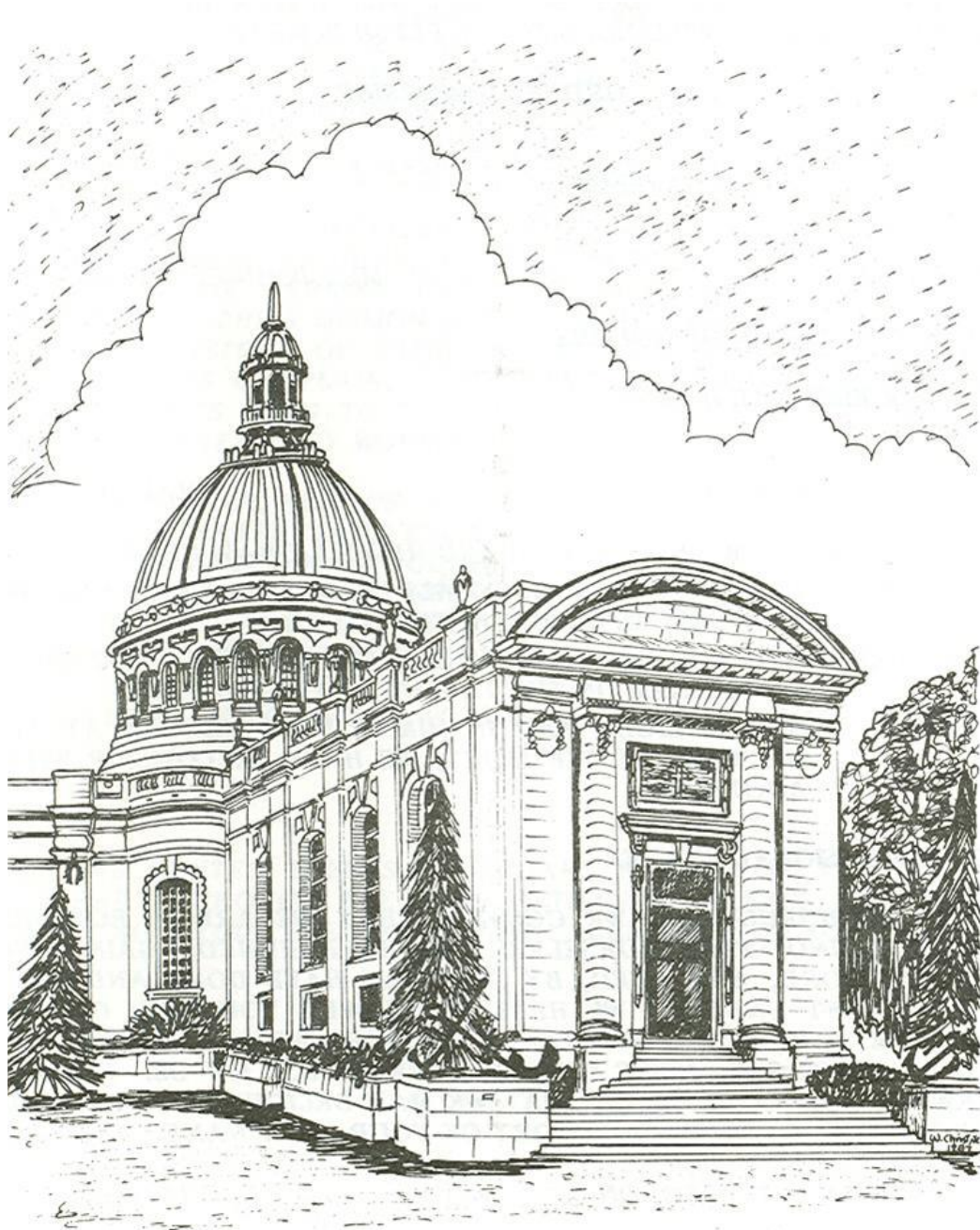


**The Midshipman's Prayer**

**A Sermon Series**

**For Plebe Summer 2013**



**US Naval Academy**

**Protestant Community**

Each Sunday during the Plebe Summer of 2013, the preacher for that week addressed one of the petitions of the Midshipman's Prayer. The scripture readings were specially selected to complement and expand on the petition rather than follow the traditional Revised Common Lectionary. Collected here are those sermons, the selected reading citations and some discussion questions to guide our journey through this prayer. We pray that this sermon series will focus your prayer life and help give you a deeper grasp of the Scriptural underpinnings of this timeless prayer.

## A Midshipman's Prayer

- Almighty Father, whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth; let me be aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will.
- Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed, and helping me so to live that I can stand unashamed and unafraid before my shipmates, my loved ones, and Thee.
  - Protect those in whose love I live.
    - Give me the will to do my best and to accept my share of responsibilities with a strong heart and a cheerful mind.
    - Make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership and faithful to the duties my country has entrusted in me.
- Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of the service of which I am a part.
- If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again.
- Guide me with the light of truth and keep before me the life of Him by whose example and help I trust to obtain the answer to my prayer, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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30 June 2013  
**Chaplain Michael Gore**

*Almighty Father whose way is in the sea,  
whose paths are in the great waters,  
whose command is over all  
and whose love never faileth;  
let me be aware of Thy presence  
and obedient to Thy will.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—First Petition

Genesis 1:1-10

Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

Mark 4:35-41

One of my favorite authors is Herman Wouk, best known in Navy circles for his 1952 Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Caine Mutiny*, describing life and tension aboard the fictional World War II destroyer-minesweeper USS Caine. Wouk wrote many other books to include *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*, which collectively chronicle the events of World War II as seen through the eyes of Commander Victor “Pug” Henry, a middle-aged naval officer serving as the military attaché to Berlin as the war begins.

When Wouk was preparing to write *War and Remembrance*, he realized that he needed to know more about The Manhattan Project – the top secret program which developed the first atomic bomb. Fortunately for Wouk, many of the scientists who worked on the project were still alive and several of them were teaching at Caltech at the time, so he made a visit to see them. Among them was the theoretical physicist Richard Feynman. When he met Feynman, Wouk described the book he was writing and explained his need to know more about the Manhattan Project in order to complete his novel. Feynman, in response, described his work on the atomic bomb, giving Wouk invaluable insight into the complex processes that led to its creation. At the end of their meeting, Feynman walked Wouk out of the building and as they were parting he asked Wouk, “Do you know calculus?” Wouk confessed that he didn’t. “You had better learn it,” Feynman said. “It’s the language God talks.” (*The Language God Talks*, by Herman Wouk, pp. 3-5. )

Doubtless, many of you know calculus but most of us don't. And if God only speaks calculus then most of us are in real trouble. Fortunately, God is Omni-lingual. He speaks every language; but his principal language is the language of prayer. It's through prayer, by prayer, in prayer, with prayer that we speak to God and God speaks to us.

This week we begin a series of sermons on the Midshipman's Prayer. This prayer is included each week in our service of worship. It is a prayer appropriate to this congregation where Midshipmen worship and pray. It is a prayer appropriate for all of us who pray alongside them. It is a prayer that can serve as a model prayer for all of us seeking personal reformation and spiritual renewal.

Today I want to focus our attention on the opening petition: "Almighty Father, whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth; let me be aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will."

It's important to note that only God's children can pray this prayer with any sense of honesty or integrity. Why? Because we pray to our Almighty Father in heaven whenever we pray the Midshipman's Prayer. And we can only pray to our Father in heaven if we are truly his children on earth.

How, then, do we become children of God? Well, we are not God's children by natural birth. We become God's children through spiritual birth. In John 3:7, Jesus said, "You must be born again!" This new birth, this spiritual birth, is given to all who believe in Jesus. First John 5:1 says, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah – God's Anointed Savior) is born of God." And John 1:12 promises that God gives to those who receive Jesus, who believe in his name, the right to become children of God.

Are you a child of God? If so, you can pray this prayer with honesty and sincerity. If not, then I urge you to believe in and receive Jesus as your Savior. If you do that then you'll become a child of God. And as a child of God you can pray to your Almighty Father in heaven.

Now notice those first two words of the Midshipman's Prayer: Almighty Father. I believe those words form the foundation upon which all of our prayers should rest. The word "Almighty" points to God's omnipotence. The word "Father" points to God's

benevolence. The word “Almighty” points to his power. The word “Father” points to his passion. Together, these two words remind us that we pray to a God of infinite power and inexhaustible love.

Yes, the words “Almighty Father” should form the foundation upon which all of our prayers should rest. Just as the dome of this great chapel rises high above our heads by resting on a foundation sunk deep in the earth, so too our prayers rise best to the heights of heaven when they rest upon the foundational conviction that we offer them up to a God who is both omnipotent and benevolent, powerful and passionate – a God whose command is over all and whose love never fails.

Why should our prayers rest on convictions such as these? Because if we don’t believe God is omnipotent and benevolent then we probably won’t pray or we will pray weak prayers. For if God is not omnipotent then why should we take our prayers to him at all? If his power is finite then why should we seek his aid? We might, I suppose, ask for the assistance of a finite god, but we can never do so with any measure of real confidence. For if God’s power is limited then we can never be sure he will have power enough to help us in our hour of need. So you see, our prayers should rest on the firm conviction that God is truly omnipotent!

Likewise, our prayers should rest on the firm conviction that God is benevolent, too. You see, whenever we pray we must believe that we pray to a Father who loves us and wants the best for us. As the father of four children, three of whom I have taken off either to college or to the military, I must confess that I was moved on I-day as I spoke with numerous fathers whose red-rimmed eyes bore touching testimony to the tears they shed in parting with their sons and daughters. Their love was evident. They impressed me as fathers who would do everything in their power to provide the very best for their children.

And that’s the kind of Father we have in heaven! Jesus said, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:11-13 NIV)

Yes, just as the Midshipman's Prayer begins with the words "Almighty Father," all of our prayers should begin with the conviction that we pray to a God of omnipotence and benevolence, power and passion, infinite strength and inexhaustible love. Such a God longs to help us and has the power to do so.

But even when our convictions fail us and our faith is feeble, our God is faithful and exercises his powerful benevolence on our behalf, even in response to the weakest of our prayers. We see illustration of this in the activity of his Son as depicted in our gospel reading. Mark chapter four tells the tale of Jesus teaching by the seaside on the shores of Galilee. And the Bible says, "...when evening had come, (Jesus) said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" (Mark 4:35-41 NRSV)

Here we see the feeble faith of the floundering disciples caught in the midst of a terrible storm and crying out to Christ, as the old translations have it, saying, "Carest thou not that we perish." And yet, despite their feeble faith, despite their collapsing convictions, despite their debilitating doubts, despite the weakness of their prayers, Christ answered with loving power, exercised his omnipotence, and commanded peace upon the winds and waves. Little wonder the disciples were left with great awe at the actions of Jesus, and we are left with great comfort knowing that God will exercise his loving power on our behalf even when our faith is small.

