

A MEMBER, SERRA CLUB OF CINCINNATI, #371

Listening Prayer

God Speaks in Prayer Relationships

Robert R.(Bob) Massa, 7680 Blue Crystal Ct, Cincinnati Ohio, 45224, USA
513.521-4935

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My reason for sharing this personal story begins with a hope you will want to know God better. Whatever you do to get to KNOW GOD better will be a real plus in your life. You'll enjoy it so much that you'll willingly persist in efforts to communicate with Him. You'll also be patient during those periods when it doesn't seem to be working. If just one person has a similar experience to what I've had, doing this for you will be worth it.

Bob

1. Thinking about Our Lord

How did I start thinking about Our Lord?

I have to go back to grade school at **St. Catharine of Siena** in Westwood, a Cincinnati suburb. First, I want people to know that I was just like the average kid for a long time. I didn't care about what they said in church. I wasn't alone. There were more guys like me than those who would say... 'Oh gee, what did you say Father?' I didn't care what Father preached. The most important things in my life back then - baseball and girls! I didn't want to go to church though I did. Nobody can tell me that the other guys didn't feel the same way. Prayer didn't mean anything because we couldn't wait until it was over so we could get to the ball field or see our girl friends. And that went on for a long time. It really did. I was happy. I didn't think I was missing anything, but I've come to realize I was missing a lot.

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My teacher in the first grade was Sr. Francis DeSales, I will never forget her as long as I live. She taught me the primary purpose of life is to know, love and serve God. She took half of a class hour to talk about knowing God. She said, 'If you know Our Lord, you don't have to worry about the other two because you will love Him and want to serve Him. Sister taught the most important thing you've got to do in this life is to know God. That impressed me. But by two (2) days later I didn't think about it anymore for many years.

So the next big life step was to go to Elder High School. The priests repeated the lesson on the purpose of life. But they didn't make as much of a deal about it as did Sr. Francis DeSales.

So I went through high school, and enjoyed it, and felt the priests who were teachers were all doing great. They were honest, and were telling me the right way to live and so forth. And I loved those priests, so much so, that I wanted to be a priest. I was still playing ball and going out with girls. The priests there were my ideals and I wanted to be just like them.

Then I told my mom I wanted to be a priest – she said 'that's fine, but you have a long way to go to get through college and all this'. She was discouraging me.

Then I had a chance encounter with a priest. He may have been kidding, but he said, 'You know when you go into the seminary you are going to have to talk Latin.'

Back then the Mass was in Latin-everything was Latin. He continued, '. . . and in the seminary you are going to have to listen in Latin; they're not going to talk in English.' That was enough to close the book. No way could I do that! So I quit thinking about it. It was too early anyway.

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The next big change in my life was when I went from Elder to Xavier University. At the time I was at XU (1943), World War II was getting really bad. Being a little boy like I was, I said to myself 'why should I beat my brains out if I am going to the service when this is over'. I just wanted to have fun because it might be the last time I am ever going to have fun. So, I didn't bother to go to some of the classes. Never missed a football game - I took in everything in sports - and everything with the girls. I didn't even take my final exams at XU that freshman year, and that's a very important witness to what I am talking about. I was so immature. I was called up into the service.

At the same time, I read in the newspaper that the Marines were no longer sending recruits to Parris Island, South Carolina, because the place was full. And if you go to the Marine Corps you're going to wind up in San Diego. I thought San Diego! I'm going to Hollywood! I talked to a guy I knew from Western Hills. He wasn't a good friend, but a guy I knew. He and I were going to go in at the same time. I told him, 'You know what... if we go into the Marine Corps we can go to California!' He said, 'No Kidding!

Where did you see that?' 'It was in the paper this morning.'

So when we got to the induction center, the place where they were signing us up. There were 150 guys in that room. We went up to the table and told them we wanted to go into the Marine Corps. where a young woman working in an WAC uniform said, 'You want to know something? You were going into the Marine Corps weather you liked it or not, because you and your friend are the two (2) biggest guys in the place'. We laughed; 'OK we're ready.' But there was a small delay due to being a student. I went into the military three (3) months later because THE MARINES,

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allowed me to complete my freshman year at XU before they put me into the uniform service.

To this point I avoided relying on prayer or Our Lord.

So, I became a Marine. How did it turn out? Because we went out for the Marine Corps camp football team when we arrived at San Diego we stayed there for fourteen months. Back home, I never played football because my dad wouldn't let me. There were nine (9) kids in our family and he didn't want to have to pay the bills to fix the injuries. So you get into the Marine Corps, where your dad doesn't have anything to say about it anymore. The other guys on that team said, 'Hell, if you get hurt it's a good thing. You won't have to go overseas.' I'm not kidding you, they really felt that way. So, we had a good football team; we were knocking people around. I got a sprained ankle. If it wasn't for that sprained ankle I might have been in San Diego only five (5) or six (6) months, not fourteen months.

The Marines put me to work in communications. After a treasured delay, they said 'OK, time for you guys to go!' We went to Hawaii and I had a ball. The Cincinnati guy I was drafted with shipped out with another group. My group of Marines was in Hawaii one week where I met a new guy. The new guy said 'Let's go down to this school where the school teacher is cute.' Without an invitation, and on our own, we went to this grade school and told the children in her class about the Marine Corps. That was my *first* talk to a class of kids.

After a week in Hawaii we went to Eniwetok, a place where all the Marines stopped to resupply and cut the tension. The base had scheduled a picnic. I was pitcher in a fast pitch softball double

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header that day; it was a day off. Had a ball! When-- you are good at something you can have fun.

Next stop Tinian¹. That's where I really got scared.

The Marines had to do a landing just like you see in the movies. Men hunkered down in a landing craft, the front opens up. They jump out into the water and wade ashore.

So our group was landing at Tinian in a LCI, (Landing Craft, Infantry) the front was lowered for us to get out. I was scared. There were about 100 Japanese shooting at us from the shore. We could see others in the caves. I was so scared I was entertaining thoughts not to getting out of the boat, which would have been ridiculous. I turned around and thought, 'I've got to pray'. I never did that in my life. Before that time, I said Hail Mary's, an occasional Rosary, and I went to Mass, but never did I have a prayer in earnest, a Listening Prayer, listening to what God had to say to me. I didn't expect He would say anything, but He did. I was really scared. I wasn't the only one. Guys were crying. My first words were, "I don't want to kill anybody" and, "I don't want anybody to kill me".

