



THE URANTIAN®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

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"EVERYDAY-PROOF" COMMUNION

Good morning, brothers and sisters:

Did you enjoy having a little talk with our heavenly Father this morning? Did you get refreshed, inspired and renewed? Are you conscious of his presence right now?

While living on Urantia Jesus had unbroken communion with our Father. The secret of this intense communion was prayer and worship. All the manifest and seen life of Jesus was based on restful meditation; it was rooted in his strong relationship with God.

We mortals are often compared to plants. Each of us is growing according to the potentials hidden somewhere inside of us. But we are very special plants, because we have been given free will, which can be used to get water and nutrients.

Reading *The URANTIA Book* is like getting beneficial nutrients for our growth. But as we know from botany, no amount of fertilizers can replace water. Water brings life.

Plants get their water through their roots. Prayer and worshipful meditation is willingness to be deeply-rooted, to establish "everyday-proof" communion. Prayer and worship is reaching towards the source of joy, love and service.

Satu Sihvo
Espoo, Finland

ASKING FOR THE SPIRIT— AND OTHER GOOD STUFF!

This is a combination of an eleven-day prayer cycle and a sharing of my insights into the relationship between the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (listed in Isaiah, chapter 11), the teaching of *The URANTIA Book* about the seven adjutant mind spirits (pp 401-403), and the Pentecostal teaching on charismatic gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8-12). Of course the possible relationship between the seven gifts and the

seven adjutants leaps to mind since the names are so close. Adding the charismatic gifts was a last minute bonus. I didn't think it possible, though I wanted it to be. Suddenly, they categorized themselves, as it were, and slipped into unexpected places. They took me by surprise!

The prayer cycle begins with Ascension Thursday and ends with Pentecost. The nine days between are the "novena"—nine days asking for the release of the Spirit. In the traditional novena, seven of the nine days are devoted to asking for a greater measure of each of the seven gifts. Here I have explained each gift, each ministry, and a little of each charism in hopes you will find ways to act to open yourself more fully to the Holy Spirit. We must always act. Faith like a mustard seed can do great things only if it is planted!

My reflections are based on a joyful and appreciative growing-up experience within Catholicism, years of encouragement within the social fellowship of readers of *The URANTIA Book*, and a recently renewed association with the worship of Catholic Pentecostals.

I should add that I left the worship of the Church for a number of years. When I returned, I had to re-examine *The URANTIA Book* in the light of what God began to do in my life as a renewed Catholic. Such re-examinations are both painful and demanding. Yet it has been a joy, too. The breadth and philosophical acuity of Catholicism are admirably suited to meet the intellectual challenge of *The URANTIA Book*, while the well-researched biographies of the saints provide truly excellent illustrations of the principles of spiritual and cosmic growth as described in this revelation. I am more delighted than I can say.

But I had to laugh one day when a friend commented after listening to my thoughts, "Well, then, I guess you would say this book is basically an extension of Catholicism." !!?

Yet there is only one God, and if he has worked in your heart through Catholicism, the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* can open your mind to new dimensions of that experience. And at the same time, revelation doesn't thrive in a vacuum. The richness of these teachings is all the greater in the context of the practical wisdom and spiritual experience of *praying Catholics*.

Rejoice in the Lord always!

I. Ascension Thursday—Asking for What?

Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened... And if you fathers know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give—good gifts in Matthew 7 or the Holy Spirit in Luke 11—to those who ask him?

These simple words have encouraged so many to take the first step of expectant faith and allow God to do great things in their lives! And yet, who does not know some floundering soul whose faith was wrecked here, who perhaps prayed to pass a history test in fourth grade (surely a good thing), flunked, and has never trusted our Father since?

On the day Jesus ascended to our Father, he asked his apostles to wait and pray for the endowment of the Spirit. They had just experienced the depths of disappointment as Jesus died in bitter humiliation after their last evening of quarreling about places at his kingdom's table. During the weeks of his resurrection appearances, their sobered

faith rose from the tomb of crushing defeat, but they still had not the heart to go forth with the gospel.

