

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



If you were told to spend your days and nights reflecting on the “Last Things” (heaven, hell, purgatory, the final judgment), you would probably say ‘okay, great’ and move on to something else. Probably a topic more pleasing. Most people would. Yet, our Catholic Faith reminds us that frequent meditation on the Last Things needs to be a part of our spiritual exercises. The reason is simple, to remind us that making right choices informed by faith will lead us to heaven as well as to make us loving and charitable people in

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this life. The Master, Jesus, instructs “as I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34). Loving God who is the object of our faith, needs to be expressed in how we love and care for others. Meditation on the Last Things is both a way to order the expression of our faith as well as to keep our hopes for union with God alive both in prayer and in the manner in which we live. Throughout the Church’s history, great women and men have led holy lives through meditation on the last things. One such person was the Servite, St. Juliana Falconieri.

St. Juliana, who lived in the thirteenth century, was the niece of St. Alexis Falconieri, one the Seven Founders of the Servite Order. It is written that St. Juliana loved to listen to her saintly uncle preach. One day, St. Alexis preached a passionate sermon on the Last Things. She was so moved by the sermon that Juliana began a life-long habit of meditating on the Sacred Scriptures, especially on the Last Things. Juliana’s meditation led her to undertake two activities in her life: prayer before

the Blessed Sacrament and service to the poor.

In frequent celebration of the Eucharist, St. Juliana was nourished with the love necessary to serve others. Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament deepened her union with God and strengthened her desire to serve Christ in His poor ones. As she read and prayed the Scriptures, St. Juliana desired all the more to have a place in heaven where she could spend eternity with her love, Christ Jesus. As she pondered the Last Things, especially in Matthew 25, Juliana became the wise virgin who put her talents at the service of the poor Christ, whom she encountered in the poor she lovingly served. Serving Christ in the poor brought the hope of heaven into the reality of the present for the saint. The future heavenly union with God was presently real in the lives of each child, woman and man that Juliana served. From serving, she went back to prayer with gratitude for experiencing her loved One in His people. Meditation on the Last Things is an invitation to reflect on our





lives and to keep ordering life according to Jesus' command to love as we are loved. Furthermore, the same meditative action is an invitation to make the joy of heaven real in our lives by how we build the Kingdom of God in our present world. Worthy and joyful reception of the Eucharist deepens our union with the Christ whom we can see in His poor ones. I believe that St. Juliana's life is an example of how meditating on the Last Things and frequent reception of the Eucharist can bring joy to lives. The joy comes when so filled with God's love for us, we freely share it with others.

Each day, like our sister St. Juliana, we Servites celebrate the Eucharist and spend time praying and meditating on the Scriptures as sources of our compassionate service to others. Like our saintly sister, we friars grow each day in love of God. It is our love of God and our personal relationship with Him which compels us to be compassionate witnesses of hope to those who suffer in any way. Christ becomes personal and real in the Eucharist, in our prayer, in our communities and in the lives of those we serve. St. Juliana reminds us to bring to others what we have received from God, love. As you continue to discern your vocation, we Servites pray that the



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follow



Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

Read Matthew 25

- 1. In my vocation discernment how am I experiencing the Lord's love for me? How am I being called to serve others?**
- 2. As I ponder the Last Things and my desire for heaven, how can I bring the joy of union with God to all that I meet this day?**
- 3. Can I see myself serving others as a Servite Friar? How? When?**

example of St. Juliana will inspire you to let God love you and through you to others in service. We are praying for you.

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