

Dear Padre,

When I'm trying to pray, I can't stop thinking about my to-do list. How do I keep my mind from racing when I pray?

Most spiritual directors encourage a person to enter gently into solitude and prayer. Real conversation with any friend begins with warm acknowledgment of that friend's presence, so as you sit or kneel, acknowledge that you are in a sacred place and that God is present.

Several techniques can help us find interior silence and solitude. Many people find it helps to sit in a comfortable position and pay close attention to their breathing. Taking slow, deep breaths relaxes our minds and hearts.

When repeated, a sacred word like *Jesus* or *Abba* can focus our attention and help us let go of the distractions that can so easily crowd our consciousness.

Another technique is to take a few moments to find quiet, then read a passage from Scripture. Many people choose the Gospel passage of the day; others read a Gospel through from beginning to end by reading a short passage each day. Other excellent techniques to focus your praying include the Church traditions of *lectio divina* as well as the imaginative prayer method advocated by St. Ignatius.

True conversation goes both ways. One way God speaks to us is through the word. Reading Scripture as part of our conversation with God is a good way to be sure we don't do all the talking.

Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Prayer often coexists with distraction. Indeed, the human mind struggles to dwell for long on a single thought. We all experience this constant whirlwind of images and illusions in perpetual motion, which accompanies us even during sleep. And we all know that it is not good to follow this inclination toward disorder.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, MAY 19, 2021



Our Parish Community

March 27, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Lent (C)

Jos 5:9a, 10-12

2 Cor 5:17-21

Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-18A



Rejoice!

Today is *Laetare Sunday*, the *Lenten Sunday to rejoice*. We are encouraged to rejoice, not because Lent is half over, but because something extraordinary has occurred. All three readings for today applaud some wondrous and joyous occasion.

The reading from Joshua notes the end of the Israelites' grueling Egyptian and wilderness experience. They settled in Canaan and now celebrated the anniversary of their deliverance by offering to God in gratitude the fruits of their own harvest. The people who once were landless have now been made anew. This is surely a reason to rejoice.

Paul's words to the Corinthians were reason for great rejoicing. He assured them that, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, their sinfulness was not held against them. Instead, they were now reconciled with God. They were a new creation. This too is reason to rejoice.

Jesus' story about the merciful father touches every

life. The young son turned away from his home and his family, yet it was the father's actions that brought about the reconciliation. The story did not explicitly say that he simply forgave his son. More than that, it says that he was filled with deep compassion for him—a compassion that restored the bond between them. This compassion brought the son who was dead back to life. There is no greater reason for rejoicing.

God has brought us into a new land, has made each of us a new creation, has brought us back to the embrace of our Father. And so, we rejoice.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ *Think of a time when a severed relationship was repaired. Be grateful.*
- ★ *What might you do to repair a situation of alienation in your life?*