And then the day came. When the Spirit fell on the apostles, their enthusiasm could not be contained. Peter went out to preach and promptly baptized 3,000 new believers. He and his associates and his followers through all the ages since have continued to ask for the endowment of the Spirit and to lead lives of extraordinary spiritual joy and power. And these lives of power have continued to include asking for the Holy Spirit and all kinds of good things besides. And getting them.

But the floundering believers still abound, and the Big Question remains: may we ask for material goods, or only spiritual stuff?

In the paper on the evolution of prayer, *The URANTIA Book* lists seven "laws of prevailing petitions." It is a formidable list, altogether daunting. But it's also very sensible and worthy of review as you begin a novena, a traditional nine-day prayer of petition.

Most strongly, it forbids an idle approach to prayer. God doesn't play abracadabra. The meek, who shall inherit the earth and all its goods, ever seek to know and obey the laws he has revealed to them. If they seem to ask for miracles, it is because they know there are more laws than they know. Meantime, they work hard to obey each revelation of his will.

And we must "surrender every wish of mind and every craving of soul to the transforming embrace of spiritual growth." When wishful material requests are divorced from the desire for spiritual purity and personal growth, they can hardly be called prayer. (Here is Nalda at the well, "Give me this water so I won't have to haul from the well every day." Woman, if you knew...!)

And yet these same material hopes, fully surrendered, may re-emerge as the will of the Father and the desire of the Son, a combination which simply IS. Divine wisdom may eventuate a transforming mindal activity that heals disease or directs choices along seraphically ordered and materially productive paths. Even the angels may be mobilized to assist us in ways that are not appropriate in an unsubmitted life.

But in any case, we must act. Decision is not a substitute for action. I love to reflect on the story of the anointing at Bethany:

While the apostles bickered endlessly about their places in the restored Kingdom of David, Mary, the listener, noted that Jesus said he was going to die. She acted; she bought the best, most expensive burial spices there were. Then, while they still closed themselves away from the unbearable human loneliness of the Lord who saw Calvary

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ahead, she noted that he said he would rise. It occurred to her that the homage of her perfumes might then be superfluous. Again, she acted, pouring nard over the beloved feet while they had yet many lonely steps to walk. And of this action, Jesus spoke unprecedented words: "Wherever throughout the world this gospel is preached, this also shall be told in memory of her." Wow!

So each day of the prayer cycle, I have tried to suggest an action to invite the Spirit of God to work in new ways in our lives.

As for the Big Question, I don't discourage praying for particular, even material needs. It seems a denial of both the Incarnation and the personal relationship of the Father to his individual children to make such rules. And it flies in the face of precious experience.

On the other hand...my heart grieves for those who have stumbled over their prayers. I would not add to their number. After all, Jesus came among us to share and guide our lives, not to arbitrarily fix them. If we love him, we will want to be cheerful and service-minded in every event of our earthly sojourn, just as he was. We will accept the Incarnation—which closed with the Crucifixion—as a promise that God cares for all our needs and as a commission to serve cheerfully whether or not this care is evident in a given situation.

So, let our first prayer be for wisdom, for the release of the Spirit. And then let us expect every good that our spirit-embraced consciousness suggests. Let us expect with lively and cheerful faith, for the everlasting Lord of all that is—our Father himself—loves us!

II. Yielding to the Spirit of God.

Of course it isn't the number of days that makes a novena but our willingness to yield our hearts to God and to make the choice of his will a specific part of our lives. We live in fragile and changing flesh, and we cannot take for granted that yesterday's choice of his will is enough resolve for a lifetime. Rather, we build him a tabernacle of expectation and hope, lofty as a cathedral or simple as a manger. We must realize that the intensity and consistency of our choice of his will does *function* in our lives.

During these special times of prayer, we build our hope from day to day. And as our hope grows larger, we confide it more deeply to God, to the lovely and blessed Indweller. And as we confide, we also yield. God is not nearly as interested in changing our lives as in changing ourselves, nor will he permit the angels to use us as tools, regardless of the yielding of our hearts. All the coordination of inner

growth and outer need is in the Father's hands. No one else, not even the Son, knows all the appointments and disappointments of the cosmos.