And so the Midshipman's Prayer teaches us that we pray to a God of omnipotence and benevolence; a God of power and passion; a God of infinite strength and inexhaustible love; a God whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command



is over all and whose love never fails. There is courage and comfort in remembering that this is the kind of God to whom we pray. When the storms of life are raging and we're tossed upon a cruel sea, we can take heart and have hope knowing that our feeblest of cries will always reach the ear of our Almighty Father above.

Twenty-five years ago, my eldest son was born in Norton's hospital in Louisville, Kentucky. In the middle of the night we were informed that he had a respiratory infection. The doctors tried to comfort us by assuring us that it wasn't serious enough to require moving him across the street to receive more specialized care at Kosair Children's hospital. But not long afterwards, they returned and told us that he was being moved over to Kosair. For ten days he stayed in ICU as they pumped his body full of medicines to fight what had become a life threatening infection. I will never forget going into the neonatal intensive care unit and seeing my son, all 8 pounds and 14 ounces of him, surrounded on every side by the tiniest of premature babies. It was an odd sight and yet, he was every bit as sick as they were.

At some point early in the process, probably around the time they moved him to ICU, I found myself alone in a waiting room high up in the hospital. I was tired, bone tired, and I leaned my face against the cool glass of the waiting room window overlooking the city of Louisville to rest a moment before returning to my son's side. And in those quiet moments the words of an old hymn slipped silent-like into my mind. It was a hymn I didn't know. To my knowledge I had never heard nor sung it before. Afterwards I found a hymnal and looked it up to confirm that it was, indeed, a real hymn and not a figment of my imagination. Perhaps you know it. Its lyrics are a prayer to him whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never fails.

*(Lord) When the storms of life are raging,  
Stand by me (stand by me);  
When the storms of life are raging,  
Stand by me (stand by me);  
When the world is tossing me*

*Like a ship upon the sea  
Thou Who rulest wind and water,  
Stand by me (stand by me).*

Imagine how comforted I was when God whispered those words into my ears and then accompanied them with the gift of his presence. For as I stood there in that waiting room, I began to sense the presence of Someone standing with me in the storm. Has that ever happened to you? Has the One who rules wind and water ever stood by you in some stormy time? Then you know the courage and comfort that comes when you know that you have an Almighty Father standing by your side.

And so the first petition of the Midshipman's Prayer hastens to its close. "Almighty Father, whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth; let me be aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will."

Let me be aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Indeed! For when we truly believe that we serve an Almighty Father, a God of omnipotence and benevolence, a God of power and passion, a God of infinite strength and inexhaustible love, then we can't help but long to be more aware of his presence and more obedient to his will. We long for this because, as King David says in Psalm 16:11, our loving Father shows us the path of life. In his presence there is fullness of joy. And at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore!

My friend, is the God of all creation, your Almighty Father? Do you know yourself to be a child of God? If so, then you know you are surrounded by his omnipotence and benevolence, his power and passion, his infinite strength and inexhaustible love. And knowing this, you know you can successfully sail through whatever seas your Almighty Father has ordained for your life.

Let us pray: Almighty Father, increase our faith in your power and love so that we can sail with courage through the stormy sea of life and come at last to the safe haven of heaven's blissful shore. Amen.

## Discussion Questions:

1. The Midshipman's Prayer is a model prayer that can inform your prayer life. What other model/written prayers do you know and how have they helped you to pray?
2. Do you agree that only God's children can pray the Midshipman's Prayer with honesty and integrity? Why or why not?
3. Read John 1:6-13, 3:1-8, and 1 John 5:1-5. What do these passages teach about how we become children of God?
4. The Midshipman's Prayer begins with the words "Almighty Father." Together, these two words remind us that we pray to a God of infinite power and inexhaustible love. How have you experienced the power of God? How have you experienced God's love?
5. Why is it important to believe that you pray to an Almighty Father whenever you offer up your prayers? What happens to your prayer life if you doubt God's power or his love?
6. Read Mark 4:35-41. How does this passage demonstrate that God answers even the weakest of his people's prayers? When has God answered you despite your feeble faith or debilitating doubts?
7. The preacher quotes a hymn that encouraged him during a time of trouble. What hymns have encouraged you through difficult times and how is God portrayed in them?
8. The first petition of the Midshipman's Prayer ends with these words: "Almighty Father...let me be aware of your presence and obedient to your will." How does belief in God's power and love inspire a desire for his presence and a willingness to obey? Has this been your experience?
9. In what other ways does the first petition of the Midshipman's Prayer speak to you and inform your spiritual life and/or life of prayer?

7 July 2013  
**Chaplain John Connolly**

*Keep me true to my best self,  
guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed,  
and helping me so to live  
that I can stand unashamed and unafraid  
before my shipmates,  
my loved ones,  
and Thee.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Second Petition

Daniel 9:4-19

Psalm 25:1-9

2 Corinthians 12:2–10

Luke 22:39-46

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

You know, there is a certain timelessness that exists when you are upon the sea. Standing on the deck of a ship you feel the gentle roll of the ocean from side to side, and then she will pick you up in her swells and gently set you down again. Stepping onto the bridge wing of the ship you enjoy that misty salty air as the breezes from the ocean gently kiss your face, late in quiet evening air. As you enjoy that moment you could easily be standing on the deck of the USS ESSEX, commanded by Captain David Porter, in 1813, and sailing against the British in the War of 1812. Or, you could be standing on the deck of the USS ESSEX, commanded by Captain Joker Jenkins, in 2013, and sailing for the cause of peace and freedom in modern day. At a certain point with the gentle rolling of the sea and with the misty salty air, you just simply cannot tell which one you are enjoying. It is at that moment that you become one with the sea, and that is a place of timeless peace.

My previous command, prior to coming to the Naval Academy, was the USS HARPERS FERRY and the USS GERMANTOWN. Every evening while the ship was at sea I would make my way to the bridge about 15 or 20 minutes before taps; this was one of my favorite times of the day. I would step out onto the bridge that was all dark, and I was surrounded by watch standers all around the bridge, busy about their appointed tasks. The

Officer Of the Deck was entrusted with safely navigating the ship through the night, and overseeing pretty much every operation on behalf of the Commanding Officer. This is a job that many of you will have in not that many years. As I would look around the bridge I would often notice our Commanding Officer, sitting quietly in his captain's chair on the bridge. From there he would observe and take in all the various evolutions that were going on. He was keeping an eye on our heading and any potential hazards that may befall us. Then I would hear him, gently encourage our Officer Of the Deck, "Keep her true Mr. Beautyman, Keep her true."

My Commanding Officer was Commander Tony Hull, and as far as I am concerned, a man wise well beyond his years. He was able to quickly and easily read the ocean and the ship, and recognize the impact of set and drift on a ship.

You see, the sea, she is alive and will pull a ship in ways that she does not wish to go. Drifting with the speed of the sea on a set course other than what you intend. A skilled Officer Of the Deck is easily able to compensate for the impacts of set and drift and keep a ship on its intended and true course despite any impacts of set and drift. So, the Captain would encourage him, "Keep her true Mr. Beautyman, Keep her true."

At five minutes before taps, the Boatswains Mate of the Watch would pick up the microphone for the 1MC, or the ship's announcing system, and give a quick call on his pipe then announce, "Tattoo, tattoo, lights out in five minutes. Stand by for the evening prayer." Then he would turn and hand the microphone to me. Just as the Captain had encouraged the Officer Of the Deck, it was now my turn and I would pray, with my crew asking God, in essence on behalf of myself and my crew, "Keep Me true, Keep Me true."

Today we continue our exploration of the Midshipman's Prayer as we look deeper into the second petition, "Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed, and helping me so to live that I can stand unashamed and unafraid before my shipmates, my loved ones, and thee."

In our gospel reading today Jesus was speaking to his disciples and praying in the Garden of Gethsemane near the time of his arrest, subsequent trial, and eventual crucifixion. The disciples were obviously failing to keep true and continued to fall asleep

on watch, so Jesus encouraged them, “Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” In many ways this is Jesus’ version of, “Keep her true Mr. Beautyman, Keep her true.”

For the disciples, and for us today, either of these prayers are very humbling. Praying to not come into the “time of trial” or “guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed,” requires of us the recognition that I am weak and that I need help. Just as any ship is subject to the set and drift of the sea I, no we / all of us, are subject to the set and drift of the “time of trial” as Jesus warned his disciples, or “dishonesty in purpose and in deed,” as we pray in the Midshipman’s Prayer. Often these are even better said as temptation to sin.

The reality of the drift of temptation is that it is crazy strong, and the set of temptation can be quite deceiving. It all seems like we are doing what we ought to be doing, and that we are on the right course and the way that we wish to go, but we do not realize exactly how far off course we have veered for quite some time. In our prayer, however, we recognize that the set and drift of temptation can and will lead us off course, AND, it is very strong. So we pray, even more earnestly, “Keep me true.”

In the coming weeks for each of us, whether that is the Class of 2017 or the link in the chain, Class of 1967, or any of us gathered here, I want to encourage us all to take a good hard look at the course we wish to sail, the course that God calls us to. For me, Joshua said this best for what our course should be, “as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) This is my course; what is yours?

An Officer Of the Deck who is truly naïve could possibly begin to think that the set and the drift of the sea will not impact him. This is not someone who I would refer to as a truly wise officer, because by thinking this that officer will certainly be standing tall in front of the Commanding Officer both, “ashamed and afraid,” as he is explaining to the Captain exactly why the ship was so far off course. This officer’s course will never stay true. But, an Officer Of the Deck who takes into account the impact of set and drift will easily stay on course.

Our set and our drift is temptation, drawing us deeper into sin. We compensate for this set and drift through our devotion life, through times of worship, through the Christian

accountability of Godly brothers and sisters in Christ walking faithfully with us, and especially through prayer. So we pray, “Keep me true,” and God helps us to steer a straight course, serving the Lord. God helps answer the prayer that Christ gave us, to “save us from the time of trial.” And, through that, God helps us to navigate around the temptations of life.

Crashing on the rocks, in a ship or in life, makes it very hard to stand unashamed or unafraid before anyone; especially if all we ever had to do was to ask for help. So, be humble, and ask for help. Ask for help in the big things of life and the small; God will provide. God wants to provide and he gave us the gift of prayer to not only praise and adore him, but to also reach out to him in those moments we need him most.