I paused for a little while not expecting an answer. He said, ***'Nobody in the world hates violence more than I do. But you are in a position - either you decide to help solve this problem or you become part of the problem.'***

That made me start thinking, "So, I better do it".

¹ *The Battle of Tinian* was a battle of the Pacific campaign of World War II, fought on the island of Tinian in the Mariana Islands from 24 July 1944 to 1 August 1944¹.

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I had a lot of gear there. One person couldn't carry it all in one trip. Picking up some of my gear and I started walking to the gate and He said,

'If you think you're scared, what do you think they are?'

More thinking: the Japanese are about a head shorter than the average GI, and if, one-on-one, I can't win out over them, shame on me.

I walked out into water chest high, rifle above my head - pack on my back- it got all wet and together our group got up on shore. All those Japanese guys that were there ran like hell. They ran all the way to the caves up in the hills, about half mile away from the shore. I didn't know it at the time, the momentum of the war had shifted and we were beginning to win. The enemy can't beat us anymore and they know it. They weren't taking chances anymore.

The Listening Prayer voice was clear. It was the first time it happened in my life. The words He said to me gave me direction, and, I was not smart enough to come up with that on my own.

About 2 years after that invasion, and after leaving the Marine Corps, I entered Holy Cross College in Massachusetts. I knew some guys at Holy Cross from the Marine Corp and some from Cincinnati, including my dad's boss. There were many reasons to go, but the most important reason for me was that they had a good baseball team and I wanted to play pro baseball.

Near the end of the school year in 1949, my college team played at the New York Polo Grounds where a scout from Chicago watched my game. This was prior to my hoped-for graduation at Holy Cross. The scout offered me a spot on a Chicago Cub farm team in Roanoke North Carolina. During the same final weeks of

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college, a number of businesses said they were interested in my working for them after I graduated.

Decision: Go Pro or No-Go: I had to make a decision to play baseball or go into business. I sat down and was thinking about where do I go now, and started to pray about that. I never would have done it using prayer if it hadn't been for that Listening Prayer incident in the Marine Corps at Tinian.

I hadn't thought about what Sr. Francis DeSales said to me in the first grade until then. And there it was. 'The primary purpose in life is to know Our Lord.' I think HE reminded me then about what she said years before. Then I said to myself, 'if that really is true, how come more people don't live that way?' My next question was, 'If that is true, how come I don't live that way?' Now I think HE prompted that too. Through prayer my decision was to say goodbye to baseball.

I also made up my mind right then I would never pass up an opportunity to get to know God better.

What's wrong in the Church? People who complain that the Christian church has failed are looking for somebody to blame for what's going on in the world. They say the church, popes, bishops and so forth are not doing their job. G.K. Chesterton when asked why the Christian Church had failed, answered it the best way saying, 'It didn't fail. We never practiced it the way Our Lord wanted it.'

So it is like any other problem to be solved. If you are part of the group, you have to do your best to solve their problems yourself. Then you won't be dependent on other people. Other people may be doing what they feel they have to do. Some may have led

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others astray, some may have followed, some decide to go the wrong way, and some may do nothing but talk badly about it.

The church hierarchy has to rely on us to concentrate on it at least once or twice a day asking, “what can I do to make this place better?” One can hide in the sand and accept what’s going on, or pray to Our Lord and work to help make it get better.

Retreats: After my years at Holy Cross I had been going to Men of Milford weekend retreats. My dad was a great retreat captain. As a captain his responsibility was to get people to go. I wouldn’t have gone if that weren’t true. I was trying to make my dad feel good. My six (6) brothers went too. I always say my dad made me go.

Not too long after that I was invited to go to a four (4) day Franciscan Cursillo retreat. At that time, I never would have gone had I not felt like I wanted to know Our Lord better. I accepted the invitation; on the first night of that first retreat, the retreat leader, Fr. Fidelis, was still talking at 4:00 in the morning. If Fr. Fidelis had said we were going to go for three more hours we all would have clapped; that’s how good it was.

When a Cursillo is over, you are involved for as long as you want. A priest meets with the group for an evening every week, and talks about the things we talked about on the retreat. After doing this for a while, I talked with the priest who we met with weekly, and let him know I couldn’t do both Cursillo and Milford. I decided on Milford. Fr. Wenzel had the Milford retreats at that time. My dad was still a recruiter for an annual Milford retreat. Fr Wenzel liked the fact I also recruited a lot of people to go, and he thought I should be a lieutenant to help my dad. That’s how I got very involved, eventually as a captain for Men of Milford. A

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suggestion was made to Fr. Wenzel that we should get together every month to talk about how to make our Milford retreats better, to make sure we weren't missing anything. Suggestions and many good things came out of those meetings. Fr. Wenzel and I became good friends.

Retreats, for me, are a place where I'm not disturbed by anything. Business was put aside; everything was put aside. Prayers are a way to open up to Our Lord. I need a time to shut up and listen. For me, a retreat is the best place to have listening prayer. I have been on an annual men's retreat for 65 years plus about 30 couples' retreats.

Meet with a priest: Currently, I meet a priest three times a month, a different priest each time. I meet with Fr. McCarthy, Fr. Schnippel and Fr. Piggot for an hour, primarily to get to know Our Lord better. Everything goes back to 'Get to Know God Better'.

The first priest I met with was Msg. Francis P. Kennedy, the pastor at the Cathedral at the time I began to serve Mass and distribute Communion more than 40 years ago.

Serra: A lot of my decisions to do something were the result of my wanting to know God better. For example, in the early 1970's I joined Serra² because I wanted to know God better.

I joined Serra Club with a friend, Tom Tasset, a Roger Bacon High School graduate. We'd meet at lunch, and we would talk about what Serra Club was doing and not doing. Finally, I said, 'it

² Serra International, established 1935, Serra Club of Cincinnati, 1973, a club in Serra USA Council, www.serraus.org

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is cutting into my business lunches with clients. I'm missing too much. If we were not going to do something, I'm going to quit Serra Club. But I'll tell you what I think we ought to do." It was a suggestion to take vocations talks to the area high schools.

Following up on how I spoke out, Tom and I partnered going over to my high school, Elder High, and said to the principal, Fr. Lawrence Strittmatter, "We'd like to meet with the kids about vocations and try to get them to think about the possibility of being a priest. If you want us to do that, we'd like you to help us. How do you want us to do that?"

