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PASTOR

My dear Kirkland Catholics,

In the popular imagination the end of the year and the beginning of a new one is a time for resolutions around self-improvement. Standards that we set matter, because our expectations of ourselves and of our family members tend to be the standards that we rise or fall to. The example of a particular sports team habitually playing down to inferior competition is a good case in point.

A standard I would like to set as an ask from you as your pastor has to do with prayer time. You might be surprised that the Saints who are considered “doctors” of prayer, from St. Francis de Sales to St. Theresa of Avila to Alphonsus Liguori to St. Padre Pio and St. John Paul II seem to be unanimous in setting **at least 30 minutes a day** as the amount of prayer a layperson should be praying daily on average. Diocesan priests are formed to pray at least one hour a day.

I can speak for myself that when I entered seminary and began the discipline of scheduling and spending an hour a day in prayer, it was daunting (I would at times count the minutes down towards the end of the hour) but got *much easier* over time. Now – generally speaking – my daily holy hour is something I very much look forward to and is often the best part of my day.

If you want to make some progress in spending time with the Lord but do not know where to start, I recommend the rosary and praying with Scripture. Praying with Scripture is not a bible study; it is simply prayerfully reading the text and expecting the Lord to form your thoughts and – in a sense – “speak” to you through the text and in your day. Fr. Val and I are also always happy to give advice as teaching parishioners to pray and have that personal relationship with the Lord in the dailyness of things is a major part of our job.

If it is not a matter of will but of time, I counter by saying that my life is often crazy hectic, but one can find time. My experience, moreover, is that when I was less faithful to my holy hour the day was *more hectic* and, conversely, the Lord somehow allows me to get more done even though I am dedicating that hour or more to prayer instead of “getting stuff done.” St. Francis de Sales famously said to spend at least 30 minutes a day in prayer, unless one is really busy then one should pray an hour per day.

With love in Christ,

Fr. Brad