



"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: February 11, 2016 Spiritual Disciplines – Daily Office

Yesterday we marked a special holy day in the church – Ash Wednesday. As we came forward, our clergy made the sign of the cross on our foreheads with the words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” With these words, we were reminded of our mortality – a result of our fallen condition. However, we were also reminded that because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, his death and resurrection, we share with him in his victory over death, and we will enjoy him eternally in heaven.

As always, the question is: how should we live until we die or Christ comes again? This lent we will be exploring the spiritual disciplines as a means of preparing for our life with Jesus, both in this world and in the world to come.

This week I’d like to focus on the discipline of praying the Daily Office. Prior to the Reformation, praying the offices was the purview of disciplined clergy and of religious communities. Archbishop Cranmer desired to introduce this discipline to all people - lay and clergy alike - and in doing so, teach people both to pray and to read the Holy Scriptures. What a revolutionary idea, and what fruit this revolution has born!

The Daily Offices - known as Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline - are made up of Canticles, Psalms, Scripture lessons, the Apostles Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Intercessory Prayers, and Prayers for Mission. While this may sound daunting at first, it generally takes about 15 minutes when you first start doing it, and can lead to a half hour or so once you are prepared to really spend time with the Lord.

There are wonderful resources on the Internet that will lead you through the services. I recommend Mission Saint Clare at <http://www.missionstclare.com>

If you are using your prayer book and need some guidance, I encourage you to sit down with your clergy and allow them to instruct you.

The benefits of praying the Daily Offices are manifold: spending time in prayer with the Lord, learning the scriptures, and regularly praying for others all help to mold and shape us, and lead us to greater maturity in the Lord! The discipline of praying the offices has been a part of my daily routine - and that of my family - for my entire adult life. If, for whatever reason, I am unable to pray the office, I feel something lacking in my day.

A blessed Lent to you all!

Bishop Menees