



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB, CAM

Litany for the New Year

One awareness I've come to accept over the years is, as we or our situations change, so too does our prayer. At first this may not sound right, prayer should be the one constant in life. However what I am speaking about is the "how" of prayer not prayer itself. *How* we pray needs to shift, grow and change, but we often are afraid to let old ways go and embrace the new. Our bodies are good indicators, they know what is working and what has become obsolete.

The frustration, confusion, uncertainty and angst of these pandemic times have awakened an ancient form of prayer which sustains me day and night – walking or sitting, doing or being – the prayer of litany. The Catholic tradition has many forms of litany in its liturgy and devotions – the great Litany of the Saints, the litany of the Sacred Heart, of the Holy Name of Jesus, of Loreto, of St. Joseph, the Divine Praises to mention a few. Litany, I suspect, comes from our Jewish roots, it was also popular in the Celtic Church, the cantor, presider or leader calling out a supplication and the congregation responding. The Kyrie Eleison is a perfect example.

Over the years I've developed my own litanies, a list of things for which I'm grateful, especially at night when I can't sleep. "Thank you for my mattress, flannel sheets, the fire in the stove, rain on the roof, shelter, health, life, belief and for waking me up to thank you." The list goes on and on until sleep returns. I also have walking litanies and a people litany (all whom have asked for prayer, I call out by name).

The litany, if I can call it that, which is my bedrock comes from reading Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God*. It has four parts:

Do what you do for Jesus and out of love,

Keep talking to God, telling Her how much you love Her, sharing everything with the Beloved,

Accepting what is, saying "yes" to where and how you find yourself now,

Trusting God completely.

These four steps have become my "go-to" prayer or litany. The reason I share this is, because I wonder if, as we step into a New Year with all its complexity, instead of a New Year's resolution, what about trying a New Year's prayer? I'm reminded of the words of Dom. Pedro Casaldáliga which I had printed on my Solemn Profession card:

"At the end of the road they will ask me;
Have you lived? Have you loved?
And, not saying a word,
I will open my heart full of names"

A blessed and peace filled New Year,

Michael

John O'Donohue, in *Bless the Space Between Us*, gives an example of a litany from the ancient Celtic Church and a permission to go ahead and compose our own.

I arise today

In the name of Silence
Womb of the Word,
In the name of Stillness
Home of Belonging,
In the name of the Solitude
Of the Soul and the Earth.

I arise today

Blessed by all things,
Wings of breath,
Delight of eyes,
Wonder of whisper,
Intimacy of touch,
Eternity of soul,
Urgency of thought,
Miracle of health,
Embrace of God.

May I live this day

Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in love.

Michael news

Br. Joshua from the Hermitage died rather unexpectedly after a massive stroke, may he already be at the Banquet. Early in the New Year, monks from the other three houses will meet at the Hermitage for the feast of the Epiphany. This is a biannual gathering, an enjoyable moment and sharing.

Work continues on the final details to launch the *Levanté* retreat. Every day seems to add something to the list but we're getting there. More soon.

Michael also shared that Santa Cruz, California has been doused with abundant rain of late. Everyone and everything is rejoicing.

Free shipping continues

Response to our December free shipping offer has been terrific, so we're holding it over for another month.

Journals are the perfect companions to the retreat recordings. Visit: <https://hermitfish.com/retreat-journals>

CD sets of some of Michael's retreats are still available. Visit: <https://hermitfish.com/retreats-cd-sets>

Gift Cards are available in several denominations. Check them out at: <https://hermitfish.com/gift-cards/digital-gift-card>

Downloads of all 13 of Michael's retreats (5 talks ea) are available. Visit: <https://hermitfish.com/audio-retreats>

Grateful for your support

Michael wishes to thank everyone for your continued prayers, good wishes and support. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475

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