So let us hunger for God, expect him, rely on him, and yield to him.

III. First Mind-gift—Intuitive Quickening

The first adjutant mind spirit is the spirit of quick intuition, sometimes called the fear of the Lord. In the lower animals this is the most primitive instinct, the speedy response, just above tropism in plants, but hardly teachable. I think of how bugs scramble for the dark when surprised under a log. In primitive religion, this fearfulness insures a minimal following of "the law."

But in the religion of love, this is the spiritual endowment that allows us to respond to the will of God *immediately*, just by the feel of his presence and the direction of his joy, even in a situation that we are unable to think through. It is the foundation of all the other endowments because the first obstacle we have to overcome in our service of God is simply inertia. So this is the wake-up adjutant.

Among the charismatic gifts, there is one that, while "least" in everyone's estimation, gets the most attention from the outside. It is tongues, the startling gift of praise when we long for more satisfying words than we know, and the precious gift of intercession for needs we cannot judge or put into words. The gift of tongues is utterly commonplace among Pentecostals, and is simple enough for anyone to use, yet it is not teachable! I believe that this gift extends the work of the first (pre-teachable) adjutant because it turns our hearts most quietly, even unconsciously, to the specific will of God. What a wonderful place to be!

IV. Second Mind-gift—Understanding, Teachability

The second adjutant mind spirit is the spirit of understanding. In animals, (and babies) this is simply the ability to associate ideas, to learn. I guess all the research on rats in mazes is second-adjutant research!

In religious experience too, we need to learn, even to be willing to learn. When you are reading scripture or listening to someone and you suddenly sense that God is speaking to you and relating the sense of the words to your life, the spirit of understanding is at work. It is the recognition of a new association of ideas that is the special province of this adjutant.

One thing you might do today for spiritual uplift is read a good article from the natural sciences. Why? Because the whole physical universe is a bundle of parables which can give you a completely fresh insight into God, free from the babble of theological commentary. God can speak very powerfully this way, associating the sense of his creative patterns with some needed spiritual insight.

In the charismatic renewal, I think the gift of understanding is extended by the charismatic gift of discernment of spirits. This gift offers implicit guidance by allowing us to recognize the spiritual quality of things, even when we cannot verbalize this recognition.

V. Third Mind-gift—Courage, Fortitude

The third adjutant mind spirit is the spirit of courage, fortitude in the Isaian-Catholic list. In animals, this begins as the instinct for self-defense but as you go up the scale of animal and then human life, the tales of daring become a thrill and a delight. From the mother robin defending her nest to the martyrs of modern totalitarianism, the ministry of this adjutant inspires our minds and breathes boldness into our hearts.

At the pinnacle of courage, of course, is the Cross of Jesus. As you seek the action of the Spirit of God in your life, be trustful of your Father though there may be a little pain, or even a lot. Nothing is beyond the reach of the divine watchcare!

The charismatic gift of the faith for miracles, really just a kind of spiritual boldness and tenacity, extends the ministry of this adjutant. Even if you aren't used to the idea of charismatic gifts, be open today to the wonderful call of specific faith. Let it be a day of boldness and miracles! The greatest boldness of all time was the laying down of a divine life in bitterly human circumstances, and what enormous power flows from that! With God, all things are possible.

VI. Fourth Mind-gift—Knowledge, Curiosity

The fourth circuit of mind ministry is the adjutant of knowledge. It goes beyond the spirit of understanding-teachability in giving us the *initiative* of curiosity in learning. The restless—intellectually hungry—scientific spirit is the result of this adjutant presence. Again, we share this ministry with every kitten in the world, not to mention crows, puppies, elephants, and dolphins.

In our religious lives, this spirit helps us to separate faith from superstition by insisting on allegiance to our highest available concepts. Never should your spiritual pursuits

cripple you with anti-intellectualism; nor need strong intelligence cripple your heart with material-minded doubting. God has given us this spiritual ministry because our knowing minds are where we choose him!