Serrans working for vocations: The conversation went well. Fr. Strittmatter told us, you just have to get in there and talk to them.

I said 'I've never done that in my life.' Even in school I never liked to get up in the class and talk. I hated it. I didn't want to make a mistake. I'd be embarrassed if I said something stupid. I wanted to do it, but I didn't want to do it. For me to accept to give a talk the next week...I don't know how I did it! And I call that a miracle.

We continued at length, to talk with Fr. Strittmatter who said, 'You guys come back here next week and I'll have seven (7) kids here. You tell them what you want to do. And you ask them how you should do it.' Father was really smart because we would have some kids in the class who knew what we were talking about.

In our meeting the following week, we urged them to ask questions; we talked about their questions and developed answers with their input. Then we planned the actual class; they would ask, we would answer to them again with the whole class present. We had skills in there!

The School Speakers Program began and continues today, 35 years later. Listening Prayer was a thing I did. It did not have a name or need a name until I began speaking with Serrans in high schools.

Bellarmino: Fr. Carter invited me to speak at Xavier University to his class of college students. Consistent with my developing practice of praying and asking God for direction before I went into a class room to speak, I found myself in Bellarmine Chapel on the XU campus. This was the first time speaking at the college level. I was not at peace. No message was coming, and it was about time for the class to begin. I was becoming worried. Then I became aware of the Crucifix above the altar. It became the most beautiful Crucifix I had ever seen. Then the Lord spoke to my heart. I remember it this way, He said,

“Hey dummy, just tell them how much I love them.”

Well I gave a pretty good talk that day.

2: Pray to listen.

What I really want to share is..... How I get to the Listening Prayer and hopefully get through to Our Lord. This is what my Listening Prayer is all about.

Every time I pray I say:

O sacrament divine

All praise and all thanksgiving

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Be every moment Thine.

I use that prayer/poem anytime I pray. Reflection follows it. I think a little bit about the problems I'm having: medical, whatever and then I say to Him.

All for the honor and glory of God.

And later on I added to my promise saying it a new way,

All for the honor and glory of God, and the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, our Blessed Mother, and to her spouse, St. Joseph, ideal father and husband, and to the Child Jesus.

That is the time when I think about this saying,

I'm here to tell You how much I love You.

During a listening prayer, He told me ,

“My love is perfect.”

I don't think He did it when He first told me about Perfect love, but eventually He told me what perfect love is:

“Perfect love is Giving Love. In other words you're not trying to get anything out of anybody...it's all giving.

“Perfect love is Forgiving Love and that's because we are all sinners except for the Blessed Virgin.

“Perfect love is Thanksgiving Love.”

Our Lord doesn't need anything from me. Thanksgiving Love is included in there because, when we turn to Him, and try to do what He wants us to do, and try to be what He wants us to be, I think He wants to thank us for it. Not for Him, it's for us, so that's Thanksgiving Love. He wants to show His appreciation for the fact that we're trying to do what He wants us to do and we're trying to please Him.

When I get that far then I simply say, ‘This is a no brainer... how could I do anything else but want to love You, Lord?’

Then I tell Him how much I love Him. I admit to Him, there is no way I have the kind of love You have for me. But, I do have

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my love, as much as I can muster, and that is the love I want to love You with, and, hopefully, I will improve and increase.

I want Him to know it's hard to believe it, but I do. Then, when I get that far, I admit to Him that, It is unbelievable that with that kind of love You would love me. But if You say so, I believe You do love me that much.

So then, by reflecting, I become more convinced.

What else do I have to have if I love Him with all my heart? I don't need any other reason to love Him. And about three weeks after He told me more about His perfect love. He said,

'I don't want you to forget about my passion and death for you because I love you.'

So, now I have two reasons to love Him.

I meditate about each sorrowful mystery of the rosary. It was very difficult to do the first time. Now, I'm more used to it. He reminded me that equally important reasons to love Our Lord are His suffering and death. He suffered for me in reparation for our sin, and ever since then every night I review: the Agony in the Garden, Scourging at the Pillar, Crown of Thorns, Carrying the Cross, and Crucifixion and I think about it how he had to love me pretty much to get through all that.

Sorrowful Mysteries: My daily prayer routine usually begins with the many reasons I have to love Our Lord. The obvious reason is Our Lord loves me with His perfect love. His perfect love involves-"giving love", "forgiving love" and "thanksgiving love". If you meditate about what that involves, loving Him is automatic. When I first learned about this wonderful love, it awakened in me attitude that, 'with this what else do I need?'

Then about three weeks later, when meditating about this again, He reminded me that I should not forget to meditate occasionally

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about His passion and death. I haven't missed a day since then to do just that. Along about 10:00 P.M. on Wednesday, January 27th, this year, before I began the meditation, I had a moment when I reminded myself that I hadn't made room for "listening prayer" for quite awhile. So I decided to be quiet and give Him a chance to communicate.

Normally, I dwell on Holy Thursday and the first Mass when our Lord gave His body and blood to His apostles. A short time after that first Eucharist Our Lord spent some time agonizing in the garden. The agony in the garden has always been somewhat vague in my mind. I've always reminded myself that Our Lord sweat blood during that time, and it just wasn't too clear about what was causing that.

While being quiet, He helped me think about His concern over His upcoming suffering to be faced on the next day. In His human nature He asked His Father if there was any chance that "suffering" could be postponed so that He could be better prepared for it. He just hadn't thought enough about it. He also thought He would ask His Father to consider asking someone else to suffer and die. Then He thought; if it must be Me why couldn't the suffering be modified somewhat. Finally, He finished His meditation by stating, "Father, not My will but Your will be done."

Then His father responded by admitting to Him that He should have discussed this with Him sometime before.

He then began letting Him know how much He loved Him. I am Your Father and I love You more than You will ever know. I love You so much that when You are suffering, I will be suffering with You. When You are being scourged I also will feel those blows to

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My body. That would be a pretty good reason for us to postpone the upcoming passion. However, the forgiveness of all the sins of the past and all the sins in the future is certainly a good and positive reason to do what we can to solve the problem.

As far as replacing You is concerned, You have a human nature, but also still have Your divine nature to help You endure all the suffering, and yes Your death. No one else could match that. The suffering also cannot be modified. Anything less would not match the problems that will be solved.