God never has, and God never will force his way into our lives. God has given us the freedom to completely and totally reject his love, to reject his help, to reject his forgiveness, to reject his redemption, to even reject the life that he has blessed us with. OR, he has also given us the complete and total freedom to accept all of this and more through the simple gift of prayer.

Do you know what makes being at sea so enjoyable – NOT crashing on the rocks. You see, crashing on the rocks seems to just suck all the joy out of being at sea. When Mike Beautyman was standing Officer Of the Deck he genuinely listened to our Captain, he regularly checked with combat to ensure that other ships and aircraft were not in the way, he regularly checked with the quartermasters to ensure that we were staying on our intended course, he regularly checked on the lookouts, etc. It was then, and only then that he was able to not crash our ship on the rocks and accomplish what the Captain told him to do, “Keep her true Mr. Beautyman, Keep her true.” Mike knows that he cannot do all this alone, and he does not try.

So, why should we? Why should we ever try to keep true all alone? Life is much better not crashing on the rocks. So, “Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial,” and pray, “Keep me true.” Don’t ignore the power of temptation, it is too strong. Pray, that we may avoid it. Then, you get to enjoy the timelessness of the sea and the timelessness of being in our Lord’s presence, the life that God gives you, where you belong. Where we can stand, unashamed and unafraid, before all – especially God.



## Discussion Questions:

1. Onboard ship we have the ship's compass and other instruments to help "keep us true," and on our intended course. From a faith perspective, what do we have to help "keep us true," in scripture? In the Christian community? In our family?
2. When you consider the "set and drift" of temptation, what have you found to be the most deceiving; that temptation that you think you are going the right way only to discover you are off course? And, what part does peer pressure have in hiding the truth of your wrong course from you?
3. Consider the times in your life when you struggled against temptation, how did you experience God helping you to navigate those treacherous waters? At what point did you begin to feel God help you?
4. Consider the humbling part of admitting you are weak and need help to stay true. Is that humility worse than the humility of "crashing on the rocks" because you did not stay true? What does it take to finally admit you need help?
5. How has God enabled you to help keep others true? Who has God brought into your life to help keep you true?

14 July 2013  
**Chaplain Madison Carter**

*Protect those in whose love I live.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Third Petition

Numbers 14: 11-21

Psalm 25:1-9

Philippians 1: 3-12

Matthew 19: 23-29

When my father passed away last year, I spoke at his funeral on behalf of my family and tried to find a few words to sum up such extraordinary character, class and candor. I did not have a gregarious father, and he certainly was not overly affectionate. He was simply direct. My father had a catch phrase he would say each time my brother and I left the house: “Remember your last name.” As I grew older, I learned he wanted us to know there was a long line of people who came before us. They established our family as a people of faith and a people of prayer. I quickly learned that my father was trying to prepare me for the eventual day I would leave home. My father told me, “I want you to remember who you are. As a Carter, you come from a family that understands what it means to pray.”

When you begin to analyze your own prayers, what is the theme? What are you praying for? For that matter, do you know how to pray?

Many of you here are in an unusual place because you are not really sure about who you are. On the flip side, many of you are in an unusual place because you are secure in who you are, but just not sure how you manage to navigate these waters away from your family. As parents, it is hard to watch your children leave, but it is your hope that your children have the foundation to propel them toward success. In this glorious text, Paul says, “I thank my God...”

This is the first part of the Midshipmen's prayer where we see intercessory prayer. “Protect those in whose love I live.” Every time I wanted to do something I wasn't supposed to do, I would thank God for my father's message. I could not disappoint my

family, and I could not disappoint the family name. Here is the other aspect of my father's message. He wanted me to know, just as I am telling you today, "You are a child of God." As a child of God, there are rights and privileges you have. The best privilege is access to God through prayer.

I am standing here today because someone saw fit to pray for me. Somebody cared enough to call my name out to God and ask Him to wrap His hands around me. God has a special place in His heart for people who cry out for others. The Bible speaks of numerous people who pray for others. Moses, Hezekiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Isaiah pray for the people. In the New Testament, Jarius prays for his daughter, the Synagogue leader prays for his servant and Jesus prays for his disciples. God moves on behalf of His children when they are moved to pray for others. However, in order to ensure your prayers reach the ears of the Father, you must have a relationship with him. That is why Paul emphasized "his" God. It was a personal relationship. And the target audience in Paul's letter was supporting the ministry. In this text, Paul is thanking the people of Philippi for their care of his ministry. They continued to provide for him financially, and they consistently supported his ministry through prayer and other emotional support. They cared for him deeply, and he was passionate about them just as much, if not more.

When people speak of being homesick, it should be a sense of joy and delight. When someone says they are homesick, it means someone loves and cares for them, and it means they love someone else. Paul was homesick. His words say he longed to be with the people of Philippi. While you may long to be with someone, take heart that God will provide for you as long as you stay in line with His will, and stay in line with His ministry. God brought you here to the Naval Academy because He has plans for you, and it is now your responsibility to walk in that authority and anointing.

Paul called himself a slave to the Gospel. While slave has become a derogatory name in our culture, Paul was calling himself a servant because he knew what his service was. Paul was not ashamed to share the Word of God. Paul was not worried about telling people who God was even if it cost him his life. Paul's statement was a reflection of Deuteronomy 15 where God speaks of a slave not wanting to leave his master because he knows it is

better to be with the master than on his own. God wants you to know it is much better to be in his company, than trying to do things on your own. Be not dismayed God has plans to wrap His arms around you and carry you to higher heights than you thought you could go. God took you away from your home so you could create a new home here. You are being shaped to be the leaders of tomorrow so you can keep the home you love so much safe.

Beloved, that is also the message here. You cannot do things your own way. Your new family, the United States Navy, the Midshipmen and the chapel family want you to succeed. We need you to succeed. There is a partnership and brotherhood that is built because of the bond, the fraternity, the union of being part of this fantastic institution. You should be overwhelmingly excited each time you get to wear the nation's cloth and serve this glorious country. Now, let us focus on another sensitive issue. Everyone is aware the Navy and the Naval Academy has taken a hit because of allegations of sexual assault and sexual misconduct. This prayer says, "Protect those in whose love I live." You can't protect someone if you are preying on them. It is your obligation as a shipmate to support one another. When you see a classmate struggling, you help them. We are demanding that you intercede on behalf of your shipmates and your classmates. We hold you in high regard because you earned a spot to be here. Not everyone who applies to the United States Naval Academy gets in. In fact, there are approximately 1000 people who wanted your spot, but you were chosen for a purpose. Your purpose was to come and sit at the feet of the sharpest minds in the country. Your purpose was to grow as a servant and as a leader. Your purpose was to develop skills and expertise the country needs you to have. Your purpose was to look out for the weak and support freedom and democracy. This is the finest Navy in the entire world, but unless someone special like you decides to change the culture, and change the image, it will continue to take blow after blow, suffer black eye after black eye and lose the trust and respect of the people who need us the most. You are called to protect. You are called to serve.

When you ask God to protect those you love, you are asking God to blanket those who mean the most to you with His love. God has always, and will always look out for those

who call upon Him. My son, Bryson, once drew a picture of a superhero. He told me his superhero was the strongest, the fastest and the smartest superhero in the world. He told me his superhero could fly, and he told me his superhero could see through walls. Looking closer at the picture, I noticed a small figure in the top corner of the page. I said to him, “Son, I see something off in the corner. What is that?” He responded, “Daddy, that is Jesus looking out for my superhero.” What makes you special, what makes you gifted, what makes you proud, what makes you protected is Jesus looking out for you. As long as you are praying for God to protect those in whose love you live, you are asking God to send His son Jesus to look out for them. Walk in the authority you are given. Walk in the anointing you are blessed with, because Jesus is your protection.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does your name mean to you?
2. How are you meeting the goals you set for yourself? How are you meeting the goals God has for you?
3. What do you believe God is calling you to do with your life?
4. If you had to list the most important people in your life, who would they be? What are your prayers for loved ones?
5. How are you doing in your role as a servant?
6. How has your separation from family and friends shaped your perspective on life?
7. Explain how you are developing relationships at the United States Naval Academy.
8. Visualize yourself four years from now. What do you hope you look like? What do you hope you sound like? Who do you hope is in your circle? Where do you hope to be?
9. If you could see and hear Jesus over your shoulder every minute of your life, what would He say?

21 July 2013  
**Chaplain Margaret Siemer**

*Give me the will to do my best  
and to accept my share of responsibilities  
with a strong heart  
and a cheerful mind.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Fourth Petition

Genesis 18:1–10a

Psalm 1

Colossians 1:15–28

Luke 10:38-42

Our world is made up of many types of people. There are dog people and cat people, Pepsi people and Coke people, Naval Academy grads...and the rest of the world. ;-) But there's one thing all of us have in common: the desire to be happy. Of course, happiness means different things to different people. Regardless of how each person defines it, we all want it. The question is, "How do we get it?"

During my last semester of college, I studied in Salzburg, Austria. One of my educational experiences was visiting a concentration camp in Germany ruled by the Nazis at one time. The feeling I had walking through the camp is indescribable. I saw pictures of horribly malnourished people. I walked through a "medical facility" that was really just used for executions.

I vividly remember a long steep hill of stairs just outside the camp. When the population of prisoners became too great or just for kicks, the soldiers would line up the prisoners in formation, 10 across, 10 deep. Each prisoner was given a large rock or small boulder to carry to the top of this long, steep stairwell. On command, the prisoners were ordered to march up the steps. The soldiers yelled at them – "Faster, faster, you're going too slow!" Because the prisoners were weak and malnourished, inevitably a few or more would eventually stumble causing a chain reaction of small boulders and prisoners crashing down the stairs to their deaths. This execution site was the last thing I saw before

I boarded our bus.

Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim survived a Nazi prison camp. His perspective on life was greatly influenced by that experience. Bettelheim believed the one essential factor in finding happiness was in having hope. Many in the concentration camp believed what they were told: that they would never be free again, they would never see their families again, and they would never leave the camp alive. They lost all hope and gave up. Those who refused to believe they would die in prison, who held on to the hope that one day they would be free again and be reunited with their families...that hope sustained them and gave them strength.

We live in the most modern, prosperous nation on earth. You would think that at least most Americans would be happy. But that's not the case. A recent global study shows the United States as the 12th happiest country in the world with only 26 percent of Americans saying they are happy.

Why is that? When we observe our world, we can see, all around us, people frantically searching for happiness – through relationships, money, sex, religion, family, success, love, sports. And they want more and more and it becomes less and less satisfying.

What we're all longing and searching for is true lasting inner happiness.

In our scripture lesson today, the writer of Psalms says he can predict with absolute accuracy who will achieve true, lasting inner happiness...and who won't.

