

October 10, 2025

Daily Reflections



LIFTING HEARTS AND MINDS ALWAYS

By Sister Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

As you begin this reflection, I invite you to center yourself with the song The Meditations of My Heart by Elaine Hagenberg:

***“May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord.
May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord.
O Lord, my Rock, O Lord, my Strength
O Lord, my God, and Redeemer.
O Lord, my Rock, O Lord, my Strength
O Lord, my God and Redeemer.”***

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. When an unclean spirit goes out of someone, it roams through arid regions searching for rest but, finding none, it says, ‘I shall return to my home from which I came.’ But upon returning, it finds it

swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits more wicked than itself who move in and dwell there, and the last condition of that man is worse than the first.”

LUKE 11:23-26

Reflection

I remember before I came to the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, I always started my prayers with the Cross on my forehead, on my lips, on my heart, and the regular Sign of the Cross (forehead, to the chest/heart, to the left shoulder, then right shoulder). I did it twice. There was a prayer that went with it:

*Lord, be on my mind, be on my lips, be in my heart, and my whole being.
Through the sign of the Cross, deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies.*

I opened my prayers with that for years because for me, the Cross was my identity. It signified that I am God's child; I live in God and God lives in me. It also signified I am a Catholic and I stand under the banner of Christ's Resurrection, who defeated evil for me and the entire world.

My perspective changed when I cared for my parents, especially when I took care of my mother on hospice at home. There were days I could not even sit down to pray formally. Many times, I skipped signing myself in the same manner as before. I learned to live my whole life as a prayer. Whatever I did, whether I was cleaning, or bathing my mom, or preparing food for my dad, it was a prayer. I could not sit down to read any religious book during the last years of my dad's life, and even during the 2-1/2 years mom was on hospice, I filled my mind and heart with God's words while watching TV Mass or when I read Mom's missal when someone brought the Eucharist. I tried to remember God's words and keep them in my heart.

I was struck by Jesus' words that if you leave a void in your mind or heart, the enemy might take up residence there.

It reminded me when I was growing up, my mother used to tell me not to let my hands or mind be idle. She said, normally the enemy attacks those who are idle. That was why my parents enrolled me in piano and dance lessons. My father always made sure that I helped with house chores.

I remember [one of Ron Rolheiser's blogs](#). He is a favorite. I quote: "All thoughts and feelings are valid material for prayer. Simply put: When you go to pray, lift up what's inside of you at that moment. ... If we do that, it makes it

easier for us to ‘pray always,’ as Scripture asks. What does this mean? Obviously, it doesn’t mean that we should always be at formal prayer, that we should ***strive to be full-time contemplatives, or even that we should seize every possible occasion we can to pray formally.*** To ‘pray always’ invites us rather to live our lives against a certain horizon. It doesn’t necessarily mean to stop work and go to formal prayer, important though that is at times. The point is rather that we need to do everything within the context of a certain awareness....”

Live with an awareness of God’s presence by lifting the eye of our minds and our hearts to God in prayer and thanksgiving at all times of the day. Being aware of God always helps us to stay the course and anchors us in God.



Image created by Sister Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

For Pondering

- What does it mean for you to be aware of God? Consider what might be holding you back from moving closer to him.
 - What does Jesus' warning about the "unclean spirit" returning to a swept-but-empty house (v. 24–26) teach you about dealing with temptation? What does it mean to fill the emptiness with good?
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For Prayer

Let us repeat the words in the song by Elaine Hagenberg:

*May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord.
O Lord, my Rock, O Lord, my Strength
O Lord, my God, and Redeemer.*

And add:

*Help me fill my mind, heart, soul, and all my being
with the thoughts of you, O Lord,
so that when your glory comes, I may reflect your beauty in me.
Amen.*

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