Our Lord's response to His explanation was what we should expect. I will be there tomorrow when the soldiers want Me to submit to the "scourging at the pillar"

All that mental and emotional experience was enough for Our Lord to sweat blood. We are so blessed that He agreed to suffer and die for us.

Needless to say, Holy Thursday will now be more meaningful to me in the future. It's another reason to say THANK YOU.

Then the next thing I think about is the Scourging at the Pillar. Our Lord knew what was going to be, and He accepted it. Every time I come to that, I think about the Mel Gibson movie³, which I watch every Good Friday. I never watch it without tears in my eyes. That is a prayer in itself. Again and again, two guys hit Jesus on the back with a whip or a rope that has nails in it. That's hard to watch. It's hard not to cry when you see Him being

³ In 2004, he directed and produced *The Passion of the Christ*, a film that portrayed the last hours of the life of Jesus Christ.

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scourged at the pillar. As you watch how they hit him with ropes with nails, He bleeds every time they hit Him.

Then the meditation is on the Crowning of Thorns: By this time He is losing a lot of energy because of the blood loss. He is giving up. Then they put the crown of thorns on His head and He starts bleeding from the head.

Then I think about the Carrying of the Cross. Our Lord was a He-Man. And being a He-Man, carrying the cross would not have been as tough as it was if He had a full night's rest the night before. But the night before, was when He was suffering in the Garden. If He had something to eat for breakfast, which He probably didn't have as an abused prisoner, He wouldn't have had such a tough time holding the cross up. Finally, He was so weakened they got Simon of Cyrene to help Our Lord to Calvary.

At Calvary the first thing you see is someone taking a hammer and nails and nailing His hands and feet. When I meditate on Our Lord's suffering and passion, and get to the point where He is being nailed to the cross, I said to myself when I saw the Mel Gibson movie, that the Crucifixion should be a 5th Meditation and the death of our Lord should be a 6th meditation. I think that should be separate. That's how important that was. You get tears in your eyes when you watch that too.

So then I repeat the fact that this is also a no brainer, I say, 'I love You, and I've got two fantastic reasons to love You: The fact that You love me with perfect love and You suffered for me and You died for me in reparation for my sins.'

I hope when you get to that point, you are feeling so good and spiritual that you should be able to say, . . .

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‘Lord I want to love You more, and the only way I can love You more is to get to know You better. I’ll shut-up and listen to what You have to say.’

That’s also when it is good to be patient and persistent. That’s when I hope He will talk to me. It doesn’t happen very often. Many people would stop trying, I think. I do this every day; every night when I go to bed.

My routine is simple: I pray every day.

I take the time to settle down. For evening prayer on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, the prayers used are:

1. Prayer for the Perseverance of Vocations – Serra
2. The Rosary.
3. Mother Theresa’s Prayer – Matthew 25:35-36, 41.
4. The Serenity Prayer - the Passionist Missionaries
5. Novena Prayer for a Return to the Faith – The Trinitarians
6. Prayer to St. Catharine of Siena – Dominican Sister of Hope
7. Prayer to St. Anthony
8. Serran Prayer for Vocations

I usually repeat or summarize in the morning.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings I pray saying,

1. All but one prayer from pages 7-16 in *Pieta prayer booklet (200)3*
2. The Memorare
3. O God of Mercy - The Soldiers Prayer
4. Safely Home – Prayer for Recently Deceased.

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When you have the faith I have, you don't earn it. You just hope He keeps giving it to you. He gave me the faith that I have. Through His grace I have the faith that I have. That's more reason to love Him too. This is just as big as the other reasons.

Refresh: At the Milford Retreat Center above the altar there's a big sign,

*All ye who labor and are burdened come to Me and
I will refresh you.⁴*

I've experienced that, once in awhile. When I needed Him, He came and refreshed me. I felt better after I asked Him to come. That's a pretty good reason to love Him also.

I was looking for more reasons I should love Him. Believe it or not, I thought of my four kids, and thanked Him for the wonderful kids I have. We had Laurie and Mark, then lost three children in the 3rd month of each pregnancy. We called the sixth child Gary after St. Gerard, patron saint of pregnant women. Our youngest is Barbara. Then I spend time thinking why they are the best, and I say to Him, 'if there were a bunch of kids sitting on a wall, I would pick these four.'

Then I think of my grandkids. Our Lord brought them into the world. If that isn't reason enough to love Him, then I don't know what it's all about. And I start thinking about things they've done, and I also think about a granddaughter, Kristin, who had cancer at age two (2). The evening before she went into the hospital, the family came over to my house. We had a good meal for them.

Pray to help: I prayed like heck before they came, and Our Lord was telling me,

⁴ Theme is in Mt 11:28-30

“You ought to pray for her with the whole family.”

They were all there. Picture Gary, Kristin’s father, sitting next to me, and I said to Gary, “Our Lord wants us to pray for Kristin, would you care if I got up and prayed for her after dessert?”

He said, “Sure, sure, sure.” He thought it was a good idea. So after we had dessert, we all went into the living room, and I told them to hold hands. We were holding hands and we prayed the Memorare.⁵ After we finished, the Memorare, I went over to Kristin. She was sitting on a chair by herself, and I blessed her on the forehead, then, blessed her on the tummy, where she was going to be operated on. I just heard not too long ago, a layman can bless another person. We did that, and the next morning she went to the hospital. The night following the operation, my son stayed with her at the hospital, and she did real well. Since then she's become a good student and aggressive athlete. She is now in the eighth grade and playing basketball and volleyball, and I think, soccer. She is good at all of them. So Our Lord sure answered that prayer.

I’ve become convinced the only thing that’s important in the world is to know God. You can’t know Him unless you talk to Him. He wants you to get it off your chest so He can say what He wants. As a matter of fact, you can’t know Him unless you let Him talk to you, and that really is difficult. You really have to be patient especially at night. What you pray to Our Lord is not so

⁵ Memorare: Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known, that anyone who implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee O virgin of virgins My Mother. To thee I come before thee I stand sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions but in thy Mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

important. You have to pray and to be brave enough to shut up and listen for Him. I pray you will find a way.

Now, when I go to bed and get finished talking about His perfect love, passion and death it takes about a half hour to do that. Sometimes I fall asleep, but that's OK. He's not going to talk to me. I can't think of a better way to fall asleep than while praying.