King David, who wrote these words under God's inspiration, was described as a man after God's own heart, but he also knew what it was like to walk in ways that were selfish, rebelling against God and experiencing the consequences. To summarize what he said in this passage: There are two roads you can walk down – one road is seeking God's ways and the other is walking your own way. David says those who choose to walk in God's way will, over time, come to experience what the Bible call blessedness.

Now that may not sound all that exciting, but believe it or not, blessedness is the heart condition that the world is looking for. I call it the Godspot. It's a place that only God can fill. Blessedness is:

- that indescribable, but very real, inner sense of well-being.



- an inner feeling of security and contentment.
- an unusual level of joy.
- calm assurance of self-worth.

When you know deep down, all is well between you and God. This is not based on circumstance. It goes beyond the highs and lows of life. The Bible says that the way to find it is to daily choose the road marked walking in God's ways.

David says, "a blessed person is like a tree planted by streams of water." When I served in the parched desert climate of Iraq with the Marines, we occasionally went to the wadi, a stream from Euphrates River, which is the only place where trees could survive. This is to what David refers. You are like a tree planted in the desert. Unless you are near the river daily, you will be parched at best or dead inside. When you really come to know God and you're walking daily in his ways, it will be as if a spring of water is welling up inside you and overflowing. A spring of living water that will never run dry.

David also says that a blessed person is like a leaf that does not wither. Blessed people have an inner resilience that enables them to keep rebounding from setbacks. Remember a few years ago - all across the country there was this thing called snowmageddon? I was living in Texas at the time, enjoying God's country (smile), and we got hit with snow that Texans are not prepared to handle. Since the trees were not used to the weight of the snow, they snapped even though the amount of snow, relatively speaking, was not really that much. They had not developed an inner strength. Plebes, that's what Plebe Summer is designed to do for you, to develop that resiliency so that when tough times come, you will be able to handle the weight of responsibility.

Blessedness is the confidence that God is in control of all circumstances. He causes everything that happens in your life to work for your ultimate good. Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose." Blessedness is knowing that your life and your eternal soul are in God's hands and he's watching over you and caring for you. And not just you, but your family, friends and your loved ones, as well. The whole world is yearning for this kind of happiness. Daily walking in God's way will get us there.

David mentions another group of people. Those who don't seek God's ways face a bleak future. A future filled with a gnawing absence of any sense of peace with God, and a recurring sense of uncertainty as to what the game of life is really all about.

In his attempt to describe this empty place in some people's hearts, David says they are like chaff blowing in the wind. Chaff is the outer shell of the grain. Once it's separated from the grain, it's worthless and just thrown out to be blown away by the wind. Don't misunderstand, people are not worthless, but the empty place in their hearts is worthless.

What David is driving at in Psalm 1 is each of us is going to wind up experiencing great feelings of blessedness or deep feelings of barrenness. It's going to be one or the other.

Now truth in advertising- I'm a chaplain. Am I starring in a commercial for God? Maybe, but here's what I know...I've walked both roads. I did not come into a relationship with God until well into my adult years. I can tell you, without a doubt, walking in God's ways, is the best way to live this life. Are there struggles and disappointments along the way? Oh yeah. But I wouldn't want to be living life without God.

Here's the reality- God loves you so much. There's nothing you can do to make him love you more. And there's nothing you can do to make him love you less. He loves you that much. He knows everything about you. He knows more about you than you know about yourself. And he still loves you that much. He loves you and he wants to be in relationship with you. He's provided a way to make that happen.

Here's the deal- every one of us has messed up somewhere along the way. You may not recognize it, but I guarantee you are not holy and perfect. I won't belabor this point because your detailers probably have done a pretty good job pointing out your weaknesses in the last few weeks. In order to be in relationship with a holy God, we have to be made new. We have to be made clean again. Jesus Christ, who is God and came to this earth in the form of a baby and eventually a man, gave up his life for us. He was the only one who could do this because he was holy and without sin. He took our sin, our mistakes, and our rebellion against God, upon himself and paid the price for our sin when he was crucified on a cross. When you accept that gift for yourself, you have the assurance that all is right

between you and God.

I accepted that gift in 1991. I recognized that living for myself wasn't working so well. I told God that I was ready to live for him, to be in relationship with him. I asked him to forgive me for my sins and to cleanse me and make me whole.

Many of you are already there. Some of you feel that nudge...pay attention to that- God wants to do some awesome stuff in your life. A few may feel pretty uncomfortable right now. Let me tell you what's going on there. We have a spiritual enemy who wants to claim your soul and make your life miserable. By hearing good news of what God can do in your life, our spiritual enemy is making a last ditch effort to claim you for his own. Don't let him win. It's not worth it. Recognize God's love for what it is- not a bunch of rules and regulations to restrict your life, not a bunch of religious mumbo jumbo. It's about a relationship with God who wants to give you what we been talking about today- that inner contentment, peace and joy.

I invite you to bow your heads with me. If you are ready to make that choice to walk in God's ways or maybe you've already made that decision but you feel the need to rededicate your life to him, I invite you to pray with me.

Holy God, I recognize that I messed up a long time ago. God, it doesn't feel good to admit that. I don't know what my life is going to look like, but I know I want to walk with you. Jesus, I receive you as my Lord and the one who saves me from all my sin. Forgive me, Lord, for all the ways I've rebelled against you. Cleanse my heart and make me whole. Give me the peace and joy that only you can give. "Give me the will to do my best and to accept my share of responsibilities with a strong (whole) heart and a cheerful mind," knowing that are right beside me all the way. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Discussion Questions:

1. What am I doing (or not doing) that is preventing me from having a strong, whole heart?
2. What people or things am I using to try and fill that void within me that only God can fill?
3. What specific steps will I take to fill that spiritual void that only God can fill?

28 July 2013  
**Chaplain Carey Cash**

*Make me considerate  
of those entrusted to my leadership  
and faithful to the duties  
my country has entrusted in me.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Fifth Petition

Exodus 18:14-27

Psalm 138

Colossians 2:6–15 [16–19]

Matthew 8:5-13

Holy Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight O Lord our strength and Redeemer, Amen.

For those of you who don't know me, especially our Plebes, I am Chaplain Carey Cash, Deputy Command Chaplain here at the Naval Academy. I come from the Baptist tradition, and grew up the son of a career naval officer; which is to say that my heroes growing up were anyone who wore the uniform. It's still hard for me to believe that I have the privilege of serving those of you who've raised your right hand to support and defend our nation. It's an honor to be one of your chaplains.

This morning we're continuing our sermon series on the Midshipman's Prayer and as a preface, it's worth it for us to remember that all of these petitions that make up the Midshipman's Prayer are more than just petitions...they're actually promises. In John 16, Jesus says something quite remarkable. He says "until now you've asked for nothing in my name, ask [in my name] and you will receive that your joy may be full."

Jesus is saying that if we are asking and petitioning the Lord in his name, according to his character, according to His desires for our lives, then whatever we ask for, we will receive. This doesn't mean if we ask for Plebe Summer to suddenly end early that that's going to happen. It doesn't mean that if you ask for one of your detailers to get mysteriously reassigned, that that will happen either. The point is that if we pray in

accordance with God's purposes for our lives, then we're already asking for the things that he wants for us, and so we can be sure that we'll receive abundantly from him. Why this is important is that when we look at each petition of the Midshipman's Prayer, we find that every one of them has their basis in God's desires and purposes for you and me.

- Let me aware of thy presence and obedient to thy will.
- Keep me true to my best self
- Protect those in whose love I live
- Give me the will to do my best

All of these are what God wants for us. So if we are praying like this in faith, we can be sure that God is going to give us what we ask. And that is something about which to rejoice.

All of this brings us to our specific focus today, the 5th petition of the Midshipman's Prayer: "Make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership." Some years ago when I was in my mid-twenties (not too much older than many of you), I went on a trip in West Virginia with a church group to do missions-work near Bluefield. On one particular day, some of the locals invited us to take some time off and come with them to go swimming in an old abandoned quarry that had become a recreational spot for the community. We got there and it seemed safe enough; so we started swimming and jumping off the rocks, having a great time. Well after a while some of the locals began beckoning us to climb up to a higher ledge and jump from there. They assured us the water was deep, it wasn't too high, and they'd been doing it for years. There was only one catch: In order to land in the water safely, you had to take a running start and leap out far enough so that you would clear another ledge that stuck out beneath you. I looked over the edge and surmised that I could probably clear it if I ran fast enough and jumped far enough. After all, I was young and felt kind of bullet proof. And did I mention I was married and already had two small children?

I backed up as far as I could, got low like I was coming out of a sprinter's stance, and just as I was about to burst forth to run towards the edge one of our leaders who was standing nearby, said to me, "Carey, stop!" I'll never forget the moment, because she

looked at me, half-smiling, and yet her words had a ring of truth that I could not deny. She said, “Carey, you’re not single anymore. You’ve got a wife and two kids...people depend upon you. What are you doing?” Have you ever had an “aha” moment where you knew something to be true, but it didn’t dawn on you until much later? A blinding flash of the obvious? That’s what happened here. She was exactly right, and I knew it. True, I was young, strong, and pretty capable, but I now had people depending upon me - a sweet wife and two little boys who needed a Dad. I smiled and climbed down. There would be no cliff-diving that day.

I share that NOT to say there aren’t risks in life. We in the military know about risks better than most. And I’m not necessarily saying you shouldn’t jump off high things. Some of you will be jumping out of lots of high things as a result of your service to our navy and nation. I share that little story because something “clicked” for me on that ledge that day that hadn’t clicked before. I already knew it, but on that day I really got it. I’m talking about the realization that I was responsible for the lives of others. Now, this happened to me as a parent, but this truth has immediate application for your life if you’re a Midshipman, especially if you’re a Plebe. Class of 2017, think about it: from the moment you walked through those huge doors of Bancroft, you were given responsibility for other people. Now it may not seem that way. Most of the time, you probably feel like you’re the one obeying orders and that other people are responsible for you. And that’s true too. But from the very beginning of your arrival, you’re given “other people” to care for - roommates, squad mates, and classmates that depend upon you for help and that you depend upon as well. How often have you asked a classmate for help with rates or the menu of the day or a uniform question? How often have you encouraged a classmate when he or she was feeling like throwing in the towel? Or when they were struggling at PEP? How often has a classmate helped you keep “pressing on” when you felt like you were just done? It starts in small ways; but in truth, it’s not a small thing at all –this responsibility to look out for others. And one day, this nation will place the lives of Sailors and Marines into your hands to lead, serve, and protect.

