

Novena to Adrienne von Speyr (September 20, 1902 - September 17, 1967)

I

Prayer for Renewal of Spirit

Dear Lord, you see how we get used to everything. It was with joy that we once took up your service, firmly resolved to be totally dedicated to you. But because every day brings nearly the same thing over and over again, it seems that our prayer has contracted. We limit it to ourselves and to what we deem necessary for the task we have to perform right now, so that in the end our prayer has been reduced to the dimensions of this small chore. We beseech you now, do not permit us to become so narrow. Give us new breadth, give us once more something of the elastic vigor of Mary's Yes, which is ready for the entire divine will, which always remains as wide as it was when it was first pronounced, and which is ratified anew every day. Whether Mary rejoiced or was afraid or hoped, whether she was tired from her daily round of duties or was being led to the Cross: she always stood before you as if for the first time, was always obedient to whatever you said, always hoped to be allowed to do all that you wished, always saw behind every one of your wishes, even the most insignificant, the great, unlimited will of the Father, which you, her Son, were fulfilling. Grant that we may contemplate and affirm you and your Church, and carry out the requirements of our mission in an ever new spirit, the spirit of the Mother's Yes. Grant also that we may pray for this spirit. We know that wherever you send your Spirit, you yourself are present. The Spirit brought you to your Mother, the Spirit enabled her to carry you, to give birth to you, to surround you with care. And because you recognized your own Spirit in her, you formed your Church from her. And since you have called us into this Church: make of every one of us a place where the Spirit of your Church blows, where, together with you and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the will of your Father, of our Father, is done, so that we may dare to pray in earnest: "You, our Father, who art in heaven..." *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

Father, we ask that through the intercession of Adrienne von Speyr those called to live in the *sequela Christi* might do so with ever-greater fidelity. Grant that, day-by-day, your love might burn and your Spirit might blow more intensely within us. In the presence of the Mother of your Son, your angels and saints, and the whole heavenly court, we beg this grace in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

II

Prayer for Indifference

Lord, you know that I would like to serve you but that I am still attached to my work and to my judgment; that I am constantly scurrying back into myself to survey everything from my angle of vision: that I do *this* in order not to do *that*, that I desire *this* and loathe *that*. Whereas you showed us in every moment of your earthly life, and especially on the Cross, what it means to do the will of another. For you this other was the Father, the Father who is so perfect that you regarded every one of his decisions as perfect and accepted it in advance, without sizing it up

first yourself. Not because of any judgment you might have arrived at after trying and weighing each case, but out of love. Your love for the Father took the place of your personal scrutiny once and for all. And you have also given the gift of this love to your saints; and your saint Ignatius has spoken and has written about it and has shown how the will of the superior, the will of the Father, the divine will pure and simple, is the decisive motive for the one who loves, for the one who no longer cares for anything but the wish of the beloved.

Grant us a share in this power of your Sonship, allow us to learn to love the Father in the way that you love him, to come to him through you and your filial attitude, to become obedient by the strength of your perfect obedience, to become indifferent by your indifference.

Grant that we may no longer seek our own interests in anything, but that, together with Saint Ignatius, our interest may go immediately to you, and we ourselves may become indifferent to the very core of our heart; not in order to lose all interest in you and the world, but in order to begin, at long last, to love you and the Father in the Holy Spirit above all things. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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III

Prayer for Constancy

Lord our God, give your children ready perseverance in loving you. You know all too well what we are like: moved by your goodness when it comes to us unexpectedly, dismayed by your severity when it reveals itself to us with its demands. When we live through happy or hard days, we think of you, seeing what comes from you; but in the monotony of every day we grow lukewarm, we forget you, we keep you far from our thoughts and from our action, as if we needed you only on the eventful days, as if we wanted to have you at our disposal. We beg you, change this, let us turn back while there is time, act decisively, tear out our tepidity, replace it with fire or cold or with both at once, only, allow your Spirit to blow in us. Destroy everything that is not yours, and let us think no thought whose center is not you, so that by this destruction we are compelled to a livelier love. We do not demand of this love that it be painful or delightful, only that it be yours, forevermore. Lord, give us the grace to offer you again and again what you have given us. Only in this way will we unprofitable servants not remain fruitless. Bless your love in us, so that it may yield the fruits that you desire. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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Son, your angels and saints, and the whole heavenly court, we beg this grace in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

IV

Prayer for Those Who Have Turned Away

We can understand death and sickness and even poverty, Lord; but how can anyone turn away from you after having known your grace? That is an unfathomable mystery to us. After all, it would be quite easy for you to make the signs of your grace so obvious that no one could have any more doubts about them or to bring back those who are leaving with a gentle call: and you do not do it, in your wisdom, you do not do it. Lord, allow us just the same to beg you with our whole soul that our cry might pierce through the lukewarmness of those who are drawing back; let our members suffer for them, accept every sacrifice for them, only, we implore you, enable them to return, make it easy for them, and in exchange let us pay the price that you deem just. We will try to give you what you take, but grant them anew your faith, your grace. And at the same time we know that we ourselves take our faith too lightly and are given over and over again to promises that seem hard when it comes time to keep them. Lord, grant us all your mercy and strengthen our weakness. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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V

