

Before the prayer. I ask that you take a pause and in your mind look back over your day from the moment you first woke up ... thinking of what you did

For example

Think about the moment you first woke up.

What did you think about in that first moment?

What was the first thing you looked at?

If we had time we would walk through the whole day --- reviewing everything that brought you to this moment – and try to list everything (being as specific as you can be).

Look at it. Are you usually doing more than one thing at once? Some do two or three things at the same time.

We live in a time where people are constantly multitasking which is cultivating a multi-focused lifestyle. Meaning we are more often than not totally giving our full attention to anything and sadly to anyone. Think about that we don't give our full attention to our spouse, our children or God.

Look at the times spent with family is the whole family engaged with each other or is each family member attached to something else: TV, phone, ipad, etc.

Where was total family time ... time when your family was entirely focused on one another?

Look over the day where was prayer for you ... for your family?

When was God invited in?

Saying "O my God" while driving on 270 does not count.

If we want to lower anxiety we have to eliminate where possible the things and behaviors that give rise to anxiety.

If we want God to be the center of our lives we have to make room for God and have to take time and focus on God.

What is the most dangerous room in many homes?

One of the most dangerous places for your children is often their bedroom – if they have access to the internet either through their computers, tablets or phones. It is there that they have the most secrets from you as parents. It is there that they often face great temptation.

Reclaim that room ... make it a safe place for your children. Make it what bedrooms were meant for: a place of rest and restorative sleep, a place to feel safe. Some of us might have to do the same thing for our own bedrooms. Stop pussy-footing around it or making excuses.

Is there a cross in their room ... in your room? If you want your family to be aware of God's presence as part of the family then you have to be willing to do what you have to do to make that happen. Today we need visuals... get a crucifix or cross, a statue of their patron saint.

Don't send your children to bed. Go to the room with them, when they are in the bed, make the sign of the cross on their forehead. As parents you need to bless your children. Ask God to watch over them through the night to keep them safe and peaceful. Tell them you love them ... **let yours be the last voice they here when you turn off the light.** Not the internet, not a chatroom, not text messages, instagram, or snapschat,. Let it be your voice. Enfold them in your love and entrust them into God's love for the night.

In a very good article entitled *The Poison We Choose* –we read:

To see this epidemic (opioid) as simply a pharmaceutical or chemically addictive problem is to miss something: the despair that currently makes so many want to fly away. Opioids are just one of the ways Americans are trying to cope with an inhuman new world where everything is flat, where communication is virtual, and where those core elements of human happiness — faith, family, community

— seem to elude so many. Until we resolve these deeper social, cultural, and psychological problems, until we discover a new meaning or reimagine our old religion or reinvent our way of life, the poppy will flourish.

I would expand this from opioid addiction to the addiction to all forms of social media. Technology has many wonderful and enriching advantages. Yet it is luring us and our children into some dark, unhealthy and dangerous places. In some instances it is stealing our children from us and us from our family bit by bit. If our children or if we spend more time communicating with social media then we do with our family then “HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!” You are the parent get a hold on it and get control of it – whether that be in yourself or in your children. Your very presence here tonight says ... “I want to be a good parent (and you are) and I want to learn how to do it.” We have to reclaim our core values of faith, family and community. It will not be easy –and our children will resist and you will resist –but it will be worth it. Don’t think it is just the children. I have a feeling there were some who have been checking their phones even while we were having this conversation.

Tonight, we are going to have a very simple prayer. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray he gave them the Our Father .. it comes from the very heart of Jesus and it is the prayer we will use. I ask that you just sit quietly for a moment ... let yourself remember that we are, as always, in the presence of God. I will say the prayer and I am asking that you just let the words move around in your heart.

Our Father

Oh wait .. I am glad you are using this prayer. It is my favorite. It has everything you need and I mean **everything**. It sums up the entire message of the gospel.

I love the opening “Our Father” you are calling me by name! it could also be “Our Giver of Life” you should know what that means. After all, you are mothers and father gathered her. You have gathered because you want what is best for your children. You gave them life and you want to continue to give them what they need to live life. That’s what I want for you.

Our Father .. do you believe that? Do you believe the “our” part. Believe it or not, I am the Father of everyone. That makes you brother and sister to each other, to everyone – despite their color, their ethnicity, their social standing, culture, religion, gender, politics, or lifestyle. I am the Creator and Father of everyone. I gave life to everyone.

Do you see me in those you meet? Do you look on others and see your brother or your sister? When you look at yourself do you see what I see – a beloved, deeply loved child of mine? We live in a world that has so forgotten this and as a result there is so much division, so much hatred, so much trouble.