When I talked about my kids, Laura, Mark, Gary, and Barbara, what I want to say...my wife is the reason the kids are what they are. She brought them into this world. I was out there working and paying the bills, but while I was doing that she was taking care of them. Now we have grandchildren.⁶

I've come from a pretty good family too. We get together all the time. I've got six (6) brothers and two (2) sisters: Rita, Donald, Art, Pat, Jerry, Jim, Roger, and Gordon. We get together every Friday and go to Mass at the Cathedral and then have lunch afterwards in a cozy restaurant by the Cathedral. Then on First Fridays we have the wives, the sisters and spouses come. We go to the nicer places like Marriot or Mt. Adams. It is a real priority - we don't miss it. We repeat stories about my dad and laugh.

3: Humor in life.

I believe God has a sense of humor and wants us to be joy filled. Psalm 98 says, The Lord has done marvelous things; Make a joyful noise to the Lord, ... break forth into joyous song, sing ...make melody with trumpet and the horn.

⁶ Grandchildren: Jessica, Luke, Katie, Kristen, Lauren, Maria

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Humorous stories bring joy. We can learn from stories. Jesus told stories. I hope you will bear with a few more of my stories that made me laugh or feel joyful over the years.

Sr. Eustella: Sr. was at St. Catharine's. She was very strict. She taught me how to serve Mass. In those days prayers at Mass were in Latin and so it wasn't easy for a 6th grader to learn them. But she taught me, and I got it done. I got all the prayers, but not quickly,... after about three (3) months.

In the 5th grade we had a guy in our class; he was a nice guy, the biggest guy in our class, but he didn't have anything between the ears. He had a heck of a time in class. Sr. Eustella was very frustrated; she couldn't get through to him. She complained to all her friends, and told the principal she could not put up with him anymore. The principal encouraged her to keep trying. Sr. Eustella's solution was to pass him on even though he didn't pass. Three months later after the summer break, she was moved up from 5th grade teacher to teach the 6th grade. So he was in her class again... and she had the same problem.

Pastor, Fr. Joseph Tieken: He was a wonderful man, but serious and crabby with the kids. He started the parish. He was a very strict, German fellow and we were all afraid of him. He and I became friends later on.

I was in high school. On one memorable Saturday, while playing baseball in the school yard just behind the priest house of St. Catharine of Sienna parish, Fr. Kennedy came over and said we have a problem. I asked, "Anyway I can help?" Fr. Kennedy explained that Fr. Tieken was going to talk to some kids because he found out that three boys wandered into an empty classroom. Those kids threw ink all over. They had a ball splashing ink all over the walls and blackboard. One of them was in the first grade.

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Back then each desk had a bottle of ink in a well hole. Fr. Kennedy and I walked in as Fr. Tieken was screaming at these kids. He screamed for a half hour, how bad it was. “I’m not going to call the cops, but I ought to. I’m going to get your mother and dad and tell them what you did.” He went on and on.

Fr. Kennedy and I sat there with these three kids. The whole time the kids were sitting there, the youngest one was playing with the ink bottle that was in the desk well hole. Fr. Tieken finished up his talk by saying, “Have I gotten through to you?” The littlest kid, undaunted, still fiddling with the ink bottle said, “We couldn’t get this one out.” Even though the kid was getting screamed at, that was all the first grader had to say. The little boy didn’t hear the priest shouting. Fr. Kennedy thought it was funny and told that story to everybody.

There but for the grace of God: God wants us to love all people. When you see someone who does things you think are not good; don’t shout dirty words at him or say them under your breath, pray for him. Use that little prayer: *There but for the grace of God go I*, and you won’t be so tough on him. God loves it when we forgive people for what they do to us. He loves that! He even said while He was on the cross, “*Forgive them, Father, because they know not what they do.*” That was one of His prayers

Fr. William T. Hilvert: The man was a genuine character, the pastor at St. Ignatius, and a teacher. He taught me history at Elder High School. He said one of the smartest things a teacher ever said, “If you guys will study and pay attention in this class, and you wind up with a 90%, you don’t have to take the final exam. Every guy in that class studied that subject before every other, and I was one of them. So I wound up with a 90%!

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Fr. Hilvert hated when students cheated in school. At Elder the windows were set up with deep, wide window sills. He climbed up onto one of those window sills, took his shoe off and he said, ‘You guys know I don’t like to see cheating. If you cheat today don’t be surprised if you get a shoe in the back of the head.’ He threw a shoe once; my guess it was a warning, it didn’t hit anyone.

Some years later, I was at Holy Cross College. I had a good deal. Some fun memories tie in with being a student athlete there. I was playing on the baseball team and we had scheduled Yale. We traveled there on a bus; it was a pretty good jaunt from Holy Cross. The game begins, soon I am the next batter, on deck, and the guy ahead of me strikes out and throws the bat. The bat hit me right across the shin. I jumped around and rubbed it. I said, “I think it’s OK” and I stayed in the game. With the next pitch I got a hit and went to first base. It really started pounding and I knew something was wrong.

The first baseman for Yale was George H. W. Bush...believe it or not. Of course, back then, we didn’t know he would be President of the United States someday. That is a fond memory.

I brought some books along and did get some study time on the bus on the way down. Our oral test in philosophy and theology was the day after the tossed bat injury at the Yale game. I couldn’t walk without crutches.

I go into the oral test. It is a big deal at Holy Cross. It takes about 20 minutes to ½ hour and the grade you get is very important; it determines whether you pass or not... and you have to pass.

So, on crutches, I walk into the classroom and there are four (4) priests there waiting to ask me the questions. But when they see me, the first question they ask is, ‘what happened to you?’ I told them, and it took me about 15 minutes to get through it all. Then one of the priests says, ‘Hey we have to get through this; we only

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have 15 minutes left. You better straighten up and fly right. One of my favorite priests is Fr. Ray Cahill and he was one of the guys questioning me. If he asked a question and the answer was yes, he would nod. Well the next guy for the test came along, and they said, ‘OK you’re finished.’ I got an 85% and probably would have had a 65% if I had to answer the questions for the whole 30 minutes.

When I got home after college graduation, I got involved in the Milford Retreats. You know the story.

Retreat Situation: For some years my dad was a retreat captain. The priest in charge gave it to somebody else, for a time, and then he approached me to see if I would be captain. I hated to be captain of anything because I hated to get up and give a talk. But I agreed to do it for Fr. Wenzel, the retreat director. I didn’t want to make any mistakes. I didn’t want to leave anything out and I’m telling them to have a monthly meeting to prepare for that. Five (5) or six (6) co-captains said, “OK”. We accomplished a lot during that time because we met often. Father appreciated it.

