

## INTERCESSION: "ON THE HOOF"

Intercession "on the hoof" is prayer outside our "prayer closet":

Everyone got an "Ambassador ribbon", a red sash to wear across the chest to remind us:

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 2 COR 5:20

Attached was a description of "ambassador" from Barnes --

*We have the problem: I don't know how to pray And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.*

My friend Betty Marantino in San Antonio first put me on to the idea of asking Holy Spirit to nudge me to pray. She always prays for airplanes when she sees them, and I try to.

Years ago a priest taught a freeing expression. Ticking off the five fingers of his hand he intoned: may --I-- pray-- **with--** you". this has freed me to actually say this phrase when someone shares a problem.

We are to judge not -- but we observe freely with the "eyes" of the One who desires that none should perish. We don't have to agree that actions are right, but we are in the position to bring the situation to the Merciful One, Jesus.

In 1981, again in San Antonio my young son and I prayed: O Lord, send someone to tell him about Jesus...so he can hear! God moved in a mighty way, and a murderer's heart was converted.

I turned daughter Anne over to Blessed Mother. In 1987. She re-turned in 2010.

For years our prayer list was/is on the refrigerator. Our kids call and ask us to put desperate people in their lives on the refrigerator. The lists get faded and sometimes stained, and then they go in a drawer. It is wonderful to run across one of the old lists to remember that that had been a prayer. Like a financial miracle, a job, a healing; and sometimes, as in the rest of life, the answer was "no, dear".

The residents of Charlestown Retirement Community started "Lighthouse", which is a simple plan to pray for the apartment neighbors to the right and left. We know the neighbors to the south but just barely the others. The house to the North is for sale with a contract -- maybe we'll do better this time!

Bless .. not curse. When I read about the importance of blessings, I decided to do it regularly. It's easy to bless the clerk in the store and the family members (usually). But I find that when I hear some political or other opponent say or do something that jars me, "may he be blessed!" has power to keep my perspective: I don't not run the Universe -- and that's a very good thing.

I often choose a decade of the Rosary for different situations. The Visitation for someone who needs a friend, Finding Jesus in the Temple for someone who is confused about the Faith, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit for all of us.

Because I have a large family, I have revised the Divine Mercy prayers, "on account of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on Ruth, and the whole world.....mercy on Anne, and the whole world... Sometimes Holy Spirit pauses me to pray more specifically for several.

We are told to pray always. I don't, but I find the little islands of prayer are getting a little bigger; perhaps they will merge into one big puddle of praise and intercession, with a lot of repenting in the middle. I have asked Holy Spirit to nudge me at specific times., and I encourage you to try a couple of new reminders.

Some triggers for me:

boarded-up houses in the city -- and unexpected places (O Lord, restore our broken families, rescue the Fatherless Generation)

men sitting around on stoops -- prayer for new industries in the city.

phone calls -- selling me something

cars doing weird things

road side cemeteries "May the souls of all the faithful departed ...rest in peace":

recently I overheard a couple arguing..."You said I could take care of naming the baby, and now you're taking it over!!!" That seemed to be a call to pray -- not for a name but first in the Spirit, then for peace between these soon-to-be parents and wisdom for them as they bring up this precious not-yet born baby.

I'm often awake at night and find that keeping my rosary under my pillow is a good reminder. I've been especially praying for two lawmakers in the Maryland Senate -- that they also be found in the Temple -- and find life and wisdom there.

Years ago I had a little telephone book, three inches by two-and-a -half, in which I wrote prayer requests when people would talk to me. One night a woman came to the revolving prayer group meeting that week at our house, and we struck up an instant friendship. At the end of the evening she said, "I'll bring Roger next week". The next couple of weeks she didn't come, and I put her name on my list. Sometime during that time I decided I needed a prayer partner, someone I could agree with in prayer. Shortly after that we were preparing to return to the States after our four-year tour in Germany in the Army. As the list was getting a bit overwhelming, I put it aside. A year later I was opening a box that had gotten forgotten in our Tacoma, Washington basement. I found the discarded book, found that page and was amazed since this Donna Stradley, was now my prayer partner, across an ocean and across the country!

It's important to ask the prayers of others."Two or three gathered". It helps us remember that we prayed, didn't just "wish" for something. This is one way our faith builds enabling us to tackle some of those mountains in our lives. The parish prayer chain is a witness and encouragement to many people.

I like to think about what saint needs a miracle in order to be canonized. Nearly two years ago my sister-in-law Charlene was with us for Christmas. She told that she had just been diagnosed with breast cancer. The four of us went to the crypt chapel at the Basilica and specifically asked the intercession of Servant of God Mary Lange. After chemo and radiation, Charlene is cancer free -- and she said she would send the testimony to the Oblate Sisters.

I like the idea of asking 'saint" Wilberforce about legislative battles, where we war not against flesh and blood...

It is good to consider our spheres of influence, where we have the opportunity to relate to others, sometimes just to pray. The Jabez prayer includes the notion expanding our tent pegs. May what we do as a prayer group, as a parish, be part of bringing the Father's love to the Baltimore area and beyond.