The realization that God has placed the lives of other people under our care is

sobering. It changes things, rearranges our priorities, upends our lives, puts things in a different light; and yet this is precisely what the 5th petition of the Midshipman's Prayer is all about: "Lord, make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership." Entrusted...it carries the idea of something of sacred value being given to you. We could certainly think of examples where some-thing of great value is entrusted to you. But this prayer is about people. "Lord make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership." It's a weighty truth; and it underscores the different way of life you've chosen from many others. I think this is something of what James was getting at when he says in James 3:1 "Let not many of you become teachers [leaders] my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." James is not trying to discourage leadership. He's just making the point that those who want to be leaders should count the cost. It is a sobering truth to be responsible for the lives of others.

On the other hand, the Bible is full of examples of men and women who had tremendous responsibilities for others and who learned to trust God with all of it. I think of Moses as he led the children of Israel, interceding on their behalf; Joshua as he charged the armies of Israel to faithfulness; Joseph as he cared for those with whom he was imprisoned, not forgetting their suffering; Elijah as he mentored Elisha and passed on his mantle of leadership to him; King David who led his people according to the integrity of his heart, guiding them by the skillfulness of his hands; Daniel as he encouraged his friends to remain faithful in the face of idolatry. In our Gospel reading today, we see the story of the Centurion, a man of great strength and military bearing, who commanded many; and yet for all his bearing and prowess, he loved his servant dearly who'd fallen ill; and he had regard for him as his own, imploring Jesus to heal him and bring him out of his torment.

Good leaders care for their people. This is actually written into the language of your Core Values. And what are the 3 Core Values? Honor, courage, and commitment. If you read the core values charter under the heading, "Commitment," it states, "I will care for the personal and spiritual well-being of my people." And this isn't chaplain-speak but written into the very charter of the United States Navy. This kind of leadership is often rare.



Some time ago I watched a documentary about a village in China that each year celebrates what they called the Festival of the 3 Rings. The way it works is that all the young men come out to a field near the village where in the middle of the field, buried in the mud are 3 brass rings. One represents fame; one power, and the other virility. At the sound of a horn, all the men rush into the field and for what seems like hours fight and gnash and pull and punch to get their hands on one of these rings. The point is that if you come up with a ring, you're promised that measure of success in life – either power, or fame, or wealth. If you don't...well you should have fought harder. I remember watching this strange ceremony, and thinking how it's a picture of our culture as well. We may do it cleaner ways, but there is a powerful temptation, even in the military, to seize upon career or power or success no matter the cost to ourselves, or others. The scriptures show us a different way to lead. Jesus said in Matthew 20 that we're not to lead by lording it over others and exercising heavy-handed tactics; but rather whoever wants to become great, must be a servant. This is why I love this petition from the Midshipman's Prayer. It keeps us grounded. "Lord make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership." This is servant-leadership and it makes all the difference.

Of all the Medal of Honor stories I have read, the story for Lieutenant Richard Antrim is, for me, one of the most compelling. Richard Antrim was Naval Academy Class of 1931, so by the time WWII broke out, he was already a senior Lieutenant and coming into his stride as a leader. He was the executive officer of the destroyer, USS POPE. In those days, executive officers of destroyers could be Lieutenants. In April of 1942, the POPE was attacked by the Japanese and sunk in the Java Sea leaving 150 men cast on the ocean for a week. As the ranking officer, Antrim managed to divide up enough rations to keep his men alive throughout the awful ordeal at sea. Soon they were picked up by a Japanese destroyer and brought to a POW camp on the Island of Celebes in the East Indies. One day during their imprisonment, a U.S. naval officer - one of Antrim's colleagues - failed to bow properly to one of the Japanese guards. In the Japanese culture at this time, this was the epitome of an insult. Frenzied by this apparent lack of respect, the guard began savagely beating the prisoner with his club. LT Antrim, along with hundreds of POWs watched, not

knowing what to do. Finally, after a few seconds, Antrim stepped in. Let me read to you part of the Medal of Honor citation because it says it better than I could:

"...Acting instantly on behalf of a naval officer who was subjected to a vicious clubbing by a frenzied Japanese guard...Commander (then Lieutenant) Antrim boldly intervened, attempting to quiet the guard and finally persuading him to discuss the charges against the officer. With the entire Japanese force assembled and making extraordinary preparations for the threatened beating, and with the tension heightened by 2,700 Allied prisoners rapidly closing in, Antrim courageously appealed to the fanatic enemy, risking his own life in a desperate effort to mitigate the punishment. When the other man had been beaten unconscious by 15 blows of a hawser-club and was repeatedly kicked by three soldiers to a point beyond which he could not survive, Antrim gallantly stepped forward and indicated to the perplexed guards that he would take the remainder of the punishment.

The Japanese were speechless and they were completely thrown off balance in their amazement.

The citation continues: "A roar of acclaim went up from the suddenly inspired Allied prisoners. By his fearless leadership and valiant concern for the welfare of another, Antrim not only saved the life of a fellow officer but he stunned the Japanese into sparing his own life and brought about a new respect for American officers and men and a great improvement in camp living conditions..."

Lord make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership...Midshipmen, you may not be at a Prisoner of War camp in the south pacific; but you do have friends and classmates who for one reason or another are feeling beaten down by the circumstances of their lives. Perhaps they're feeling overwhelmed by the stresses of Plebe Summer, or they're struggling to meet the physical demands. Maybe they've got difficult circumstances at home that are weighing on them, or are just being beaten down by the challenges of being a Plebe every day. What they need the most right now is a friend, a leader who will step in, and be willing to intervene. This is what Jesus did for us. Philippians 2 says, "...Christ Jesus...although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself and taking the form of

a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death upon a cross.” Jesus stepped in when we needed him most and took our punishment on himself. He was the greatest leader who ever lived.

This means when we pray, “Lord make us considerate of those entrusted to our leadership,” we’re really praying to be more like Jesus...and that’s a prayer that God can answer. Class of 2017, look around at one another. You’re responsible for each other. You’re classmates have been entrusted to you. It’s a tremendous responsibility and charge. But if you will look unto Jesus and lead as he led, love as he loved, you’re classmates and one day your shipmates will follow you. They’ll follow you because they’ll see in you something true and authentic. They will say about you there is something different. They will be more willing to follow, to sacrifice, to serve and to act. Even if they cannot describe it, they will sense about you the aroma of Christ, the fragrance of righteousness without which nothing of value can ever endure. And it will make all the difference. “Lord make us considerate of all those entrusted to our leadership.” Amen.

## Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways have you sensed a responsibility to look out for your fellow Plebes?
2. How have you experienced God's blessing in your life through someone who was looking out for you? What characteristics come to mind when you think of this person?
3. James 3:1 says "Let not many of you become teachers (or leaders) knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." Why are leaders held to a higher standard by God?
4. Can you think of examples from the Bible of men and women who led and cared for others?
5. What about the Roman Centurion from Matthew 8:5-13? What qualities do you see in his life that you want to emulate?
6. Jesus is the supreme example of servant-leadership. In Matthew 20, He says that "whoever wants to be great must be servant of all." How can we serve those around us even if we're higher in the chain-of-command than they are?
7. How does the Medal of Honor story of LT Richard Antrim apply even to our daily lives? Are there people you know who are being "beaten down" by the issues of life? How might you intervene to help them?
8. Prayer: Lord Jesus as You have met me right where I am time and time again, help me reach out to those in my care and supervision. Help me see the great trust that you have given me in the lives of others. May I be a good leader, praying for my people, attentive to their needs, leading them by example, and loving them even through conflict and difficult circumstances. In Your name I pray, Amen.

4 August 2013  
**Chaplain Michael Gore**

*Let my uniform remind me daily  
of the traditions  
of the service  
of which I am a part.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Sixth Petition

Numbers 15:37-41

Psalm 149

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 7:15-20

One of my favorite musicals is *The Fiddler on the Roof*. The movie begins with the sun rising slowly over the village of Anatevka. Gradually, as the darkness gives way to dawn, you begin to hear the haunting sounds of a scratchy violin. Moments later, you see a fiddler perched precariously atop a little house playing a lively tune. At that very moment, Tevye the milkman appears and says: “A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka, every one of us is a fiddler on the roof trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn't easy. You may ask, why do we stay here if it's so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home. And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word: Tradition!

“Because of our traditions, we have kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything: how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered, and always wear a little prayer-shawl. This shows our constant devotion to God. You may ask, how did this tradition start? I'll tell you. I don't know. But it's a tradition. And because of our traditions, every one of us knows who he is, and what God expects him to do. Traditions, traditions. Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as... as... as a fiddler on the roof!”

Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof! Indeed, traditions are important. The Navy is replete with them. Our traditions tell us who we are

and what is expected of us. They place us in relationship to our Navy and our nation. And the uniforms we wear are a part of that great tradition.

For those of us who wear them, the uniform connects us to all who donned our country's cloth in bygone days winning honor and accolades by their courage and their daring. Indeed, the uniform connects us to the likes of John Paul Jones and Stephen Decatur; Oliver Hazard Perry and David Farragut; Fleet Admirals Halsey, Nimitz, Leahy, and King; Amazing Grace Hopper, the first female Flag officer; and Vice Admiral Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr., the first African-American to serve as an officer aboard a fighting ship, the first to command a Navy ship, the first to command a fleet, and the first to achieve Flag rank.

Yes, for those of us who wear them, the uniform connects us to those who've gone before us. And so we teach our midshipmen to pray: "Almighty Father...Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of the service of which I am a part." It's the uniform that connects us to the traditions of service and valor bequeathed to us from our predecessors.

I'm not exactly sure when I first found it, but if my memory serves me, I was a lad of six or seven and it happened this way. My father got a new job far across town. In order to be closer to that job, he bought a little house not far from the factory where he was newly employed. It was a small house, much smaller than the one we had moved from, and it was clearly not large enough for a family as large as ours. In fact, the new house had only one bedroom and that bedroom went to my eighteen year old sister, leaving me, my two brothers, and my parents sleeping together in the living room until a new bedroom could be added to the house. Once that was done, my parents moved me and one of my brothers to a double bed beside them in their bedroom. As you can imagine, it was hardly an ideal arrangement.

Be that as it may, now that I was sharing a bedroom with my parents, I grew a bit bold. And in my boldness I began to snoop through their dresser drawers to see what I might find. And that's when I found it. Folded neatly in the top drawer of a tall dresser was my father's uniform from World War 2.

You see, my father was a signalman in World War 2 and served aboard the U.S.S.

Philadelphia. He participated in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, and southern France. He rarely talked about his experience but as I grew older I learned enough to know that he saw all the combat he ever hoped to see and didn't want any of his children to experience what he had experienced during the war.