We had a dinner once a year as a celebration to close one year and as a kickoff for the next, and that is when they put somebody else in charge. Dinner was at the Cathedral in the undercroft. When it came time to replace me, Fr. Wenzel took me aside and said, ‘I would like to have you back again for next year’. So I became willing to go another year.

Fr. Wenzel got up, gave his talk, and he told the crowd... ‘Bob Massa agreed to be captain again for another year...but only if you would do it right this time.’

I thought that was funny.

4. Priests & Nuns in My Spiritual Life

The priests and nuns I've known are a key cause I have the faith I have. My connection with them as guides and role models helped me to love Our Lord.

With my faith, spiritual things happened to me all the time. At first I'd share mine with Fr. Kennedy, and he shared his with me. Now, I share with Fr. McCarthy. There have been many wonderful priests and nuns in my life. And that's how I was getting to know God. My life has been graced with countless kindnesses, lessons and friendships that have made a positive difference in my life. So Sister or Father, if I missed mentioning you, I apologize. My 85 year memory may have forgotten your name, but your impression is forever carried in my heart.

Here is something more about each of them:

Grade school years - St. Catharine of Siena

1. Fr. Joseph A. Ticken: Pastor St. Catharine of Siena and friend.
2. Fr. Emil Heiring: Very good friend.
3. Fr. Francis Kennedy: best friend, parish priest and chaplain in the service. Fr. Kennedy and I go way back. Fr. Kennedy was also from St. Catharine's. When I became a Marine, he was in the Navy and his ship came into Guam where I was stationed. Fr. Kennedy would call and we would go to dinner... on the

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ship...because they always had good food on a Navy ship. Fr. Kennedy knew Marines didn't eat as well. It was my first time for chicken and steak together, on the same plate! These meetings were the basis for becoming good friends.

4. Sr. Frances deSales: As my first grade teacher, she was the one who taught me the most important lesson I ever learned in my life, and I still feel that way: The primary purpose in life is to know, love and serve God. In her half-hour forming talk, sister said you don't have to worry about the other two because if you know God you can't help but love and serve Him. She planted the seed in us. By divine providence she began to form me.
5. Sr. Ann Charles was my Second Grade teacher. Everybody liked her.
6. Sr. Clarice: this sister was one of my favorites. She had a pretty face and was spiritually very attractive. She said, "If you treat people the way you would treat Jesus, it will be a better world".
7. Sr. Eustella: She was the one who taught me to serve at mass. She was tough. You didn't mess around in her class. I didn't like her then, but as I look back, I was glad I had her, not just for serving but also in the 5th and 6th grades.
8. Sr. Mary Schlanser: She was a girl I dated way back. She became a nun. We stayed friends and when Serrans were giving talks in high schools she joined us a couple of times.

High school years at Elder

10. Fr. Basil A. Haneberg: principal while I was a student.
11. Fr. William T. Hilvert: history and government teacher.
12. Fr. Charles J. Schreibeis taught both algebra and general science.
13. Fr. James Krusling: he was one of the best teachers I had, a biology teacher.
14. Fr. August Kramer: my senior religion teacher
15. Fr. Felix taught freshman religion.

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Xavier University era

17. Fr. Malone: biology teacher; really good; told it like it was
18. Fr. Mooney; frankly I just liked him.
19. Fr. Nieporte: I didn't have him for any subject. He was related to my mother and worked as a vice president of Xavier University. I saw him every once in awhile and we talked.

College of Holy Cross years

20. Fr. John P. Deevy was the Disciplinary. He loved athletes, and he and I became friends. He was an ideal priest.
21. Fr. Francis J. Hart: He kept me from getting home sick. I was in the Marine Corps for three years and within 6 months I'm at Holy Cross. I was getting tired of being away from home. He liked athletes too, so we got along. As a matter of fact, I was playing student football, and was catching passes and so forth. He told the football coach he ought to be talking to me. The coach said I should go out, and so I did. But, by the time I did, all the good equipment was gone. I hurt my shoulder with one of those sleds that they have for tackle drills; I hit it hard and hurt my arm because the equipment wasn't doing anything. I said, "Hey, I'm going to play baseball." I quit and played baseball.
22. Fr. Raymond Cahill taught me philosophy; a great guy; I will never forget him.
23. Fr. Patrick J. Cummings was my confessor. He was the first guy I ever went to confession face to face with; he taught me that. Now it seems as if I've done it all my life. He was the first priest I spent an hour with weekly while I was at school.
24. Fr. Joseph F. Sullivan: Philosophy teacher. Most of the philosophy teachers were way above my head, but he wasn't. He had good personality and taught so I could understand it; that's was why I liked him. He was pretty old when I was there.

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25. Fr. Michael Pierce was philosophy/theology teacher. This regular guy got it through to us; he made class fun.
26. Fr. John E. Brooks was a classmate of mine who became a priest and is still very active. He just retired four years ago as president of Holy Cross. Fr. Brooks was president of the college longer than anybody else. They have a building named after him now. Our Alumni Club used to have him come to our dinners and give a talk. They don't make too many like him.
27. Fr. Donaghy: Probably the best speaker I ever heard at that age. He was so good that I got Father Wenzel to call. Fr. Wenzel got Fr. Donaghy to give a retreat at Milford all the way from Holy Cross. When he was up there talking, you didn't sleep, I can tell you that.

Cincinnati, After 1949

9. Sr. Rosemary Laux of the Precious Blood Order: She was sacristan at the Cathedral way back when I started, over 40 years ago. She and I became friends because I would always get there early and she'd be there. I'd kid her when she would prepare the wine, and ask her why she didn't share it with me. She retired and lives in Dayton. I still go to Mass at the Cathedral, but quit serving when I was 80 years old.
16. Fr. Lawrence Strittmatter: As principal at Elder he encouraged and guided us through the start-up of the Serra Speakers Program. Without him we would not have initiated the program.
28. Fr. Filippine and I are very good friends and have known each other for a long time. He grew up in St. Catharine's parish. Recently, he was pastor at my present parish.
29. Fr. Chuck Mentrup: I had a good spiritual relationship with him. He was my confessor, and I made it a point to go to confession two or three times a year. Fr. Chuck Mentrup was a cheer leader at St. Xavier when my boys were playing sports there. Later as a

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priest he was again a cheer leader, believe it or not. He was very sportsman like and a good motivator.

