

Reflections

*International
Catholic Family Newsletter*

December 2021

Volume 77

Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

Do You Have Spiritual Goals?

Become a Spiritual Child of St Padre Pio

Josephine Bakhita, a Saint for Africa

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

The challenges in life are part of an ongoing journey for all of us, as we seek peace in ourselves and in our families. Sometimes the words of saintly people help direct us along this journey. Many of you reading this newsletter have favorite saints. There are many that help us and motivate us. Padre Pio and St. Therese have been at the top of many people lists of favorite saints.

Pio didn't ask for the stigmata or the many spiritual gifts he was given, but he did ask to serve Jesus in all humility.

That is an important aspect of serving Jesus, to serve him humbly and to reflect upon your spiritual goals each day.



Do you have spiritual goals? If not, perhaps the life of St. Therese of Lisieux might inspire you. Her diary shows that each night, she would reflect upon her day and the things she accomplished spiritually and in regard to the rules of her convent. Some days, she did not do very well and only accomplished a few things well.

However, she would recall each night the things of her day and eventually, she was rewarded with grace to accomplish all of her spiritual goals and obedience to the rules.

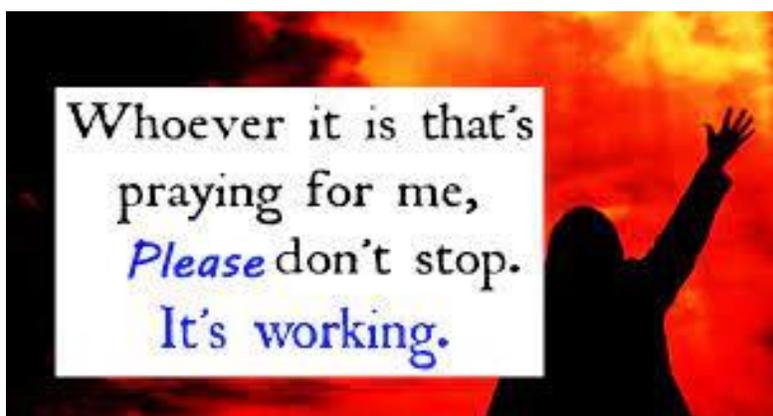
Her simple way of life was very much hidden from the world, but through her persistence towards holiness and her simple ways, she was named a doctor of the church by Pope John Paul II in 1997. Her messages were simple and to the heart.

One of her sayings seems to say it all. "If I did not simply live from one moment to another, it would be impossible for me to be patient, but I only look at the present, I forget the past, and I take good care not to forestall the future." ~ St. Thérèse de Lisieux

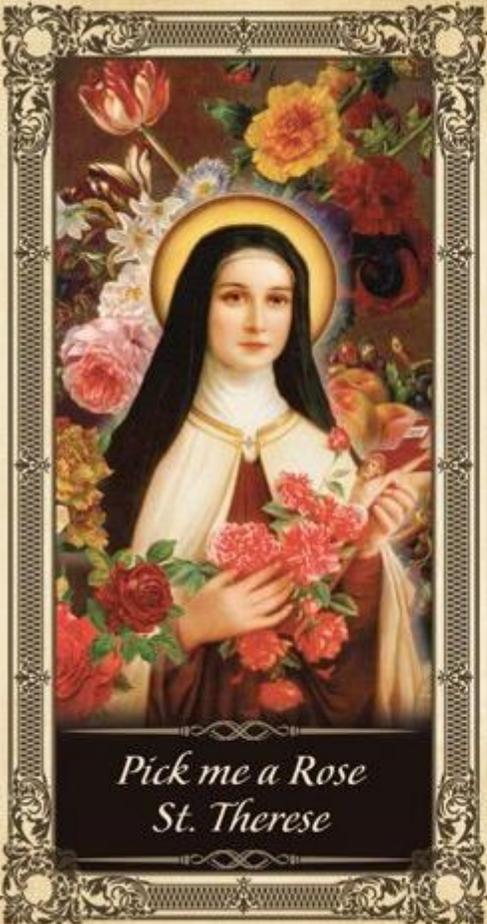
How do you start your spiritual goals? In the morning upon rising, be sure to say at least one Our Father and One Hail Mary for your intentions. Then ask Jesus for the grace to help you with one thing that seems to be a problem. Then each night upon retiring, remember that one thing you ask Jesus to help you with. And if you see progress, thank Jesus. If you don't see progress, thank Jesus anyway.

Remember Jesus' words to us in Luke 11:5-9, that we should be persistent in our prayers. **"And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.**

And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."



Continue in your prayers. Don't stop. Be persistent.