Despite the fact that he didn't say much about his naval service, I grew up wanting to follow in his steps. I wonder now if perhaps the first seeds of such an interest were initially sown that day when I first found his uniform tucked neatly away and learned that my father had been a Sailor in World War 2. In any event, after I donned the cloth of my country, my father opened up and began to share sea stories he never shared with me before. Suddenly we shared a common bond. We were part of a shared tradition. And when he died, his uniform was passed down to me to keep the memory alive.

Yes, for those of us who wear them, the Navy uniform connects us to those who've gone before us. And so we teach our Midshipmen to pray: "Almighty Father...Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of the service of which I am a part." But for those who have never worn a uniform, this petition may seem meaningless. And yet, perhaps people of faith are called to uniformed service as well. Perhaps people of faith are called to wear a uniform that identifies them with the great traditions of their religion.

I know this is true for our Jewish friends and neighbors. Just a few days ago I was walking across the yard when I ran into a family of Orthodox Jews visiting the Academy grounds. I stopped to greet them and, during the course of our conversation, I noticed some tassels dangling from their garments. Those tassels are prescribed by God in Numbers 15:37-41. "The Lord said to Moses: 'Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.'" (NRSV)

Here God tells the Jews to wear tassels to remind them of who they are and whose they

are and what is expected of them. According to Rabbi Sherwin, who serves on our staff, there are 613 knots and loops in those tassels to remind the Jewish people of the 613 commandments set forth in the Torah. Rabbi Sherwin tells me there are 248 positive commandments, “Thou Shalts,” representing all the bones in the body, and those positive commandments remind us that we are to obey God with every fiber of our being. Deducting the 248 positive commandments from the total of 613 leaves 365 negative commandments, “Thou Shall Nots,” and those negative commandments remind us that we are to refrain from sin every day of every year of our entire lives.

It’s a beautiful interpretation and I admire the practice of our Jewish friends who wear a uniform to remind them of the great Torah tradition to which they belong – and the God of that tradition to whom they owe absolute obedience. But what about us? What about Christians? Perhaps we also belong to God’s uniformed service. Perhaps we are commanded to wear a uniform that connects us to the great traditions of our faith – a uniform that identifies us just as surely as a Navy uniform identifies a Sailor and tassels identify a Jew. Is there such a uniform? There is!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, the apostle Paul writes about the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead. In verse 2 Paul tells us that Christ will come unexpectedly like a thief in the night, but he assures us in verses 4-8 that the Second Coming will not catch us by surprise if we stay sober and alert and are dressed in the proper uniform when Jesus comes again. What is that uniform? The answer is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 where Paul says, “...let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” (NRSV) Faith, love, and hope - these are the elements that comprise the Christian’s uniform. People should be able to look at us and see these things.

My friend, are you wearing the uniform of faith? According to Hebrews 11:1 and 6, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen...without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (NRSV)

What is faith? Faith is believing that God exists. But it’s more than that. The devils



believe that much and tremble. (James 2:19) No, faith is more than believing that God exists. It is believing not only that he exists but that he also rewards those who diligently seek him. And how do you know whether or not you are seeking him? It will show in what you do. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews makes this plain. For after giving the definition of faith, Hebrews goes on to provide a long list of saints who demonstrated their faith by their actions – saints like Abel, Enoch, and Noah; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Joseph, Moses, and others who demonstrated their faith by their works and their deeds.

My friend, are you wearing the uniform of faith? When people look at you do they see someone who truly believes that God exists? Do they see someone who truly believes that God rewards those who diligently seek him? And do they see someone who is demonstrating their faith by what they do on a daily basis? This brings us to the second piece of the Christian's uniform: love.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul tells us to put on the breastplate of faith and love. Notice how these two articles are joined together by the apostle Paul. They are all part of the same breastplate. Why? Because faith and love – love for God and love for neighbor - always go hand in hand. If you truly believe in God then you will love him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and you will love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:34-40) Yes, faith and love go hand in hand. That's why James 2:14-17 says, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (NRSV) My friend, are you wearing the uniform of faith? And are you wearing the uniform of love? When people look at you do they see someone who is head over heels in love with God and actively involved in loving others?

Finally, are you wearing for a helmet the hope of salvation? What is the hope of salvation? It is the hope that comes to those who have accepted the saving help of Jesus Christ. You see, if we have accepted the saving help of Jesus Christ then we should be filled with hope! We should be filled with hope because we know our sins are forgiven.

We should be filled with hope because we know we're accepted by God. We should be filled with hope because we know that Jesus is with us to help us when we need him. And we should be filled with hope because we know that he has prepared a place for us in glory! Knowing all of this, how can we be anything but hopeful? My friend, are you wearing for a helmet the hope of salvation? When people look at you do they see someone who is full of hope? They should! It is your birthright as a Christian.

Brothers and sisters, if you're a Christian then you're part of God's uniformed service. And as part of God's uniformed service, you are to dress yourself in faith, love, and hope! God supplies them. All are gifts. But you must put them on. Are you wearing them? When Christ comes again, will he find you in uniform? Will you pass his inspection? You think about that. So let us pray: "Almighty Father...Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of Thy service of which I am a part." Amen.

## Discussion Questions:

1. In *The Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye says, “Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof!” What are some of the traditions that you find most meaningful in your family, your work, and/or your life of faith?
2. In Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus criticizes some of the religious traditions of his time. What were those traditions and how can religious traditions sometimes undermine our faith?
3. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:15. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15, Paul told the Thessalonian Christians to hold fast to the traditions that he taught them by word of mouth and in written letters. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 he spoke of the traditions he passed on to the Thessalonians by his example. What were those traditions and why were they important? What traditions have been passed down to you by word of mouth or example that strengthen, rather than weaken, your faith?
4. In the Midshipman’s prayer we pray to God saying, “Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of the service of which I am a part.” The uniform is an outward and visible symbol that connects those who wear it with military service, the country at large, and the citizenry of that country. What outward and visible signs and/or symbols connected you with the Christian faith, God’s service, and his Church?
5. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul says, “...let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith.” According to Hebrews 11:1 & 6, faith is believing that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him. How did you first come to faith? How have you experienced the rewards of faith?
6. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul says, “...let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of love.” According to Matthew 22:34-40 and James 2:14-17, true faith results in love for God and loving service of others. How has your faith inspired you to love God and neighbor and what concrete acts demonstrate that love?

7. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul says, "...let us be sober, and put on...for a helmet the hope of salvation." The hope of salvation is the kind of hope that comes to those who have accepted the saving help of Jesus Christ. How has Jesus helped you to be hopeful?

11 August 2013  
**Chaplain John Connolly**

*If I am inclined to doubt,  
steady my faith;  
if I am tempted,  
make me strong to resist;  
if I should miss the mark,  
give me courage to try again.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Seventh Petition

Joshua 1:1-9

Psalm 119:129-136

James 1:12-18

John 20:19-31

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Personally, I find the opportunity to be in this pulpit today to be a tremendous blessing. Over the past little over six weeks I have had the privilege of serving as the Plebe Parent Contact on behalf of the Chaplain Center. I feel that this has provided a certain kinship between us that I have really enjoyed. Over these weeks I have enjoyed quite a few conversations with you, our families, where I have prayed for you and I have prayed with you. I have struggled with you and I have struggled for you. And, I have even laughed with you on occasion.

About 6 ½ weeks ago you dropped off your sons and your daughters here at the Naval Academy and entrusted them into the care of the US Navy. That was a day that was filled with many emotions: joy, excitement, sadness, tears, fear, and laughter. That day, the question that I am sure was at the top of almost all your lists was, “Am I doing the right thing; sending my son or my daughter to the US Naval Academy? I am just not sure. I am not sure they are ready. I am not sure they can make it. They’re just too young. Do they have enough underwear?”

That same sentiment is one that I now have a much better understanding of than I previously did. You see, just a few days before the Naval Academy’s I-Day, my family and I experienced our own sort of I-Day. This year, our daughter, Maggie Rose, headed off for

summer camp for the first time ever. Preparing for it was tremendously exciting, and we each headed into it very enthusiastically eagerly preparing. We packed, and double packed and even made sure she had enough underwear. Then the fateful time finally came to say “goodbye.” I helped her carry her bags down to her cabin and carefully placed them on her bunk. I met her counselor, McKenzie, who would be with her the whole time; an incredible young lady. I then pulled Maggie Rose aside for a moment just to tell her goodbye, tell her how much I love her, and send her forth with a blessing. Then, the emotions of the whole thing finally hit me in an overwhelming way. “Am I doing the right thing? Is she ready? Will she be able to make it?” Then, the waterworks began. Maggie Rose turned and looked at me, and she too began to tear up. Then, she got very frustrated, put her hands firmly on her hips, stomped her foot, and let out an exasperated, “Daaad!!!” At that point, my lovely wife, Emma, stepped outside to see what was taking so long, and what all the commotion was about. Maggie Rose did not even bat an eye. She turned, looked at my wife and pointed at me saying, “He started it.” With no further fanfare, Maggie Rose walked immediately into her cabin, did not look back, but waved over her shoulder with a quick, “bye.”

It was at that point, all my doubts and fears quickly subsided. All concerns were washed away. Maggie Rose would be just fine, and of that I had no doubt. It was at that moment that a prayer we pray each week was resoundingly answered, “If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith.” Our Lord, through the determined confidence of an eight year old little girl, sent a very clear answer to my prayer.

The truth is doubting, being tempted, and missing the mark of God’s intentions in our lives are all quite normal parts of being human. On the other hand, steadying my faith, making me strong to resist temptation, and giving me courage to try again are all normal parts of what God does for us. The thing is we are not required to remain in a status of doubt. We are not required to continue to struggle with temptation. We are not required to miss the mark of the high calling in our lives of God’s intentions over and over again.

Our Gospel reading for today, John 20:19-31, is one of those very encouraging texts to me. It is normally read on that first Sunday after Easter each year. It is through this text

that Thomas gets a very bad rap and is thereafter referred to as “Doubting Thomas.” But really, you doubt one time and you are forever marked; just doesn’t seem all that fair. Now, although Thomas figures very prominently in this text, however, I am really not so sure that he is the point. I think this is one of those occasions that we could take a cue from the Carly Simon song, “You’re so vain, I bet you think this [sermon’s] about you.”

This Gospel reading, the Midshipman’s Prayer, and even this sermon are really much more about God than they are about us. The reading, the prayer, and this sermon all freely acknowledge, “Of course I doubt, of course I am tempted, of course I miss the mark – that is the whole point.” This prayer could probably be even more appropriately prayed not “If I doubt,” but instead, “When I doubt.” It is really not a matter of IF; it is much more a matter of WHEN because I certainly have and I certainly will again. Thomas was simply bold enough to actually admit it.

