

**The Meditations for Rogation Days  
MD 37 for Rogation Monday  
(1/2)**

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*Of the obligation we are under to pray for those  
whom we are called upon to instruct*

The title of this meditation is probably not the Founder's. The pronoun "we" occurs twice in the title, but is not used in the meditation itself. It is hard to imagine the Founder using this title and not including himself among those for whom it was intended. Moreover, the title uses the ideas if not the words of the first sentence of the first point: "the obligation you are under of taking an interest in the welfare of those whom you instruct". We see that the pronoun "you" is used three times in this short extract.

Unlike the Meditations for Sundays, the meditation for Rogation Monday in the printed text is not preceded by the Gospel for the day, Lk 11, 5-13.

### 1st point

*In today's Gospel Our Lord proposes a parable to make you understand the obligation you are under of taking an interest in the welfare of those whom you instruct. «Let us suppose», he says «that one of you has a friend to whom he goes at dead of night, and asks him, lend me three loaves of bread, neighbour; a friend of mine (traveller) has turned in on me after a journey, and I have nothing to offer him». The highlighted text can be found in Amelote 1685.*

This is a rare instance in which the Founder does not personalise a text from the Gospel. We often find in the introduction to his meditations such expressions as "marks us" or "teaches us". Here [in the French text] the construction used is somewhat unusual because no direct object is specified, and "which teaches" seems to be directed at the world at large. Should we not see in this an answer to the question: What is a Brother? The exact nature of the "welfare" mentioned is not specified either.

Then immediately, De La Salle refers to St Augustine. He will do this 4 times in all: once in point 1, and 3 times in point 2. When the Founder speaks of prayer it is to experts such as this Saint and St John Chrysostom that he turns.

*"In the explanation he gives of this parable, St Augustine says..."*

Although De La Salle gives no details about the source, he leaves a clue when he speaks of "the explanation he gives of this parable".

An examination of the Commentaries of St Augustine reveals Sermon 105: **"On the words in Chapter 11 of the Gospel of St Luke: If one of you, having a friend, went to him in the middle of the night, etc"**.

This sermon is divided into several chapters, the first three of which are particularly interesting.

Chapter 1: Jesus Christ exhorts us in the parables to pray to God.

Chapter 2: We have to restore the strength of the friend who has returned from a journey.

Chapter 3: What do the three loaves represent?

These chapters contain the passages to which De La Salle refers in this meditation.

While St Augustine takes some liberties with the text of the Gospel, De La Salle reproduces it almost word for word, and then comments on it.

We can compare De La Salle's commentary (left column) with that of St Augustine's (right column) which inspired it:

*The traveller is he who has long walked in the path of iniquity, and who, having sought to gratify his passions in the world, and having found there nothing but vice, vanity, misery and sadness, addresses himself to you in his distress, in the hope of receiving some help...*

This road can also represent an evil life, and it can happen that one of your friends, feeling the poverty and emptiness that false pleasures here below leave us with; and feeling the exhaustion caused by the cupidity that leads us to seek them, but not having been able yet to discover the truth and taste the happiness which it produces in those who listen to it and understand it, comes to you as to an enlightened Christian, and says to you: "Instruct me..."

We can see that De La Salle follows the same plan but uses different words. It might be possible to find the exact source -if there is one! The version given here dates from 1730. All the ideas put forward by St Augustine can be found in the meditation except what he says about truth and the happiness its discovery brings.

Then De La Salle goes on with a quotation from the first Letter to the Thessalonians 5. 14:

*"convinced that you have received the grace required to sustain the weak, to instruct the ignorant and correct the wayward".*

We find this same quotation in a meditation for the time of retreat. Different words are used and it is prefaced by "It is your duty, therefore,..." (MR 198.2.2). This shows that the use of this quotation in the present context is not accidental. The connection with the MR is sufficient proof.

*"he comes to you, as a traveller, tired and weary (is De La Salle repeating himself or is the meaning of these two words different?) beseeching you to relieve his wants".*

The text of the meditation goes on:

*"Such is the position of those whom God has confided to your care, and whom you have to instruct and*

*train to piety. It is God himself who has brought them to you, who holds you responsible for their salvation, and who places you under the obligation of supplying their spiritual needs. This, therefore, should be your constant care".*

It is worth noting how the last sentence repeats the first of the meditation almost word for word.

Up till now, there has been no reference to prayer. There is simply the observation that people, or, more exactly, friends, who have spiritual needs come to me, and that God has put me where I am specifically to respond to these needs.

The dramatic tone of this text and its formulation convey a sense of urgency, the tragic nature of the situation, and the need to do something; and yet I feel helpless and powerless to act.

All I can do is to turn to God, especially as the writer makes it quite clear that I have been chosen by God to provide this help.

What value should we place on "spiritual" in the expression "spiritual needs"? Is it meant to be exclusive?

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