*Pick me a Rose
St. Therese*

**Pick me a Rose
St. Therese**

*St. Therese,
The Little Flower,
please pick me a Rose
from the Heavenly
Garden and send it to
me with a Message of
Love.*

*Ask God to grant
me the Favor I Thee
implore and tell Him
I will Love Him each
day More and More.*

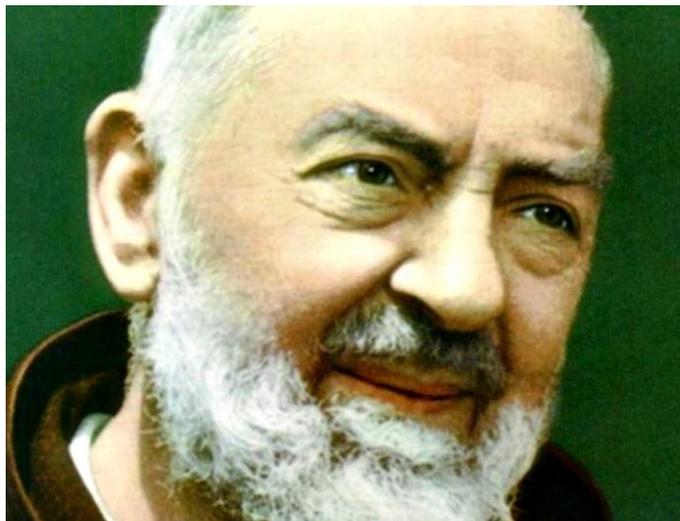
(The above prayer, plus, 5 Our Father's, 5 Hail Mary's, 5 Glory Be's, must be said on 5 successive days, before 11 A.M. On the 5th day, the 5th set of prayers having been completed, offer one more set — 5 Our Father's, 5 Hail Mary's, 5 Glory Be's.)

KE24-340 *Kilgarlin*

Be sure to teach your children to pray



Wise Words from St. Padre Pio...Must Read



Padre Pio will long be remembered for the countless spiritual insights, succinct spiritual direction, and constant encouragement he gave through his concise sayings and teaching. Here are 50 of them to think about.

1. Today's society does not pray. That is why it is falling apart.
2. **Prayer is the best weapon we possess, the key that opens the heart of God.**
3. **Pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless. Our Merciful Lord will listen to your prayer.**
4. Endeavor to unite the simplicity of children with the prudence of adults.
5. Do not be so given to the activity of Martha as to forget the silence of Mary. May the Virgin who so well reconciled the one with the other be your sweet model and inspiration.
6. It would be easier for the world to exist without the sun than without the Holy Mass.
7. A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.



8. How can the mother of Jesus, present at the foot of the Cross on Calvary, who offered her Son as Victim for the salvation of souls, be absent at the mystical Calvary of the altar?

9. In the spiritual life, he who does not advance goes backward. It happens as with a boat which always must go ahead. If it stands still the wind will blow it back.

10. You must speak to Jesus also with the heart, besides the lips; indeed, in certain cases you must speak to him only with the heart.

11. We must always have courage, and if some spiritual languor comes upon us, let us run to the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and let us place ourselves in the midst of the heavenly perfumes, and we will undoubtedly regain our strength.

12. Have you not for some time loved the Lord? Do you not love him now? Do you not long to love him forever? Therefore, do not fear! Even conceded that you had committed all the sins of this world, Jesus repeats to you, 'Many sins are forgiven thee because thou hast loved much!'

13. God loves man with an infinite love and when he punishes, he does so with reverence, almost fearing to hurt.

14. God "absolutely cannot reject the sincere desire to love him."

15. My past, O Lord, to your Mercy; my present, to your Love; my future, to your Providence!

16. The heart of our Divine Master has no more amiable law than that of sweetness, humility, charity. Often place your confidence in Divine Providence and be assured that sooner heaven and earth shall pass away



than that the Lord neglect to protect you.

17. Kneel down and render the tribute of your presence and

devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Confide all your needs to him, along with those of others. Speak to him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart, and give him complete freedom to work in you as he thinks best.

18. Do not worry over things that generate preoccupation, derangement and anxiety. One thing only is necessary: to lift up your spirit and love God.

19. Thank and sweetly kiss the hand of God that strikes you, because it is always the hand of a Father who strikes you because he loves you.

20. Where there is no obedience, there is no virtue; there is neither goodness nor love. And where there is no love, there is no God. Without God, we cannot reach Heaven. These virtues form a ladder; if a step is missing, we fall down.

21. Obey promptly! Do not consider the age or merit of a person. And in order to succeed, imagine you are obeying the Lord.

22. To fail in charity is like wounding God in the pupil of his eye. What is more delicate than the pupil of the eye? To fail in charity is like failing against nature.

