



The Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRAYER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS

By Barbara Mattick

**Gracious and Holy Father,
that Thy Son may be glorified,
give Thy Daughters:**

**Wisdom to Perceive Thee
Intelligence to Understand Thee,
Diligence to Seek Thee
Patience to Wait for Thee
Eyes to Behold Thee,
a Heart to Meditate upon Thee,
and a Life to Proclaim Thee.**

**By the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
Amen.**

Our Prayer is based on what is known as the Prayer of St. Benedict. Benedict lived from 480-547 A.D., and is the person who is considered one of the founders of monasticism.

INTRODUCTION

What is an order? How is an order different from an organization or a club? Members of an order follow a rule of life. The Daughters of the Holy Cross follow personal rules rather than one of the order. Members of orders also take a Vow. Vows are what set an order apart from any other kind of group. We Daughters take a four-part Vow, a lifelong Vow, of: **Evangelism** – literally, or by our way of life; **Service** – to others, but particularly in support of our parishes and their clergy; **Study** – Bible study particularly; and **Prayer** in all its aspects. Each Daughter must decide prayerfully for herself how she should live out this Vow in this season of her life, rather than having one method for all members at every stage of life. We all make the same Vow, but each lives them prayerfully as God directs her through scripture and the teachings of the Christian community.

I found myself memorizing the Prayer, but found myself reciting it like multiplication tables, with little understanding of its deep meaning. Perhaps you find that to be true for you. This retreat will be a quiet one, focusing on the Prayer of the Daughters of the Holy Cross through some study, but primarily by taking time to individually meditate and pray about what it means, and how we can deepen our relationship with Jesus as we pray it each day.

In John 15:5, it is recorded that Jesus said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the

branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” The Daughters’ Prayer is about growing in our relationship with the Lord – abiding in Him.

We will look at each part of the Prayer to gain a fuller understanding of what it means. We will look at the opening and concluding phrases, but most of our time will be spent examining the pairings of the words in the main body of the Prayer. We will be meditating on the meanings of the words, studying related scriptures, and praying by ourselves to ask the Lord to give us insight into how to grow closer to Him, and more like Him. Without Jesus, we can do nothing. Only by abiding in Him can we bear lasting fruit as we seek to live out our lives in accordance with all four parts of our Daughters of the Holy Cross Vow.

On the following pages you will find each pairing of words in the Prayer, along with some scriptures that use those words. Depending on what translation you use, the words may differ, but the sense should be similar. You will find a lot of overlap or interchangeability in the use of the words. A particular verse may address more than one word or you may want to read more of the context. Let the Holy Spirit lead you.

The large space on each page is for you to write down your insights as you meditate and pray over the passages.

I teach a Historic Preservation class – students start noticing styles around them – you may find the same thing with these words in scripture, or another good place is in hymns.

So let’s begin.

Let us pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, You know the needs of Your children before we ask. We pray that You will clear our hearts and minds of all clutter, and guide us as we pray for a deeper understanding of our Daughters of the Holy Cross Prayer.

Opening Line:

Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .

Notice: God is gracious and, despite His Holiness, He loves us and wants to give us these things so that we can be closer to Him. It is not for our comfort or satisfaction but to glorify His son, Jesus.

WISDOM to PERCEIVE THEE

WISDOM

1 Kings 4:29
Proverbs 2:6
1 Corinthians 2:6-7
Colossians 1:9-10
James 1:5
James 3:13-18

PERCEIVE

Matthew 13:16-17
John 4:19

Wisdom = keen insight, Webster says = knowledge, ability to discern inner qualities and relationships – meditate on that in terms of your relationship with God

The scriptures say that God gives wisdom to whoever asks. It is not of ourselves.

Perceive = more than simply viewing, it means to discern, separate, distinguish between, Webster says: to detect with other senses than vision (revelation?), to come to know or recognize mentally, or to see or understand the differences, grasp with understanding – being able to tell what is of God and what is not

Now, working silently on your own, look up these scriptures or others you find. Space is left for you to take notes if you want to jot down any thoughts or insights the Lord may give you.

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .
INTELLIGENCE to UNDERSTAND THEE**

INTELLIGENCE (knowledge)

Proverbs 2:6
Romans 11:33
Romans 12:2
1 Corinthians 8:2
Colossians 2:1-3
2 Peter 3:18

UNDERSTAND

Matthew 13: 23
2 Timothy 2:7
Acts 28: 26-27
Isaiah 55:8-9
Proverbs 3:5-6

Intelligence – this word is not found very often in the Bible, but is akin to Knowledge, which is used fairly often. It does not mean “smart,” but is more similar to wisdom or understanding.

Testimony about taking 18th Century American Intellectual History – I just couldn’t understand the material we were studying in regard to Puritan theology (about how salvation is not inherited, until I came to a saving knowledge of Jesus during Lent that year (that’s another story). After that, I was able to say, “Oh, now I get it!” When I told my professor about the impact of my experience, he couldn’t get it.” We are asking the Father for spiritual not intellectual knowledge of God.