30. Fr. Edward Piggot: I see him once a month. I don't think he's a teacher anymore-kind of a consultant.
31. Fr. Donald McCarthy: I visit him once a month. He's retired but very active at St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart Radio.
32. Fr. Kyle Schnippel: I see him once a month, also. This young priest is Vocation Director for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and is chaplain to Serra Club. He fills this role well.
33. Fr. Bramlage is the current pastor at the Cathedral. He and the other priests, Fr Snodgrass and Fr Larger, give good counsel.
34. Fr. John Rea was the first chaplain for the Serra Club when I joined...way back. They don't come any better than that guy. He loved to cook. We had Serra meetings twice a month like we do now, but he would have an evening meeting about every 3 months. He would make a meal for us and then would give us a "retreat like" talk. He was fantastic. And he went to all of the Serra conventions so he learned something too.
35. Fr. John Wenzel ran Milford Retreat Center.
36. Fr. Robert Hagedorn was at the Cathedral as an assistant. He was one of the few guys who would come early for Mass. He and I would sit down, never for less than twenty minutes, to talk about what's going on, and what we thought about this; what's good, what's bad and so forth.
37. Fr. Paul Gebhardt: He's a gentle and holy pastor of St Vivian's where I attend Mass on Sunday and holy days (the masses I go to during the week are usually at the Cathedral). I began to be concerned about not telling Fr. Gebhardt as I had already spoken to Fr. McCarthy and Fr. Schnippel about my first draft on this Listening Prayers booklet. So, after mass I asked to have a half hour of his time. He said all I had to do was make an appointment through the secretaries. I made the appointment and we got to know each other better in that half hour.

38. Fr. Fidelis was director of Crisillio, the four (4) day retreat.
39. Fr. Bill Cross opened the door for our speakers to work at Purcell Marian High.
40. Fr. Jim Willig: a long suffering saint, a remarkable spiritual leader and author. He was the assistant at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral (late 70's) when I served Mass for him. Later Fr. Willig was pastor at Sts. Peter and Paul in Reading, his last earthly assignment.

Yes, my life has been graced with countless kindnesses, lessons and relationships that have made a positive difference in my life.

5. Listening Prayer Lessons :

Give me a reason: In prayer, I requested, ‘Give me the best reason we should love Our Lord!’ An answer received was,

*Our Lord loves me with the most perfect love there ever was;
Our Lord loves me with the most perfect love there ever will be.*

Our Lord loves you with the most perfect love there ever was.
Our Lord loves you with the most perfect love there ever will be.
Think about it; there are many reasons to love our Lord but no other reason makes as much sense as this one. A little bit later He tried to explain it to me in layman’s language and said:

‘Perfect Love is first of all’

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Giving Love...you are not loving because you want something back, plus

Forgiving Love... All of us have sinned in our lives, and His love for us includes forgiving love and reparation for our sins.

And Perfect Love includes ***Thanksgiving Love***.

I believe, He wants us to know He appreciates we are doing our best to love Him and are doing our best to live and be the best person, we can be, the person He wants us to be, and we are doing our best to please Him.

These are three reasons why it is important for us to love Our Lord. His love is perfect.

Listening prayer is not easy, but will be there if you are patient and persistent. When it seems like He's not answering the prayer it's very difficult to be patient and persistent. If you aren't patient and persistent, He's certainly not going to come back. You have to keep working so that He will answer your prayer. If you haven't learned anything by reading this, at least remember, the primary purpose of life is to know, love and serve God.

I would like to explain I am no longer giving talks at schools, and I went several months without engaging in any Listening Prayer.

I had quit giving talks in the high schools because I can't stand on my feet that long anymore. I have bad legs. I was thinking the only reason I needed to use listening prayer was to give a talk.

In fact, my listening as part of prayer didn't have a name or need one when I first experienced. It only got named after I started speaking about it with other Serrans and students during the high school visits. Several years ago, I was seeing Fr. Piggot at one of our once a month sharing sessions, and he asked me if I was getting any Listening Prayer. I said, 'I don't really feel like I need it because I'm not giving the talks anymore.'

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He said, ‘you don’t have to give talks to listen to Our Lord, and have Him talk to you.’ I said. “You’re right. I should start that over again.” So if it wasn’t for Fr. Piggot I wouldn’t have done this.

Now that I am doing Listening Prayer more often at night, I get to the point where I want to listen to Him but am falling asleep. So getting through doesn’t happen as often as it used to but I get twice as much now than before I had quit.

God helps you : Our Serra Club members gave me the chance to talk to explain many of my listening prayer lessons and to field their questions. On the day I was to give a talk at the bi-monthly meeting of my Serra Club I stood for over an hour and never during that hour did I feel bad. There was no pain anywhere while I was trying to help Our Lord spread His word. God helps you do what He wants you to do. This recent experience proves that out. I hurt the next day, but during the time I was there the Lord was really helping me. And that talk was also the beginning of getting this all on paper.

In heaven there will be very few celebrities among the “athletes” and “entertainers”, although there can be exceptions. I think the “celebrity” roster in heaven will be priests, nuns and deacons and saints. There are some movie stars that I thought had a spiritual life, but I think they are very few. Athletes are the same way. What is the point? I used to talk about the goal of trying to become a celebrity in heaven. The celebrities in heaven are going to be people who had a good spiritual life here on earth. One of the things that will help give you a good spiritual life is Listening Prayer. A good spiritual life is a better goal in the end. People who go out of their way to help that “roster” will be semi celebrities. Hopefully that’s us in the Serra Club.

Thanks to Our Lord for He made me in such a way that I find joy in donating to charities and also living within my means. Once I could afford to go out of town with my family, we traveled within the United States. The US has places and sights that are good to see. I've been in every state except Washington, Oregon and Alaska. But I don't need luxuries like a country club, a mansion to live in, vacations, cruises or exotic European trips.

Extra benefit: Many people become forgetful when they hit their 80's. If you have a prayer life you can improve your memory. Our Lord helps you think when you meditate. The practice of meditating keeps the mind working.

Suffering does not have to be a negative. Don't waste it ...

