



From A Bishop's Journal (678)

“My Soul Longs for the Living God”

As I celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of my episcopal ordination, I want to repeat with all the believers these wonderful words from the psalm: “As the deer longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God. Athirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God? Those times I recall, now that I pour out my soul within me. When I went with the throng and led them in procession to the house of God, amidst loud cries of joy and thanksgiving.” This Psalm 41 (42) is, for me, a recollection and thanksgiving for everything that happened that January 9, 1994. It is also a cry of hope for everything that shall happen in the course of this my fourteenth year as bishop.

The Prayer of Consecration

I like to recall the prayer that Bishop Gerard Dionne made in the name of the entire Church, at the time of my episcopal ordination:

“God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you dwell in heaven, yet look with compassion on all that is humble. You know all things before they come to be; by your gracious word you have established the plan of your Church. From the beginning you chose the descendants of Abraham to be your holy nation. You established rulers and priests, and did not leave your sanctuary without ministers to serve you. From the creation of the world you have been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen. So now pour out upon this chosen one that power which is from you, the governing Spirit whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by him to the holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name,

Father, you know all hearts. You have chosen your servant for the office of bishop. May he be a shepherd to your holy flock, and a high priest blameless in your sight, ministering to you night and day; may he always gain the blessing of your favour and offer the gifts of your holy Church. Through the Spirit who gives the grace of high priesthood grant him the power to forgive sins as you have commanded, to assign ministries as you have decreed, and to loose every bond by the authority which you gave to your apostles. May he be pleasing to you by his gentleness and purity of heart, presenting a fragrant offering to you.”

Earnestly Desiring God

An unknown author quoted in the book, *Devant toi, Seigneur* (“Before, you, O Lord”), relates the following incident: A disciple went, one day, to meet his master and asked him: “Master, I want to seek God.” The master gazed at the young man without saying a word, and smiled at him. The young man came back to his master every day with the same question about religion and seeking God, but the master knew better than his disciple what that would entail. One very hot day, he asked the young man to accompany him to the river, for a swim. The young man dove into the water, and the master followed him and forcefully held him underwater. After the young man had fought for his life for a while, the master let go and asked his disciple what he had craved for the most while he was underwater. “Air,” replied the young man. “Do you desire God in the same way?” asked the master. “If you do, you will find Him immediately. But if you do not have this desire and thirst, you may well struggle with your mind, your lips and all your strength, you will not find religion. As long as this thirst is not in you, you are no better than an atheist. But then, very often the atheist is sincere, while you are not.” These are very hard words, to a neophyte.

A Consuming Flame

The Evangelist Saint Luke reports these words of Jesus: “I have come to light a fire on the earth. How I wish the blaze were ignited!” At my priestly ordination I had these words of Jesus inscribed on the paten of my chalice: fire would always remind me of these words. I would like to be aflame with the same desire for Jesus so that throughout my years as bishop I tell everyone I meet how much the lord loves us. “His love is from age to age!”

My One Desire

To express my only desire, to love God with all my heart, and my brothers and sisters for love of Him, I want to make mine, here, the 34 acts of love which Saint John Eudes wrote. This act of love is from the wonderful book, *Itinéraire spirituel pour aujourd'hui avec saint Jean Eudes* [“Spiritual Itinerary for Today with Saint John Eudes”]:

Yes, Jesus, I earnestly desire to love you; I no longer have any desire but this.

Farewell, all you other thoughts, inclinations, and any other will.

Oh you, only object of my love, make that I never love anything except through you and for you.

Jesus, divine Love, be the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the heart of my heart. May I live only in you and from you. May I subsist on you alone. May I never do anything except through you and for you.

Jesus, I want all my thoughts, words, and actions, my very breathing and the beating of my heart, every moment of my life, all these things be changed into as many voices through which I ceaselessly and eternally desire you. I love you. Yes, Lord Jesus, I love you, I love you!

My Wish, for the Fourteenth Anniversary as a Bishop

It is very simple: That together we welcome God's love for us, and that we reveal this love to our neighbour. As Pope Benedict XVI has said: *Deus Caritas est.*

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01-03-07

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