

Jesus † Mary † Joseph  
Chapter 35 - Variety in the Spiritual Life

Christ:

My child, not everyone can make use of the same spiritual exercises. One devotion suits this person, while another suits that person. At times, a change of spiritual exercises will do you good. Some devotions will help on ordinary days, and others will be more helpful on holy days. You may need one type of spiritual activity in time of temptation and another in time of peace. A man likes certain thoughts when he is sad, but in times of spiritual joy, he prefers other thoughts.

2. Variety in your spiritual life will help you live a richer life and a holier one. Make your spiritual goals and your resolutions according to the spirit of the different seasons of the Church calendar. Plan your interior life as one who is eager to give Me better service. Live as one who looks forward to Heaven.

3. Think of death as the gateway to Heaven. Learn to look upon your earthly life as a great opportunity to make a worthy preparation for Heaven. If I have not called you yet, consider that it is because you are not yet well enough prepared to receive the heavenly glory which is being reserved for you. Then plan how to prepare yourself for that heavenly reward. Never forget the words: “Blessed is that servant whom the Lord shall find watching when He comes. Indeed, I tell you, He will place him over all His possessions!”

Think:

It is so easy to fall into a routine and stick to it. Many go on day after day, doing the same old things in the same old way. Variety makes life interesting, yet too few have the ambition and energy to put variety into their daily lives. In prayer, I shall try to learn various methods in case I should need them to avoid the dullness of routine. I can read the lives of the saints and see where I may make a few changes in my own spiritual life. My spiritual director can give me ideas on how to freshen my zeal for God’s glory and for the help of my neighbor.

Pray:

O Holy Ghost, my God and Sanctifier, grant me light to see how I can make my daily life more fruitful in doing good. Let me not fall into a rut and stay there. Life is a glorious opportunity to do great things – to become more like You, my God, by the good and love which I can give to others. Help me to see more ways of increasing the good in my daily life. Give me the unselfishness and strength to do good for Your sake. Amen.

December 4<sup>th</sup> - Saint Barbara, Virgin and Martyr (†235)

Saint Barbara was brought up by a pagan father, Dioscorus. With the intention of protecting her beauty, he kept her jealously secluded in a lonely but very luxurious tower which he built for that purpose; for in his own way he loved her. In her forced solitude, this very gifted young girl undertook to study religion, and soon saw clearly all the vices and absurdities of paganism; her clear mind realized that there could be only one supreme

Creator-God, and that He is entitled to the worship of His reasonable creatures. Divine Providence by its wonderful ways contrived to obtain for her the means to send a message to Origen, the famous exegete, asking for knowledge of the Christian faith. That teacher of Alexandria immediately sent to her, at Nicomedia, a disciple named Valentinian. Soon she was baptized, and Our Lord appeared to her, as He would appear to others such as Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Teresa of Avila, to tell her He had chosen her to be His spouse. Saint Barbara, rejoicing, hoped to be able to communicate her precious new faith to her father, but would soon discover that hope was vain.

When she was of an age to marry, many requests for her hand came to her wealthy father. She was his only heiress, and he rejected her expressed wish not to accept any such offer, although she said she wished to remain his consolation for his declining years. When she continued to refuse every suitor's demands, and when Dioscorus returned from a journey to find all the idols he had placed in her tower broken in pieces and scattered about, he was furious. Discovering his daughter's conversion, he was beside himself with rage. She escaped and dwelt for a time in a cavern, where she was concealed by the vegetation growing at the entrance. But finally her father's threats of chastisement, which he made known during his searches, for anyone who might be concealing her, caused some local shepherds who knew of her whereabouts, to reveal her retreat.

Her father denounced her to the civil tribunal, and Barbara was horribly tortured twice, and finally beheaded. Her own father, merciless to the last, asked to deal her the fatal blow himself. God, however, speedily punished her persecutors. While her soul was being borne by the Angels to Paradise, a flash of lightning struck Dioscorus and Marcian, the civil prefect, and both were summoned in haste to the judgment-seat of God.

Saint Barbara is beloved of the Spanish-speaking peoples. She is the special protectress of the region of Metz in France, where a magnificent church, later destroyed, was built in her honor in the 1500's. She is invoked against sudden and unprovided death, and invariably answers all requests for the favor of receiving the Last Sacraments. A famous instance of her intervention on behalf of a Saint who was on the verge of death, can be read in the life of Saint Stanislaus Kostka.

Sources: Les Petits Bollandistes: Vies des Saints, by Msgr. Paul Guérin (Bloud et Barral: Paris, 1882), Vol. 14; Little Pictorial Lives of the Saints, a compilation based on Butler's Lives of the Saints and other sources, by John Gilmary Shea (Benziger Brothers: New York, 1894).

#### Preparing the Stable - December 4th - Cobwebs

Clean the cobwebs from your spiritual crib. Diligently remove from your heart every inordinate desire of being praised. Renew this intention at least three times a day.

Ejaculation: My Jesus, I want to please You in all I do today.

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