerns, asking people to join him in prayer. You should learn about and pray every day for these intentions. You can be part of a huge family, about 40 million people, in 90 countries, that follow the Apostleship of Prayer.

Well, I like all this very much, and I am eager to start living it. I think it is a good way to give meaning to my daily life. It will help me overcome my selfishness, my loneliness and sadness sometimes, for I will feel united to Jesus and to many other people. To finish, can you suggest what words I could use to offer myself to God every day?

Express your offering in the way that is most meaningful to you. Use your own words or those of someone else. Our daily Morning Offering could be done through this prayer, which we will all repeat now after me, sentence by sentence, giving full meaning to what we say:

*God, our Father, I offer You my day. (everyone repeats)
I offer You my prayers, thoughts, words,
actions, joys, and sufferings
in union with Your Son Jesus' Heart,
Who continues to offer Himself in the Eucharist
for the salvation of the world.
May the Holy Spirit, Who guided Jesus,
be my guide and my strength today
so that I may witness to Your love.
With Mary, the mother of our Lord and of the Church,
I pray especially for this month's intentions
as proposed by the Holy Father.*

I think this will help me understand that my life can be lived as a service to others.

Of course, this is a spirituality of prayer and service. We don't just pray and then remain inactive. This prayer changes us. Uniting our hearts with the heart of Jesus in the Eucharist leads us to share his concern for all people. Living a Eucharistic life by making a total offering of ourselves every day leads us to pray for and to serve others. It helps us become generous followers of Christ, sent out to make the world a better place.

Thank you, this has been very interesting. I think there are many people here that would love to know more about this.

Sure, after the mass [or meeting] we will hand out a leaflet with more information, and we will register those who wish to receive our publications at their homes. Thank you very much.

(Claudio Barriga, sj)