[sigh and muse] “hmm ... Our Father...”

Okay ... go ahead with your prayer.

Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Yes, I am in heaven, and no doubt my name is holy. However, I am also within every single person.

– it does not matter if they accept that truth, acknowledge it,

love it or hate it, embrace it or deny it –none of that matters.

I have called each person by name. I dwell in every person, and because of that, every person is holy to me. I love each and every person and I will never abandon anyone. I am in you. I am around you. I am the very air you breathe. My name IS holy and by me creating you, that makes you holy.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

No problem my will is done in heaven I take care of that.

My will being done on earth involves you. I can't do it without you. You are integral to the whole process. You don't always accept that mission or you pay attention to it only if it is convenient or you have time. Sorry – it doesn't work that way. You have to be part of the process, I need you. You heard that correctly ... I WANT YOU. I NEED YOU.

Give us this day our daily bread

I am always ready to do that but you know what – you don't always ask me.

What did you ask me for today?

Did you need courage? Wisdom? Faithfulness in relationships? Guidance? Understanding? Help with your work? Help with relationships? What did you need to make it through today? Do you need resistance, patience, peace? What? Did you ask me for what you needed? Maybe you don't even know what you need. That's okay. I know. Invite me into your life.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Oh me ... this always gets misunderstood.

Here's the thing, my forgiveness for you or for others does not depend on your forgiveness to others. My forgiveness is endless and always at the ready. What is underneath this phrase is that you have to be willing to give and to receive forgiveness. It is your choice. Be open to forgive and be open to be forgiven. Forgiveness is one of the most essential things we need to do in life and it is so complicated.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

This got messed up in the translation. Pope Francis is helping to get everyone on the right track again...

“I don’t lead you into temptation.” Would you lead your siblings, friends, or children into danger? Neither would I.

A better translation is “do not let us enter into temptation.”

Sometimes you walk right into temptation, led by Satan ... whoever or whatever Satan is for you: it could be your greed,

your undo desire for power or more achievement,

maybe pornography, drugs, excessive social media use.

You choose your own evil, you choose and give into your own temptation! I am always ready to help you, but you don’t always want my help. “God give me strength” is a quick prayer that invokes my name and invites me in ... I want to protect you but you have to let me.

Amen

Amen. So be it! The Our Father is the only prayer you need. It is the summary of the Gospel... “Amen” confirms that:

I am the giver of all life and that makes you brothers and sisters to each other.

I am holy and I have made you holy – I live in you.

You need to ask me for what you need every day,

you need to always be ready to forgive and be forgiven

and you shouldn’t freely walk into your own temptation. When you are tempted ask me for help.

All of this is because I love you and all of this will give you life.

Say “Amen” with me!

AMEN

--Laura Ginikos and Sister Teresa



You have to do the work:

Challenge 1. Studies shows that we spend at least 4 hours every day on some type of social media. What if we reduce it by 30 minutes? The challenge is to spend 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening in prayer WITH your family instead of on social media.

1. Morning Prayer (15 minutes)

- a. Pray the Our Father
- b. Name anyone that you have difficulty as seeing as your brother or sister...
- c. Name anyone that you need to forgive, or ask forgiveness. "I am sorry" and "I love you" are two of the hardest things to say.
- d. What is "Daily bread" you need today. Wisdom? Understanding? Guidance? Insight? Help with a test. Peace of mind? etc.
- e. Is there a temptation you are facing at work? At school? At home? Do you need strength to resist it? (God, give me strength.) they are facing and need strength to resist it?
- f. Pray the Our Father again.

Night Time Reflection (fifteen minutes)

- a. Pray the Our Father

- b. Was there someone you saw/didn't see as a brother or sister acted/ or didn't act as a brother or sister towards today
- c. Did you offer or receive forgiveness from anyone
- d. What did they you do with the "daily bread" God gave you today?
- e. Where were you tempted.
- f. Pray the prayer together.



Challenge #2. Everyone go offline for the night ... put you and your phone to bed.

Get a basket and put it on your kitchen table of kitchen island. Everyone put their phone in it for the night. EVERYONE. Neither you nor your children need to have a phone in the bedroom. It fosters the addiction to it and all that it opens up to us and it also robs us of restorative sleep. If you think there will be emergency calls at night then either the mother or the father may have their phone – BUT ONLY TO RECEIVE OR MAKE AN EMERGENCY CALL. Be prepared for resistance to this suggestion (the more resistance, the more evidence you have to the addiction to it).