23. The final purpose of meditation is the love of God and one's neighbor. Love the first with all your soul and without reservation, love the second as another self, and you will have arrived at the final purpose of meditation.

24. Temptations, discouragement and unrest are the wares offered by the enemy. Remember this: if the devil makes noise, it is a sign that he is still outside and not yet within. That which must terrify us is his peace and concord with the human soul.



25. The demon has only one door by which to enter into our soul: the will; there are no secret doors. No sin is a sin if not committed with the will. When there is no action of the will, there is no sin, but only human weakness.

26. That which comes from Satan begins with calmness and ends in storm, indifference and apathy.

27. The field of battle between God and Satan is the human soul. It is in the soul that the battle rages every moment of life. The soul must give free access to the Lord so that it be fortified by him in every respect and with all kinds of weapons; that his light may enlighten it to combat the darkness of error; that it be clothed with Jesus Christ, with his justice, truth, the shield of faith, the word of God, in order to conquer such powerful enemies. To be clothed with Jesus Christ it is necessary to die to oneself.

28. Do not fear. Jesus is more powerful than all hell. At the invocation of his name every knee in heaven, on earth and in hell must bend before Jesus; this is a consolation for the good and terror for evil.

29. When you are exposed to any trial, be it physical or moral, bodily or spiritual, the best remedy is the thought of him who is our life, and not think of the one without joining to it the thought of the other.

30. Remember that it is not feeling of guilt that constitutes sin but the consent to sin. Only the free will is capable of good or evil. But when the will sighs under the trial of the tempter and does not will what is presented to it, there is not only no fault but there is virtue.

31. The best means of guarding yourself against temptation are the following: watch your senses to save them from dangerous temptation, avoid vanity, do not let your heart become exalted, convince yourself of the evil of complacency, flee away from hate, pray whenever possible. If the soul would know the merit which one acquires in temptations suffered in patience and conquered, it would be tempted to say: Lord, send me temptations.



32. It is necessary to guard all your senses particularly your eyes: they are the means by which all the fascination and charm of beauty and voluptuousness enter the heart. When fashion, as in our time, is towards provocation and exposes what formerly was even wrong to think about, caution and self-

restraint must be exercised. Whenever necessary you must look without seeing and see without thinking about it.

33. Always live under the eyes of the Good Shepherd and you will walk unharmed through evil pastures.

34. You must remember that you have in Heaven, not only a Father but also a Mother... Let us then have recourse to Mary. She is all sweetness, mercy, goodness and love for us because she is our Mother.

35. To doubt is the greatest insult to the Divinity.

36. Walk in the way of the Lord with simplicity and do not torment your spirit. You must hate your defects but with a quiet hate, not troublesome and restless.

37. You should rather humble yourself before God than be distressed if he reserves for you the sufferings of his Son, and makes you experience your weakness. You should offer up to him the prayer of resignation and hope, even when you fall through frailty, and thank him for all the benefits with which he continually enriches you.

38. The sublime degree of humility is not only to recognize one's own abjection but to love it. I have chosen says the prophet to be abject in the house of God rather than to dwell in the houses of sinners.

39. **A good heart is always strong, it suffers, but with tears it is consoled by sacrificing itself for its neighbor and for God.**

40. God enriches the soul which empties itself of everything.

41. **The life of a Christian is nothing but a perpetual struggle against self; there is no flowering of the soul to the beauty of its perfection except at the price of pain.**

42. He who attaches himself to the earth remains attached to it. It is by violence that we must leave it. It is better to detach oneself a little at a time, rather than all at once. Let us always think of heaven.

43. **Let us bind ourselves tightly to the Sorrowful Heart of our heavenly Mother and reflect on its boundless grief of how precious is our soul.**

44. If we are calm and persevering, we shall find not only ourselves, but our souls, and with that, God Himself.

45. Love and fear must go united together, fear without love becomes cowardice. Love without fear becomes presumption. When there is love

without fear, love runs without prudence and without restraint, without taking care where it is going.

46. Pray that God will console you when you feel the burden of the Cross, for in doing so you are in no way acting against the will of God, but you are placing yourself beside the Son of God who asked His Father during the Agony in the Garden to send Him some relief. But if He is not willing to give it be ready to pronounce the same 'Fiat,' 'So be it,' that Jesus did.

47. Let the world turn topsy turvy, everything be in darkness and Mount Sinai all aflame, covered with lightning, thunder — God is with you. But if God lives in the darkness and Mount Sinai is all aflame, covered with lightning, thunder, and noise, will we not be safe near him?

48. Time spent in honor of God and for the salvation of souls is never badly spent.

49. Do you not see the Madonna always beside the tabernacle?

50. You must have boundless faith in the divine goodness, for the victory is absolutely certain.



Some of you reading this Newsletter are the Spiritual Children of Padre Pio.