And then, in mercy, he extends the ministry of knowledge in the charismatic word gifts. Prophecy and the other word gifts are altogether marvelous in that they allow us to know the touch of God's spirit in our verbal experience. What a blessing if every theologian could experience the simplicity of this! As I reflect on the manner of God's revelation in the word of prophecy, I find the story of John the Baptist's witness particularly moving. Here is a man of prayer suffering very deeply. Suddenly, unexpectedly, and on his own tongue!, the Father speaks words that strengthen. Amazing!

Be open today to God's magnificent and various words. Take time to enjoy the pursuit of your curiosity. And take time to listen. Let his word come to you from without and within. Listen with hunger of heart and mind.

VII. Fifth Mind-gift—Counsel

The spirit of counsel is the fifth adjutant of evolutionary mind, the highest of the five we share with animals. In the lower animals, it doesn't even function. Moving up the scale, we see complex social organizations, increasingly infiltrated with the affection that is the evolutionary foundation for love.

In the religious and social experience of humans, this is the endowment responsible for the development of loving relationships, for personal spiritual sharing, even for the giving and receiving of advice!

Perhaps the most powerful and unique contribution Catholicism has to make in this area is in the sacrament of reconciliation, or confession. The personal act of taking responsibility for our sins and seeking forgiveness and spiritual counsel is very powerful. And if we seek forgiveness, we must also offer it. Today would be a good day to receive this sacrament. Even if you're not a Catholic, you can go. It's a good way to open yourself to the spiritual ministry of counsel.

If you have not yet experienced the amazing power of healing that flows from genuine forgiveness, you have a real treat in store. In the charismatic renewal, all kinds of healings take place, physical, mental and spiritual, but the key is always forgiveness. If you go the confession today, be sure that you not only ask God's forgiveness, but genuinely offer it to those around you, especially those who have hurt you and those whose sins are similar to your own.

But in all your efforts to build community, remember that the brotherhood of man is based on the fatherhood of God, not the other way. Even before repentance, forgiveness, healing, or spiritually uplifting relationships of any kind, we must abide in the fathering love of God. Be sure to spend time in worship each day.

VIII. Sixth Mind-gift—Worship

With the spirit of worship (piety in the Isaian and Catholic lists) we come at last to those adjutants whose ministry we do not share with the animals. In fact, this is what makes us humans and them animals: we are responsive to the spirits of worship and wisdom and they're not. (Of course, unlike tools, fires, and an upright pelvis, worship and wisdom leave no mark in the fossil record!)

It is interesting to reflect that the mental activities of courage, curiosity, and community precede worship. They seem to be the very opposite of this rather solitary silence and meekness before the majesty of God. It is even more surprising and instructive to reflect that *worship* precedes *wisdom*.

Indeed, this is the difference between wisdom and mere understanding or knowledge. If you don't worship, you don't have wisdom. Period. It's easy to forget this when personal problems weigh heavily. We ask God's help and then we think as hard as we can. We may even attempt to and listen or at least "sleep on it." Well and good! But if you really want *wisdom*, you have to let go all the way and allow the Lord to lead you through worship.

In the mansion worlds, the threshold of heaven, we will have new minds which do not need the service of the first five adjutants, only worship and wisdom. And Paul says we will no longer need the charismatic gifts, either. While the charismatic gifts certainly depend on our responsiveness to the adjutants of worship and wisdom, they seem to be special extensions of the first five adjutants under the influence of worship, wisdom, and the Spirit of Truth.

It is so important to spend time in worship each day. Repentance and petition seem to be the most natural forms of prayer, but this is just immaturity. Many people don't think of praying until they feel really guilty or encounter other massive problems. Don't wait. Take delight in the Lord each day. He is worthy of your attention and nothing is more thoroughly refreshing than worship.

IX. Seventh Mind-gift—Wisdom

The seventh adjutant mind spirit is the spirit of wisdom. This is the highest activity of the human mind, the

unification of all other mental activities.