Thomas effectively and openly confessed, “I am really having a hard time believing all this stuff. This is a lot to absorb. I want to believe, but this is very hard. I need more, I need help to believe.” And, Jesus answered that prayer in a simple and straightforward manner.

“Thomas, do you need more to believe? Well, I have more. Place your fingers here, does that help? Place your hands here. Do you need more, because I will certainly give you more?” Even our ability to believe is a gift from God. So, when I doubt Lord, and I certainly will doubt, steady my faith.

So, let’s turn this around some, since this really is much more about God than it is about you and me. When I doubt, when I face temptation, when I miss the mark – how does God answer this prayer? I am completely confident that God does.

Take a look, a good hard look at our own lives. Not those grand, big neon sign moments, but the simple and quiet moments. Elijah, the prophet from the Old Testament went to meet God on a mountain top. Elijah expected to meet God in the mighty wind, but did not find God there. Then he expected to meet God in the roaring fire, but did not meet God there. Then he expected to meet God in the tremendous earthquake, but did not meet God there. Instead, Elijah came into the presence of God in the stillness and the quietness. Elijah met God in the still small voice.

We too meet God in the simple, the still and the quiet as well. We meet God and hear his reply for instance in the God-given confidence and strength of an eight year old girl. We meet God in the compassion and love of a phenomenal wife of 22 years. But, even more so, we meet God at the table, in the font and in the word.

At the table we are reminded, “This is my body,” and “This is my blood,” experienced in simple and ordinary bread and wine; not extravagant, but simple. Yet, in this simple bread and simple wine is the true embodiment of our Lord, broken and shed for us – for the forgiveness of our sins.

At the font a sinner is cleansed and welcomed to the family of God. Here they are bathed in the simple, ordinary waters of baptism and connected to God’s holy and abiding word and promise. It is in this simple bath that salvation is extended – to you.

The opening to the Gospel of John we read, “In the beginning was the Word...and God’s Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” as a common Jewish child born of very common parents. Yet this same Word came to redeem us through his sacrifice on a cruel Roman cross as a common criminal. Through this Word we have life, and this is the same Word that we proclaim today.

Throughout the millennia, in many and various ways, people have prayed this same prayer to steady my faith, to make me strong to resist, and to give me the courage to try again. Throughout the millennia God has also answered those prayers, and continues to answer them; in very unexpected ways. In this he extends his overwhelming love, grace, forgiveness, and redemption to all of us.

So now, for you nearly seven weeks into this adventure, how has God answered your prayer? How has God heard and answered your plea to steady my faith? Certainly, some doubts may have lingered. No doubt that you still face the occasional temptation. I am quite positive that some of the objectives that may have been set have been missed. All of that is OK, because we are still human and God is still God. But, continue to pray, AND God will continue to answer those prayers. This really is, after all, much more about God than it ever will be about you and me.



## Discussion Questions:

1. Think back across the moments of your life that you have experienced the greatest doubt, fear, anxiety, etc. What helped resolve that fear and doubt, and how can you now see the hand of God at work in helping to relieve your fears?
2. Thomas has gained the infamous moniker of “Doubting Thomas” for having the courage to actually state that he needed help to believe. Each of us, no doubt, has cried out in one way or another to God in a similar way to help strengthen our faith. How have you been allowed to “place your fingers in the wounds” as it were to help strengthen your faith?
3. When you stop looking for the big neon sign ways that God answers your prayers, you begin to see the small and simple ways that God was there answering that prayer all along. How has God done that for you?
4. Really none of us have accomplished truly meaningful things in our lives without mistake. Our marriages and raising our children for the vast majority of us would comprise those things in our lives that are the most meaningful, and also those things in our lives that represent the largest number of mistakes. How has God filled you with his Spirit to give you the courage to try again when you have missed the mark in those areas of your life that are the most meaningful?

18 August 2013  
**Chaplain Madison Carter**

*Guide me with the light of truth  
and keep before me  
the life of Him  
by whose example and help  
I trust to obtain the answer to my prayer,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary—Eighth Petition

1 Chronicles 16:34-36

Psalm 43:1-4

1 John 5:6-15

John 14:1-14

The Bible tells us, that when we pray, we should pray with confidence. The Bible also tells us that we should pray without ceasing. The Bible tells us that we should practice intercessory prayer for our friends, families, loved ones and enemies. The Bible also tells us that we should pray acknowledging God's goodness and God's power. Most importantly, the Bible tells us to pray in the name of Jesus.

Over the last several weeks, your Protestant Chaplains have preached through the Midshipmen's prayer walking through the Bible taking a look at different stanzas of this prayer and dissecting it so you can better understand it. What makes this prayer exciting is that it incorporates all of the small details God asks for us to follow when we come to him in prayer.

We started off by helping you see that we are praying to an "All Mighty God whose ways are in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth." If we serve a God who is so power that he can control the sea, the great waters, who can command all and who provides unfailing love, then don't we serve a God who is powerful enough to take care of our teensy weensy problems? This portion of the prayer also asks us to be aware of His presence and obedient to His will.

There is absolutely nothing we can accomplish in life if we are not aware of God's unfailing love all around us. There is no possible way we can be successful and achieve our goals if we are not obedient to the will of God.

After looking at that stanza, we explained the value of being true to our best self in order to guard against dishonesty in purpose and in deed. If you are true to who you are in the eyes of God, then you have no reason to be ashamed of what you are; however, it requires you to remain in the will of God so you remain in his favor. As long as you have favor with God, then you can be proud to stand before your shipmates and those you love.

Next, we talked about "protecting those in whose love we live." During that sermon, we learned that God will cover your family, and those who matter most to you if you simply ask him to. However, we must also understand our family is not just those in our home states and home towns, but our family also consist of the men and women who wear this same uniform.

This prayer also tells us to ask God for the will to do our very best taking hold of each responsibility with a passionate heart and jovial mind, and the prayer asks us to be "considerate of those entrusted to our leadership." When you are in a leadership role, you must never forget you are responsible for precious cargo. In the military, that means you are responsible for the lives of God's children. There is someone's daughter, someone's son, someone's mother, someone's father, someone's niece and someone's nephew who looks to you for guidance through some of the darkest challenges in life, and you must be considerate of the fact that lives are at stake. You can't possible lead others if you are vacillating in your thoughts and character. You must know your center.

This prayer also teaches us to ask for our uniform to remind us that we have accepted a higher calling that requires us to give up our self for our country and we know there will be time when we will doubt, but God is faithful and just to steady our faith and give us the courage to keep trying.

Today, we come to the conclusion of this prayer. When we close this prayer we go to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and our last word is "Amen."

The person whose example you must follow is Jesus Christ. You must be a person of

integrity. You must be a person of honor. You must be a person who speaks truth. You must be a person who is not afraid of confrontation. You must be a person who knows when to speak and knows when to be silent. You must be a person who is charismatic enough that others will want to be around you, and you must be a person who is humble enough to know there are times when you should steal away to get the feet of our Father in Heaven and leave the crowds behind.

In this service, there are six occasions where we pray corporately. We are trying to demonstrate to you that we can never have enough prayer. If you are going to be the leader God called you to be, you must have a strong prayer foundation throughout your daily routines. We are asking God to step in our behalf because we realize we are greater with Him than we are without Him.

Paul writes this text in Colossians because he knows the church is under attack. He knows there is danger ahead of them, but they cannot afford to lose focus on Christ. Young people, the reason why you have so many wonderful men and women in this congregation who hope to encourage you is not because they think they are better than you or because they are trying to look down on you. It is because they have lived life long enough to see the pitfalls and traps you are heading toward. We are passionate about helping each of you make sure you do not make many of the same mistakes we have made.

If you commit this prayer to memory, you will have that will capitulate you to a closer relationship with God, and it will provide a covering for you as you matriculate throughout your military career. Paul wrote Colossians because he was concerned the people of God would be pulled away from God, and it is our prayer you are not pulled away from God. Paul wanted the church to realize that it was Christ that gave them everything they needed for success. It was not their ability to build cathedrals, to build ships, to travel the world, but it was their relationship with Christ. You are stronger because of your faithful foundation in Christ and not because you survived PEP, because you can do chow calls or because you can know your rates. You are stronger because of God.

Today, this series is concluded just the way the prayer is concluded-“In Jesus name.” We get to God because we go through Jesus. Our sin blocked us from getting to God, but

when Jesus shed his blood on that Old Rugged Cross, he opened the doors for us to have salvation. You and I must have a burning desire to be all into Christ. His word tells us to delight in him, and that means we should be in love with him.

When my wife and I first started dating, I wanted to do all I could to get her to fall in love with me. Some of you have heard me tell this before, but I wanted her to want me. I knew what her schedule was better than she did. The only route she could take to get home went right past my gym, and I would make it a point to be in the gym's parking lot hoping she would catch a glimpse of me as she hit the stop light. She mentioned a cologne she liked and took a bath in it every day. She told me a meal she liked and I learned to cook it. She told me the books she liked to read, and I read the books so I could quote them to her. She told me the songs she liked to listen to so I bought the CDs. I wanted to know all about her and make her want to know all about me. I wanted to make sure she was aware that I would be everything she needed me to be.

God is telling all of us, He sent his son to be everything we need and more. However, we miss opportunities to get closer to God because of pride. This prayer comes to a conclusion knowing that pride cannot be part of the equation. You must humble yourself before God and be willing to call upon Jesus' name acknowledging that he is your only source of salvation.

The disciples were scared when Jesus told them he was going to leave them, but he had to go to the cross in order for them to have the comforter he promised. Likewise, Jesus had to go to the cross in order for us to have power.

When Paul says he took your sin to nail it to the cross, it was because he knew that without the death of Jesus we were condemned to Hell. Today is the day you leave pride at the door and ask God to take your sin and nail it to the cross. Today is the day that you check pride so God can check you into Heaven.

To cut across the field, there are more than 30 times the Bible uses the word Amen. In those times, do we really know what we are saying? Amen is a statement of firmness. It says, "So let it be." It is a statement of security. It is a statement of trust. When we say "Amen" at the end of a prayer, we are actually saying, "Lord seal it." The Lord seals the

prayer because of that awesome son Jesus and that advocate that went to the Cross on your behalf. His sacrifice meant death no longer had a sting and death no longer has power. In the book of Revelation the Bible says in chapter 3 the great Amen is Jesus. That means Jesus is the conclusion. He is the exclamation point. He is the seal to the prayer. His death means the prayer is heard by God because he stamped it by His blood.