Padre Pio stated that:

1. "I love my Spiritual Children as much as my own soul, and even more."
2. "To my Spiritual Children, my prayers for you will never be lacking."

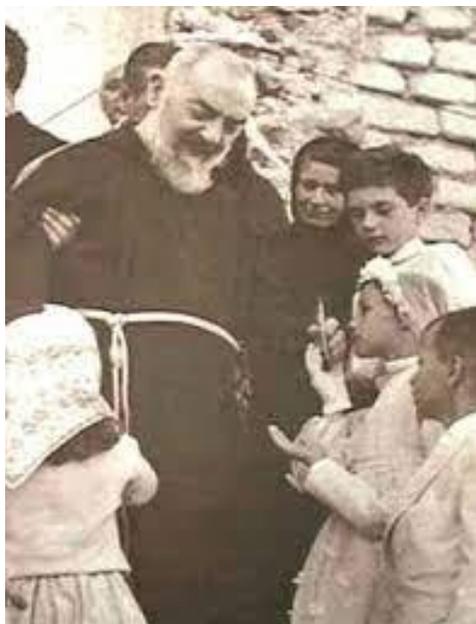
3. If one of my spiritual children ever goes astray, I shall leave my flock and seek him out."
4. "I shall stand at the gates of Paradise until all my spiritual children have entered."
5. "Once I take a soul on, I also take on their entire family as my spiritual children."

How to Become a Spiritual Child of St. Padre Pio

"I have made a pact with the Lord: when my soul has been purified in the flames of purgatory and deemed worthy to be admitted to the presence of God, I will take my place at the gate to paradise, but I shall not enter until I have seen the last of my spiritual children enter."

O Saint Padre Pio, holy bearer of the Wounds of Christ, accept us this day as your spiritual sons and daughters and keep us always on the narrow path by your intercession. And do thou, O our Spiritual Father, stay there at the Gates of Heaven until all of your spiritual children have entered through, even and including us. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Dear Padre Pio, I recall your promise to the Lord, "Lord, I will stand at the gates of heaven until I see all my spiritual children have entered."



Encouraged by your gracious promise, I ask you to accept me, and my family, as spiritual children and to intercede for my prayer requests (Here state your petitions) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Josephine Bakhita, a saint for Africa



During his first apostolic visit to Africa, as the airplane descended to Yaoundé airport in Cameroon on March 17, 2009, Benedict XVI said these powerful words: "Africa suffers disproportionately... The life of St. Josephine Bakhita offers a shining example of the transformation that an encounter with the living God can bring to a situation of great hardship and injustice. In the face of suffering or violence, poverty or hunger, corruption or abuse of power, a Christian can never remain silent."

Referring to the suffering that Josephine Bakhita endured in her life and the joyous ending of her story thanks to her faith in Christ, the encyclical on hope, *Spe Salvi*, presents her as an African symbol of Christian hope.

Josephine was abducted by Arabs between the ages of 7 and 9 and sold as a slave. She was cruelly treated and beaten every day until she bled from the wounds inflicted. She was also subjected to scarification and carried 144 deep scars on her body for her whole life.

However, one of her masters treated her differently. Left in the care of the Canossian sisters in Venice, she heard of a God above all others, who loved her and who had – like her – been subjected to suffering and degradation.

Her new-found knowledge of, and encounter with, God's love changed her life. From then on, she had hope. She became a Christian and a nun. She received the liberation of Christ (cf. *Spe salvi*, 3).

St. Josephine Bakhita can carry Africa's hope. Her story makes transparent the tragic destiny of Africa, which is still subjected to slavery and to degradation in many respects.

The life of this African saint is good news, especially for young Africans, because it announces where rebirth can emerge. The rebirth of Africa can only come from the humble and gentle, Christ. The path to freedom is the path of justice, reconciliation and peace.

Josephine Bakhita's story demonstrates that, from marginal places, history itself can change course; that faith gives meaning to life and directs it towards fulfilment.

At the heart of Africa's anguish, faced with the complex issues of development, Josephine Bakhita is a symbol of hope: she reveals that the path to reconciliation begins with a memory that has been transfigured.

In the deep night of Africa's crisis, Josephine Bakhita recalls to us the power of that undiminishing Light, which dissipates all darkness and irradiates with joy all those who allow it to reach them: the Light of Christ, the Hope of Africa.



St Bakhita says...Pray & God will do the rest.

**The International Catholic Family Newsletter
Is Published Monthly**

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

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**I am watching over you. Pray my children,
Pray, Pray, Pray, My Rosary For The Salvation of
Sinners**

