

Loving Pastors?

OK. I've got a great pastor. Father Justin is orthodox and admittedly human: richly so, kind of noble but not self-important. His confidence in mercy frees him to be a sinner but not perilously. His solid bearing as a father frees me to exhale. The impact of a pastor's integrity makes me want to pray for all the pastors I know. That's what our Lenten prayer focus will be for the next 47 days. Plug in your pastors and join us?

I pray for pastors because if I do not, I get caught in petty judgments that calcify into suspicion. Let's face it: we are consumers--spiritual gourmards--when it comes to our leaders. Add the global virtual lens that frames them as pedophiles at worst, abusers at best, and we might confess we see pastors 'through a glass darkly'. I submitted a piece on pastors last year to Justin and he remarked gently: 'You sound angry...'

Angry. Got it. He was right. I carry concealed weapons when it comes to divided pastors who threaten to divide others. But my caution belies a deeper truth: human anger tends to frustrate the righteousness of God (James 1:20). I look no further than my own divides—personal fissures irritated by a host of external prods. My self-directed anger, or another's, heals me not. Either makes me sick and sad, inclined to isolate and lie against the truth. Only this gaze of Love, this Jesus who looks on me kindly and constantly, frees me to bypass pet idols and proceed (however shakily) to offer others my best self.

If that is true for me, then why do I deny that for pastors? Why do I deflect the light of love from them rather than offer them up to the One whose love sustains and dignifies each one of us, if only we would open ourselves to Him?

Lately I spend a lot of time in Adoration—focusing on Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist—wordlessly confessing that He is all and nothing else much matters but His gaze of love on me. On us. When I think of the demanding, inherently frustrating, never completed, usually lonely task of pastoring, I know that only Jesus' intimate bond of love with each shepherd can cure what ails him. And as I linger in His courts, I can bring these leaders with me and offer them up as well, asking Him to shine on them and so call them in from the cold and be loved for a while.

I am indebted to a book on praying for pastors—*In Sinu Jesu*--written by a monk for fellow priests. The author listens, and Jesus speaks to us: 'Do this one thing, Adore Me, and wait upon Me, and you will see in astonishment that I will do all the rest. There is but one obstacle to My plan here, and it is that you lose the grace for which I brought you here by becoming distracted and consumed by a multitude of other things. Be faithful to what is essential, your being with Me—and all the rest will be given to you besides.' (Matt. 6:33)

We at DSM will give up distractions this Lent so we can linger longer before the One who makes us whole and who can do the same for our pastors. Let's forego our laments and lay our shepherds

before the kind face and heart of Jesus.

I'm including a schedule when we at DSM will pray once a week. Besides following us weekly, may I ask you daily to lift your pastors using this simple prayer?

'Father, I offer You the Precious Lamb of God for my cleansing and healing, and for the cleansing and healing of Pastors_____. I ask that You Jesus shine the light of Your merciful face upon_____; Holy Spirit, break the grip of discouragement, and infuse them with the grace to linger before Your love. May You become their all-in-all.' Amen

Please take time to watch our video and become '[Chaste Together](#).'

Join us this Lent

INTO HIS HEART

Interceding for Pastors and Priests

“Nothing surrendered to My Heart is ever lost. If you would place the persons and the things you love in the safest place of all, surrender them to My Sacred Heart.”

ST. AGNES CONVENT
3220 W. 53rd Street
Roeland Park, KS 66205

6:30-8PM

<i>Loving Pastors?</i>	Thursday, February 27
<i>Softening Hardened Hearts</i>	Tuesday, March 3
<i>Advocacy, Not Acrimony</i>	Tuesday, March 10
<i>Overcoming False Intimacy</i>	Tuesday, March 24
<i>Forging Young Fathers</i>	Tuesday, March 31
<i>Shifting the Atmosphere</i>	Tuesday, April 7