Prayer for Liberation from Oneself

Lord, set me free and take me to yourself. You have shown me the chains that hold me back from my way, and if they still exist to hinder me, it is for no other reason than that in my heart of hearts I am not yet willing to detach myself from them. How often I moan and groan and regret having so little freedom, whereas all I really mean are the obligations that daily life and my profession entail; but these obligations do not really block my path, they do not affect its essential course, at most its outer form; if anything, they are perhaps just little tests. What weighs so heavily does not come from outside; it lives and takes shape in my own self—I mean everything to which I am attached, which I am not disposed to renounce, which serve me as a crutch and a convenience, everything to which I believe I have a right. Take, Lord—I am trying to ask you for this sincerely—everything that in my eyes is part of my rightful spiritual property, but that paralyzes my love for you, that makes your love for my neighbor stop flowing and freeze solid. Let me disappear in the flow of your love to all men, so that it can pour itself out unhindered. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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VI

Prayer for Usability

Father, let our whole life become a prayer that rises up to you like fire and sweeps along in its flame everything evil and impure, all that belongs to us and to others, so that you may fill it up with your Spirit and may make it good enough to become yours and to be used by you. Do not leave the evil in us either, Lord, but turn it back; open us to your action, even when it is painful; allow our conversion, allow it in your own name. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

Father, we ask that through the intercession of Adrienne von Speyr those called to live in the *sequela Christi* might do so with ever-greater fidelity. Grant that, day-by-day, your love might burn and your Spirit might blow more intensely within us. In the presence of the Mother of your Son, your angels and saints, and the whole heavenly court, we beg this grace in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

VII

Through Mary to Christ

Through you, Mother, we have come to your Son. You conceived him, you carried him, you gave birth to him, you accompanied him throughout his life, in order to bring him to us and to give him to us. And also in order to show us how a man can bear and understand him, how a man can place his life within the life of your Son, so as to receive it from him. In order to convey to us the gift of his infancy, of his years at home with you, the gift of his public life and of the hour of his Passion. At every phase of his life you were so involved that everything his presence conveyed found room in your receptive heart. Yet not for you, but for us. By your Yes, you placed yourself so totally at the disposal of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, that the triune God gave us to the Son right through you. You led us to him, but you were always so much in God, so much within your mission and your own Yes, that your only desire was to act as the conveyor of the gift and not as the original giver. Yet for that very reason your act of conveying also became a gift that came from your humility and that your humility gave us. A gift to us, but also a gift to God. And we would like to ask you today to accept into your Yes all that makes up our lives, not just its joys, but also its sacrifices, the roads we take that we had not reckoned on before. Do this so that we may once again come to your Son through you. So that through you, who knew so well how to carry out the Son's will, we, too, may now accept anew everything he intends for us

in the will of the Father, may now will it anew because it is his will. But also that through you we may will anew, with you, grateful that everything you did occurred entirely within his mission. And when the sacrifice costs more than we thought, when it is harder to bear than we imagined, we want to remember that you did not shrink in fear from any sacrifice, and that you did everything in the joy of your Yes. And we want to ask you to intercede for us with the Father, with your Son, and with the Spirit, so that we may be permitted to live by your strength, to come in reality to the Son through you, and to do in him what *you* have done for him all along. And when you see your angel, Mother, remember that his appearance assured you of the way. Ask him to surround us with care out of love for you, just as he did for you, to intercede for us just as he interceded for you and, by his appearing, gave you the power to say Yes in faith to everything. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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VIII

Prayer to the Risen Lord

Lord, we thank you for the Easter feast. We thank you that after your death and your descent into hell, after tasting to the full every kind of abandonment, you have returned to us; that you have remembered our insignificant abandonment and overwhelmed it with the radiant fullness of your presence. Although you suffered the death that we caused by the burden of our sins, you come back to us as our brother with the gift of your redemption. You do not make us pay for having brought you to the Cross but let us take part in your joy. You celebrate a reunion with us as if we had never been unfaithful, as if we had always awaited you with faithful trust, as if we were capable of adding something ourselves to your joy. Lord, make us grateful. Let the thanks we owe you and your Mother always accompany us from now on, let them bear fruit, let them be the pervasive spirit of our service. Let us be redeemed men who truly fill their whole life with your redemption, follow you wherever you go, and attempt to do your will, just as you do the Father's will. Do not let us merely enjoy the fruit of your Passion and of your redemption; let us try, starting today, to know you as our brother, as our true redeemer ever in our midst, and always to bear in mind that you are present and that you have repaid our unfaithfulness with fidelity and our unbelief with even greater grace. Let every day, whether hard or easy, dawn as a day that holds the express, or even hidden, joy of knowing that you have redeemed us and, returning to the Father, have taken us back with you. We ask you now for your Easter blessing; may it include the blessing of the Father and of the Spirit. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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IX

To Surrender What We Do Not Possess

Lord, so often I have given you what I possessed in abundance; let me now offer you everything that I do not have, that has always been denied me, that I have sought half-suspecting it was unattainable: peace, rest, shelter. And if I know now that all this belongs to you, that it remains in your safekeeping and is your possession, I will no longer clamor for it. The constant, vain running of my restlessness no longer troubles me: rest is in you, you have taken possession of it, even for me; you can dispense it again without loss; in you is shelter—who else would have it?—you can deal out this gift. Be praised: what we seek is found in you, and what we fancied we were giving you generously was in you from the beginning. And yet we thank you that in spite of this you accept it from us as well. Lord, do not just take what we do not have: keep it. Planting is the Lord's alone, to us he might leave the gathering of a few ears of his sprouting seed; that which was already his is what we bring before him. A living fire does not cease to burn until all is consumed and reduced to ash; no one regards the ash; strewn and lifeless on the ground, it cannot fructify, hidden as it is, but it can be trampled completely into the earth, serving a task of which it knows nothing. Lord, burn us to ash, and scatter us according to your will. If I should ever say again what I will, do not grant that prayer: believe, even against every appearance, that from now on I am yours alone and know no other will than yours. *Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

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