Use suffering. Offer it up to God. Suffering goes on in the world today with each one of us. I have come to the conclusion that if you pray, suffering is not a minus; often it can be a spiritual plus. If you start crabbing about it and blaming Our Lord about it, it gets worse, and doesn't improve. But, if you accept what He has allowed it to happen, if you offer it up, and don't let it go to waste, it is a plus. When you offer suffering to Our Lord, even though Our Lord doesn't need it, He will find some way to help you because of it.

Our Lord doesn't need a person to offer up their suffering, but if you offer it up to Him, He will take it and give it to benefit someone who needs it right now... and that somebody could be you or some other suffering person. So if you have the right attitude about suffering you can get some release, plus Our Lord promised, "All you who labor and are burdened come to me and I will refresh you." I've leaned on Him that way many times.

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Death has its pluses. Some people when I tell them about death think I'm nuts. Listening Prayer gave me a spiritual outlook on death and it's connection to perfect happiness. The person who dies and is on the way to perfect happiness never had it so good in all his/her life. In addition, that final happiness never will go away. If you ponder on that, especially when someone you love passes away, it will help you very much. That has helped me with my attitude about death. **It's not something to fear intensely.**

Some think something is wrong with me if I'm not worried about death. I don't want to die. I just want people to know that if and when it comes and that's what Our Lord wants – that's what I want. I offer that as an idea to consider; give it some time to develop like a seed planted.

Lunch with friends: A few months ago I was scheduled to have lunch with Joyce, the wife of an old friend, Bob. Bob recently passed away. During the conversation, Joyce shared her sister-in-law, Rita was in town from Colorado. Rita had been a class mate of mine at St. Catharine's grade school. I suggested she call Rita and invite her to have lunch with us. Rita agreed and we three met at Parkers, a favorite eatery for Joyce, Bob and I.

We talked about the Cincinnati Reds and did the usual catching up. I knew Bob was raised Catholic. Although Joyce was baptized Catholic I didn't know she never practiced the Faith. I mentioned one of my Listening Prayer messages, *'if you don't have a prayer life you can never accomplish your maximum potential'*.

For the rest of the lunch Rita and I shared all the good news about being Catholic with Joyce. Before parting I gave Joyce a copy of my Listening Prayer list and the synopsis of my Listening Prayer talk from the bi-monthly Serra Club minutes. Within months of that luncheon, Joyce found a priest to investigate what she needed

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to do to become a practicing Catholic. I report this because Our Lord prompted me to evangelize... and I did. I have had the opportunity a few other times. Putting this down on paper is also a way I am evangelizing.

Unbelievable for us could be routine for God. Several months ago I was working on a Listening Prayer, just sitting there, not saying anything, waiting for a time He would talk to me. I had already said a prayer about how much I love Him, and every time I did I tried to tell Him why. He told me that a good reason to love Him was because He loved me in a perfect love. By keeping my mouth shut He may talk to me as He did when he said, Perfect Love is Giving Love, Forgiving Love and Thanksgiving Love. And every time I pray about His words about love, I use the word 'unbelievable'. I think that it is unbelievable that He would bother to love me with that kind of love. With that kind of love, my loving Him is a no brainer. There is something wrong if you don't love Him knowing that He loves you with a perfect love.

We should never take advantage of a situation when Our Lord is answering our prayers. When Our Lord answers a prayer, and it's very obvious, we should never forget to thank Him and share the experience with others... especially our family. It doesn't help anyone if you don't pay attention to it and let it be known. He answers your prayers and you are pleased. When my grandson was hurt playing football I told him I was praying for him. I also said you should be praying for yourself too. When he got better and he was playing again. I said, *'don't forget to thank Him'* If we hadn't prayed for him, he may not have gotten well that fast.

6. Summary:

My prayer for whoever reads this message is to understand the Primary Purpose of life is to 'know' God. Knowing God is so important because if you fully come to know God you will automatically love Him, and if you love Him, you will automatically serve Him, and do whatever you can for Him. Not everybody knows and understands that.

I will never forget Sr. Frances deSales, my teacher from the first grade at St. Catharine's, because she taught me that the primary purpose of life is to know, love and serve God.

Sister pointed out that to know God you should spend some time everyday trying to get to know Him, because if you know Him, you will love Him, and will serve Him. It is my guiding principle. I want to pass on her teaching. Use it to direct your life.

When I came back from the Marines Corps and had to find out what I was going to do with my life. I prayed and Our Lord reminded me about the primary purpose of life, and I thought to myself, if this is true, I should never pass up an opportunity to get to know God better. And that's how I was guided to get very involved.

Listening Prayer is an important part of my life. It is a way I learn more about God. Through Listening Prayer, Our Lord said to me, ***'if you do not have a prayer life no matter what vocation you choose you will never reach your full potential'***.

To carve out time for prayer and plan time away for retreats is not easy. Always there is a choice between what is important and what is not important. If you are looking at it from how will you benefit at age 22 you could come up with a different answer than

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if you have clear long term vision. To know and love God is a long term vision to keep us on the right path. It is important to live God's vision for your life. Living His vision for your life gives help and direction all through life and benefits us in the end.

When I was neglecting my children because of the pressures of business, the Lord through my spiritual exercises including listening prayer would correct my path or remind me about it. By this beneficial spiritual refocusing He guided me to keep from a life in bars or on golf courses. He blessed me and kept me focused on family, the responsibility to wife and kids. This is a rewarding life and a grand blessing.

Spiritual life is important.

Acknowledgments

This pamphlet would not have happened if it had not been for others who urged me to do it. In fact, it wasn't my idea at all.

Father Piggott guided me to begin constructing a list of my spiritual listening events. Although the entire list did not get into the booklet, I hope the fact and benefit of the practice comes over.

Fellow Serran, Dottie Ciok recorded my verbal comments, organized and brought these through word processing into the first hard copy. Thereafter she continuously suggested improvements in the way the story was put down. Another Serran, Lou Eichhold, had much to do getting my pamphlet where I wanted it.

Father Donald McCarthy offered his help and insured a proper presentation about his fellow priests and helped bolster my relaxed use of our language.

A classmate's son, Dan Spraul, Atty., added his generous perspective and expertise.

Thanks to all of you for helping this work come to completion.

Bob Massa

I, Bob Massa, author of *Listening Prayer : God Speaks in Prayer Relationships* , wishes to express the granting of permission to Serra Club Members, or others, to distribute or otherwise use this writing in connection with evangelizing or spreading the Good News or encouraging others to practice "Listening Prayers".