

Distractions can be useful in prayer

Ever wonder how you can be riveted by a cheap novel or mindless TV show for hours, but spend no more than a few minutes in prayer before your mind wanders?

Believe it or not, distractions can be useful in enriching our prayer life. Our minds wander to those things that are really important to us. We might as well admit to them and make them a part of our prayer.

For example, if your prayer wanders, bring it back to the point ... "Lord, thank you for the beautiful gift of my home and its comfort. Of course, I better clean out the gutters or the roof will leak all over the furniture. That would be bad, even

if the furniture isn't as nice as my neighbor's. They have so much money. But forgive me Lord for feeling envy, and help me to be grateful for what I have. Also help me to show my neighbors the love of Christ, the only possession worth having."

And so on.

The idea is to acknowledge the distraction and ask God's help in overcoming its source. Then use it as a tool to get back on track.

Remember, prayer is not a rigid routine we have to get right. It's a conversation with someone we love who loves us back.



Feasts & Celebrations

April 2 - St. Francis of Paola (1507). After a pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome when he was thirteen, St. Francis became a hermit in a cave. Others joined him and formed the Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi. While he preferred solitude, St. Francis was called to active service and influenced international relations. He was canonized for blending active and contemplative service.

April 4 - St. Isidore of Seville (636). Born to a family of three other saints, St. Isidore succeeded his brother as archbishop of Seville. St.

Isidore established seminaries in every diocese, and founded schools that taught every branch of learning. Some of his writings helped shape the spiritual outlook of the Middle Ages.

April 7 - St. John Baptist de la Salle (1719). At a time when only the rich were educated, St. John devoted his life and fortune to educating the poor. He formed the Brothers of the Christian School, a successful community of educators. Pope Pius XII named him the patron of school teachers.

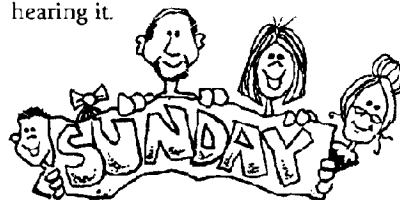


Q & A What should I do to keep the Lord's Day holy?

Sunday - the Lord's Day - is the day of the week we set aside just for God. We gather at Mass to listen to his Word and take part in the Eucharist. Our activities on Sunday should center around thanking God for our blessings and promise of salvation.

One of the best ways we can show God how much we love him is to show love to each other. Sunday is a great day to devote to the care of relatives and friends, which may be tough during the week. Performing works of mercy is also a fitting observation of the day.

Sunday is also a time for the reflection and meditation necessary for our spiritual growth. It can be the one day in the week during which we slow down and listen for the voice of our Father, and actually have a chance of hearing it.

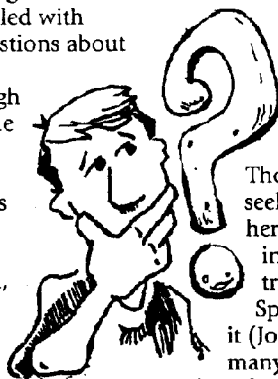


from Scripture

John 20:19-31, Doubting Thomas.

Have you ever struggled with doubts or troubling questions about your faith? Do you sometimes feel that tough questions aren't welcome or acceptable to people of faith?

Even though Thomas was with Jesus for three years and witnessed the great miracles first hand, he still needed time, evidence, and first-hand observation before he could accept the Resurrection. Far from rebuking him, Jesus invited Thomas to do



whatever was necessary to convince himself of the truth.

It is also interesting to note that in spite of his misgivings, Thomas had not left the group, nor was he excluded by them: despite his non-conformance. As a result, he was able to find the answers in the context of that early church.

This encounter with Thomas suggests that every seeker is welcome to bring his or her doubts to God. He delights in guiding our search for the truth and promised that the Spirit would aid those who seek it (John 16:13). God knows that many faithful people who probe their doubts and fears finally reach the truth - and faith in the truth is what Christ desires for us.

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