

A PRAYERFUL HEART

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself.

Indian Proverb

All real prayer must begin in wonder.

Tad Dunne, S.J.

A lot of trouble about prayer would disappear if we only realized really realized, and not just supposed that it was so -- that we go to pray not because we love prayer but because we love God.

Hubert van Zeller, OSB

By a long process of prayer discipline I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody.

Gandhi

Do what you can and then pray that God will give you the power to do what you cannot.

St. Augustine

If the only prayer you say in your life is "thank you," that would suffice.

Meister Eckhart

Prayer is not just spending time with God. That is prayer, true -- but if it ends there, it is fruitless. No, prayer is dynamic. Authentic prayer changes us -- unmasks us -- strips us -- indicates where growth is needed. Authentic prayer never leads to complacency, but needles us -- makes us uneasy at times. It leads us to true self-knowledge, to true humility.

Teresa of Avila

At the heart of silence is prayer. At the heart of prayer is faith. At the heart of faith is life. At the heart of life is service.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

All creation teaches us some way of prayer.

Thomas Merton

You pray in your distress and in your need. Would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

Kahlil Gibran

Once upon a time a disciple asked the elder, "Holy One, is there anything I can do to make myself Enlightened?" "As little as you can do to make the sun rise in the morning." "Then of what use," the disciple asked, "are all the spiritual exercises?" "To make sure," the elder said, "that you are not asleep when the sun begins to rise."

Anthony de Mello, SJ

If your heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it in our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour will be very well employed.

St Francis de Sales

It is precisely after that first sin [in the Garden of Eden] is committed that God asks the question, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9) Here begins the history of this dialogue we call prayer. In prayer, God makes it possible for us to draw close to him once again, for it is he who asks for us, it is he who calls out to us.

Pope Francis



Phone call home

A letter from James Foley, Arts '96, to Marquette.

Marquette University has always been a friend to me. The kind who challenges you to do more and be better and ultimately shapes who you become.

With Marquette, I went on some volunteer trips to South Dakota and Mississippi and learned I was a sheltered kid and the world had real problems. I came to know young people who wanted to give their hearts for others. Later I volunteered in a Milwaukee junior high school up the street from the university and was inspired to become an inner-city teacher. But Marquette was perhaps never a bigger friend to me than when I was imprisoned as a journalist.

Myself and two colleagues had been captured and were being held in a military detention center in Tripoli. Each day brought increasing worry that our moms would begin to panic. My colleague, Clare, was supposed to call her mom on her birthday, which was the day after we were captured. I had still not fully admitted to myself that my mom knew what had happened. But I kept telling Clare my mom had a strong faith.

I prayed she'd know I was OK. I prayed I could communicate through some cosmic reach of the universe to her.

I began to pray the rosary. It was what my mother and grandmother would have prayed.

I said 10 Hail Marys between each Our Father. It took a long time, almost an hour to count 100 Hail Marys off on my knuckles. And it helped to keep my mind focused.

Clare and I prayed together out loud. It felt energizing to speak our weaknesses and hopes together, as if in a conversation with God, rather than silently and alone.

Later we were taken to another prison where the regime kept hundreds of political prisoners. I was quickly welcomed by the other prisoners and treated well.

One night, 18 days into our captivity, some guards brought me out of the cell. In the hall I saw Manu, another colleague, for the first time in a week. We were haggard but overjoyed to see each other. Upstairs in the warden's office, a distinguished man in a suit stood and said, "We felt you might want to call your families."

I said a final prayer and dialed the number. My mom answered the phone. "Mom, Mom, it's me, Jim."

"Jimmy, where are you?"

"I'm still in Libya, Mom. I'm sorry about this. So sorry."

"Don't be sorry, Jim," she pleaded. "Oh, Daddy just left. Oh ... He so wants to talk to you. How are you, Jim?" I told her I was being fed, that I was getting the best bed and being treated like a guest.

"Are they making you say these things, Jim?"

"No, the Libyans are beautiful people," I told her. "I've been praying for you to know that I'm OK," I said. "Haven't you felt my prayers?"

"Oh, Jimmy, so many people are praying for you. All your friends, Donnie, Michael Joyce, Dan Hanrahan, Suree, Tom Durkin, Sarah Fang have been calling. Your brother Michael loves you so much." She started to cry. "The Turkish embassy is trying to see you and also Human Rights Watch. Did you see them?" I said I hadn't.

"They're having a prayer vigil for you at Marquette. Don't you feel our prayers?" she asked.

“I do, Mom, I feel them,” and I thought about this for a second. Maybe it was others’ prayers strengthening me, keeping me afloat.

The official made a motion. I started to say goodbye. Mom started to cry. “Mom, I’m strong. I’m OK. I should be home by Katie’s graduation,” which was a month away.

“We love you, Jim!” she said. Then I hung up.

I replayed that call hundreds of times in my head — my mother’s voice, the names of my friends, her knowledge of our situation, her absolute belief in the power of prayer. She told me my friends had gathered to do anything they could to help. I knew I wasn’t alone.

My last night in Tripoli, I had my first Internet connection in 44 days and was able to listen to a speech Tom Durkin gave for me at the Marquette vigil. To a church full of friends, alums, priests, students and faculty, I watched the best speech a brother could give for another. It felt like a best man speech and a eulogy in one. It showed tremendous heart and was just a glimpse of the efforts and prayers people were pouring forth. If nothing else, prayer was the glue that enabled my freedom, an inner freedom first and later the miracle of being released during a war in which the regime had no real incentive to free us. It didn’t make sense, but faith did.

This article written by James Foley appeared in the fall 2011 issue of Marquette Magazine following his first capture earlier that year. Foley was killed in August 2014 following a second capture in 2012. Additional resources on Foley, including the university’s response and information about a James Foley Scholarship, is [available online](#).

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