His proclamation, his virgin birth, his life, his betrayal and his conviction are the story, but his death is the exclamation point. Rather than you carrying a heavy burden you were not designed to carry, take it to the cross and leave it there. Rather than trying to solve problems you are not capable of fixing, take it to the cross and leave it there. Rather than trying to conquer the world by yourself, take your burden to the cross and leave it there.

Remember, leave your burden with the Lord and shout your Amen. You take fornication to the cross and shout, Amen, because it is done. You take gossiping to the cross and shout, Amen. You take cheating, stealing, backbiting, adultery and alcoholism to the cross and shout, Amen. You take worry, you take hate, you take anger, you take depression to the cross and shout, Amen. When you seal it by the power of Christ you can't take it back.

By his death we have the same power and authority of Heaven. It is by his death that we have a healing. It is by his suffering that we have freedom. It is by his resurrection that we have joy. It is by his ascension to Heaven we have freedom. It is by Christ we have power. We can shout Hallelujah because the Amen means we concluded our prayer knowing we have a greater power than the rest of the world. It is a power the world can't give and the world can't take away. When you have that type of power, all of God's people can say, "AMEN!"

## Discussion Questions:

1. How can you pray with more authority and conviction?
2. What does the word, “Amen” mean to you?
3. What do you need to take to the cross and leave with God?
4. Has anyone ever said you are too “proud?” If so, how did it make you feel? If not, is there anyone you know who is too proud? What is that person like to be around?
5. What are some of the things that are pulling you away from your relationship with God?
6. If you could write a letter to a friend warning them of danger ahead, what it would say?
7. What are some things you wished someone would have warned you about?

# Midshipman's Prayer Lectionary

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## First Petition

Genesis 1:1-10

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20

I cry aloud to God,  
aloud to God, that he may hear me.

<sup>2</sup>In the day of my trouble I seek the LORD;  
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;  
my soul refuses to be comforted.

<sup>11</sup>I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD;  
I will remember your wonders of old.

<sup>12</sup>I will meditate on all your work,  
and muse on your mighty deeds.

<sup>13</sup>Your way, O God, is holy.  
What god is so great as our God?

<sup>14</sup>You are the God who works wonders;  
you have displayed your might among the peoples.

<sup>15</sup>With your strong arm you redeemed your people,  
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Selah

<sup>16</sup>When the waters saw you, O God,  
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;  
the very deep trembled.

<sup>17</sup>The clouds poured out water;  
the skies thundered;  
your arrows flashed on every side.

<sup>18</sup>The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;  
your lightnings lit up the world;



the earth trembled and shook.  
<sup>19</sup>Your way was through the sea,  
your path, through the mighty waters;  
yet your footprints were unseen.  
<sup>20</sup>You led your people like a flock  
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

#### 1 Peter 3:13-22

<sup>13</sup>Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?  
<sup>14</sup>But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup>yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.  
<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

#### Mark 4:35-41

<sup>35</sup>On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

## **Second Petition**

Daniel 9:4-19

<sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying,  
"Ah, LORD, great and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, <sup>5</sup>we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances. <sup>6</sup>We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.  
<sup>7</sup>Righteousness is on your side, O LORD, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. <sup>8</sup>Open shame, O LORD, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you. <sup>9</sup>To the LORD our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him, <sup>10</sup>and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.  
<sup>11</sup>All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. So the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against you. <sup>12</sup>He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers, by bringing upon us a calamity so great that what has been done against Jerusalem has never before been done under the whole heaven. <sup>13</sup>Just as it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us. We did not entreat the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and reflecting on his fidelity. <sup>14</sup>So the LORD kept watch over this calamity until he brought it upon us. Indeed, the LORD our God is right in all that he has done; for we have disobeyed his voice.  
<sup>15</sup>And now, O LORD our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and made your name renowned even to this day — we have sinned, we have done wickedly. <sup>16</sup>O LORD, in view of all your righteous acts, let your anger and wrath, we pray, turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; because of our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors, Jerusalem and your people have become a disgrace among all our neighbors. <sup>17</sup>Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, and for your own sake, Lord, let your face shine upon your desolated sanctuary. <sup>18</sup>Incline your ear, O my God, and hear. Open your eyes and look at our desolation and the city that bears your name. We do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies. <sup>19</sup>O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, listen and act and do not delay! For your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people bear your name!"

Psalm 25:1-9

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.  
<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.  
<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.  
<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.  
<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.  
<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!  
<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

#### 2 Corinthians 12:2–10

<sup>2</sup>I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. <sup>3</sup>And I know that such a person — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows — <sup>4</sup>was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. <sup>5</sup>On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, <sup>7</sup>even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. <sup>8</sup>Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

#### Luke 22:39-46

<sup>39</sup>He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." <sup>41</sup>Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, <sup>42</sup>Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done. [ <sup>43</sup>Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave

him strength. <sup>44</sup>In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.] <sup>45</sup>When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

## **Third Petition**

Numbers 14: 11-21

<sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? <sup>12</sup>I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

<sup>13</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for in your might you brought up this people from among them, <sup>14</sup>and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people; for you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go in front of them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. <sup>15</sup>Now if you kill this people all at one time, then the nations who have heard about you will say, <sup>16</sup>'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them that he has slaughtered them in the wilderness.'<sup>17</sup>And now, therefore, let the power of the LORD be great in the way that you promised when you spoke, saying, <sup>18</sup>'The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and the fourth generation.'

<sup>19</sup>Forgive the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have pardoned this people, from Egypt even until now."

<sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said, "I do forgive, just as you have asked; <sup>21</sup>nevertheless — as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD —.

Psalm 25:1-9

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.

<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,

for your goodness' sake, O LORD!  
<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

#### Philippians 1: 3-12

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup>to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.  
<sup>12</sup>I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel.

#### Matthew 19: 23-29

<sup>23</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup>Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>25</sup>When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>26</sup>But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."  
<sup>27</sup>Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" <sup>28</sup>Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup>And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.

## **Fourth Petition**

Genesis 18:1–10a

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on — since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. <sup>9</sup>They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." <sup>10</sup>Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

Psalm 1

Happy are those  
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup>but their delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.  
<sup>3</sup>They are like trees  
planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither.  
In all that they do, they prosper.  
<sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.  
<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;  
<sup>6</sup>for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Colossians 1:15–28

<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup>for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so

that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup>And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him — <sup>23</sup>provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

<sup>24</sup>I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. <sup>25</sup>I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup>the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup>To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup>It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

#### Luke 10:38-42

<sup>38</sup>Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup>She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup>there is need of only one thing.

Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."



## **Fifth Petition**

Exodus 18:14-27

<sup>14</sup>When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" <sup>15</sup>Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. <sup>16</sup>When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God." <sup>17</sup>Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup>You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. <sup>19</sup>Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; <sup>20</sup>teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. <sup>21</sup>You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>22</sup>Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. <sup>23</sup>If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace."

<sup>24</sup>So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. <sup>25</sup>Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. <sup>26</sup>And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves. <sup>27</sup>Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country.

## **Psalm 138**

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
<sup>2</sup>I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;  
for you have exalted your name and your word  
above everything.  
<sup>3</sup>On the day I called, you answered me,  
you increased my strength of soul.  
<sup>4</sup>All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD,  
for they have heard the words of your mouth.  
<sup>5</sup>They shall sing of the ways of the LORD,  
for great is the glory of the LORD.  
<sup>6</sup>For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly;  
but the haughty he perceives from far away.  
<sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;

you stretch out your hand,  
and your right hand delivers me.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;  
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.  
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

#### Colossians 2:6–15 [16–19]

<sup>6</sup>As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup>when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. <sup>17</sup>These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup>Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, <sup>19</sup>and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

#### Matthew 8:5-13

<sup>5</sup>When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him <sup>6</sup>and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." <sup>8</sup>The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." <sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

## **Sixth Petition**

Numbers 15:37-41

<sup>37</sup>The LORD said to Moses: <sup>38</sup>Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. <sup>39</sup>You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. <sup>40</sup>So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God. <sup>41</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

Psalm 149

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in the assembly of the faithful.  
<sup>2</sup>Let Israel be glad in its Maker;  
let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.  
<sup>3</sup>Let them praise his name with dancing,  
making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.  
<sup>4</sup>For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;  
he adorns the humble with victory.  
<sup>5</sup>Let the faithful exult in glory;  
let them sing for joy on their couches.  
<sup>6</sup>Let the high praises of God be in their throats  
and two-edged swords in their hands,  
<sup>7</sup>to execute vengeance on the nations  
and punishment on the peoples,  
<sup>8</sup>to bind their kings with fetters  
and their nobles with chains of iron,  
<sup>9</sup>to execute on them the judgment decreed.  
This is glory for all his faithful ones.  
Praise the LORD!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup>But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup>for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup>for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are

drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

#### **Matthew 7:15-20**

<sup>15</sup>"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup>You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus you will know them by their fruits.

## **Seventh Petition**

Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, <sup>2</sup>My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. <sup>4</sup>From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup>No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. <sup>9</sup>I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Psalm 119:129-136

<sup>129</sup>Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore my soul keeps them.  
<sup>130</sup>The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it imparts understanding to the simple.  
<sup>131</sup>With open mouth I pant,  
because I long for your commandments.  
<sup>132</sup>Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as is your custom toward those who love your name.  
<sup>133</sup>Keep my steps steady according to your promise,  
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
<sup>134</sup>Redeem me from human oppression,  
that I may keep your precepts.  
<sup>135</sup>Make your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your statutes.  
<sup>136</sup>My eyes shed streams of tears  
because your law is not kept.

James 1:12-18

<sup>12</sup>Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup>No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup>But one is tempted by one's own desire, being

lured and enticed by it; <sup>15</sup>then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. <sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved. <sup>17</sup>Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

#### John 20:19-31

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

## **Eighth Petition**

1 Chronicles 16:34-36

<sup>34</sup>O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

<sup>35</sup>Say also:

"Save us, O God of our salvation,  
and gather and rescue us from among the nations,  
that we may give thanks to your holy name,  
and glory in your praise.

<sup>36</sup>Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting."

Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

Psalm 43:1-4

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause  
against an ungodly people;  
from those who are deceitful and unjust  
deliver me!

<sup>2</sup>For you are the God in whom I take refuge;  
why have you cast me off?

Why must I walk about mournfully  
because of the oppression of the enemy?

<sup>3</sup>O send out your light and your truth;  
let them lead me;  
let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your dwelling.

<sup>4</sup>Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to God my exceeding joy;  
and I will praise you with the harp,  
O God, my God.

1 John 5:6-15

<sup>6</sup>This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>There are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree. <sup>9</sup>If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. <sup>10</sup>Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you

may know that you have eternal life.

<sup>14</sup>And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.

#### John 14:1-14

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup>And you know the way to the place where I am going." <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." <sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup>Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.