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .
DILIGENCE to SEEK THEE**

DILIGENCE

2 Timothy 3:14
Hebrews 12:1-3
Hebrews 6:11-12
2 Peter 1:3-11
Matthew 15:21-28

SEEK

Isaiah 55:6
Hebrews 11:6
Psalm 27
Lamentations 3:25

Diligence = steady, earnest and energetic perseverance – don’t give up

Seek - The desire to find God comes from Him. Search for Him earnestly.

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .
PATIENCE to WAIT FOR THEE**

PATIENCE

James 1:3, 12
Romans 12:12
2 Timothy 3:10
Hebrews 12:1-3
1 Samuel 13:8-14

WAIT

1 Thessalonians 1:10
Acts 1:4
Genesis 49:18
Isaiah 40:31
Psalms 27:14
Psalm 40:1
Lamentations 3:25

Patience – *this is not in the sense of needing patience on a highway during rush hour, but is about enduring through real difficulties (e.g., illness, deaths of loved ones, loss of job, personal relationships). This word is often linked with perseverance or endurance.*

Webster says – *not hasty or impetuous (like Saul who tired of waiting for the prophet Samuel to come to give the sacrifice (See 1 Samuel 13 above); but be steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity.*

Wait = ***Webster says*** – *to delay in hope of favorable change or to look forward expectantly. This word is often linked with hope in the scripture (e.g., Romans 5:5: “hope does not disappoint,” and Romans 8:24-25: “For in hope we have been saved but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”*

You have probably often heard “God is never late,” which also reminds us that the Bible tells us that events took place “in the fullness of time”. Meditate on this in regard to waiting on the Lord.

This phrase from the Prayer may relate not just for ourselves, but also for those we pray for.

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .
EYES to BEHOLD THEE**

EYES

Matthew 13:16-17
Psalm 119:18
Proverbs 4:25
Isaiah 6:5
Matthew 20:33
Ephesians 1:18

BEHOLD

John 1:14
John 1:29-32
1 John 1:1-3
1 John 4:14
1 Corinthians 13:12
Hebrews 12:1-2

From the Book of Common Prayer: Almighty God, grant us a vision of your being and beauty, so that in the strength of it we may work without haste and without worry; through Jesus Christ our Lord

With our eyes, we see creation, activities around us etc. but this is talking about our asking for spiritual eyes to see the Lord in His creation and things going on around us.

***Behold** = to perceive through sight or apprehension, but I like this definition, “to gaze upon,” meaning fixed, intent look, often with eagerness. It implies looking with eagerness, or fixed and prolonged attention, as in awe, wonder, or admiration – how about with reverence or delight?*

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters . . .
HEART to MEDITATE UPON THEE**

HEART

1 Peter 3:3-4

John 14:1

Matthew 13:15a

Matthew 22:37

Luke 8:15

MEDITATE

Joshua 1:8

Psalm 143:5

Psalm 1:2

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 27:4

Proper 28 from the Book of Common Prayer: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace them and ever hold fast to the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Collect for Purity, BCP: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires, known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord, Amen.

This phrase is what prompted this study of the words. As I tried to pray the Prayer more deeply, I wondered why it spoke of a heart to meditate, rather than a mind. I found it does not involve my mind (it is not intellectual). Think back to what you found when you looked at asking for “Intellect to Understand.”

***Heart** = a person’s center for both physical (center of our bodies) and emotional (heart-felt), intellectual (learn by heart), moral activities (having a good heart or an evil heart), = our innermost being*

***Meditate** = this does not mean to think about something, the way a mathematician would think about a math problem, but to reflect on, muse over, contemplate, ponder (“and Mary pondered these things in heart”) – don’t let thoughts of God flit by, but spend time with them by being available for the Lord to speak to your heart.*

**Gracious and Holy Father, that Thy Son may be glorified, give Thy Daughters...
A LIFE to PROCLAIM THEE**

LIFE

1 Timothy 2:2
2 Timothy 3:11-16
1 Timothy 4:12
1 Peter 1:14-15
Colossians 1:10
Ephesians 5:15-16
James 3:13-18
Acts 2:42

PROCLAIM

Matthew 5:13-16
Luke 4:18-19
Acts 8:5
Acts 9:20
1 Corinthians 11:26
Mark 16:15
Psalm 19:1
1 John 1:1-3

From the General Thanksgiving, Book of Common Prayer: We beseech Thee
... that we may show forth Thy praise not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving ourselves to Thy
service and walking in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives . . .

The Daughters' Prayer builds up to this grand finale.

Life = phase of earthly existence (what happened between someone's birth date and death date?), or the way we spend our time and interact with God and others. Does the life we live reflect God's presence in us?

Proclaim = to declare publicly. This is not a wimpy word, but a very strong word (not whisper, or not simply stating matter-of-factly, but to announce strongly and openly, to extol. The way you live your life can also quietly proclaim but have resounding results.

"Actions can speak louder than words," but there is also an important place for words, as in preaching (Romans 10:14-15).

**By the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.
Amen.**

Our Prayer begins and ends with an acknowledgment of our reliance and dependence on God's grace and Jesus' work for us.