Consider the other gifts as foundations for wisdom, and see what power is here: Wisdom is active, building on responsive intuition. Wisdom is teachable, building on associative understanding. Wisdom is strong, building on fortitude. Wisdom is thoughtful, building on knowledge. Wisdom is friendly, building on counsel. And wisdom is holy, building on worship.

We were given mind as our interface between the material and spiritual worlds we simultaneously inhabit. Nothing on earth is more powerfully directive than a fully unified and divinely fed human mind. But do not make the mistake of asking for wisdom and failing to act. Nothing plugs up the spiritual life like such foolishness!

Wisdom has often been addressed as a feminine personality. Solomon prays for her presence and a strong tradition in Catholicism teaches that love for the Blessed Mother will especially open us to the action of the Holy Spirit. *The ULRANTIA Book* teaches that as soon as wisdom begins to function, usually around the age of five, the Local Universe Mother Spirit (known as the Holy Spirit) encircuits the growing mind and a focal point for the indwelling of the Father's spirit gift invites his presence. And since Pentecost, these momentous events also put us in touch with the Spirit of Truth. Divinity thus dwells with us in a three-fold manner, each person of the Trinity ministering to us in a different way.

Let this be a day to address your heavenly mother, to feel her gentle presence. No matter how open you are with Jesus and your Father, you will find that as soon as you begin to address a feminine personality in your prayer, you start saying new things. Although many particular differences between men and women are trivial, the richness of their difference reflects eternal and divine realities, too.

X. The Spirit of Truth

After Jesus lived among us in the flesh, he received from our Father the privilege of sending us a new ministry of truth, a spiritual endowment which would constantly make available to us both his precious presence and the spiritual substance of his teaching. This is the Spirit of Truth, a comforter to us and a teacher as well.

Every normal mind is prepared for this ministry of truth by the local universe Mother Spirit. But there is this difference between her ministry and his: hers is given almost automatically, but the ministry of the truth-spirit depends directly on our knowledge of Jesus, our love for him, and our personal commitment to his way. For those who do not

know the name of Jesus, or for whom his name is associated with confused and darkened teachings, acceptance of the substance of his revelation, to whatever extent it is presented in their situation, is sufficient for spiritual growth. But the profound experience of the baptism in the spirit and its startling endowments of charismatic power are usually reserved for those who have made conscious personal contact with Jesus, who have made a heartfelt commitment to his explicit teaching and who bear lasting spiritual fruit by *acting* on the gifts received.

I used to wonder why he is sometimes called the Advocate (legal defender), sometimes the Comforter, sometimes the Teacher. But on our troubled planet, our biggest problems are just these: We feel uncertain of our status before a just and mighty Father; he defends our hearts from burdensome accusation. We feel alone in a vast and uncaring universe; he is our Comforter. We are so confused; and he is a most astounding teacher. In fact, our minds, Pentecostally infected with the mind of Jesus, are sensitive to truth as a plant is sensitive to light. We *know*. And what we know first of all is that the Father himself loves us.

XI. Pentecost: A Day of Action

It is hardly possible to emphasize too strongly the importance of acting on our prayers. There is just no power in laziness. Act. If God wanted to do everything alone, he wouldn't have created us. At the same time, don't think that acting on prayer always means doing extraordinary things. Most often, it just means doing our usual rounds with extraordinary devotion.

Once you have asked for guidance, expect it, and believe that it is given even if you don't sense just what it is. God

cannot always speak to us as clearly as we would like, nor as clearly as he would like! Perhaps you won't have heard him just right the first time. Learn to be humble about your sense of guidance without denying his presence in your life.

And don't be afraid of making mistakes, as you certainly will. He calls us to share his work and his glory in a magnificent way—a way not open to beings created in perfection. Give thanks for your imperfect life, because when we come out of this darkness, we will praise him in a manner “astounding to the angels of Paradise.”

And so be joyful. Jesus says, “In the world, you will have trouble, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” He really has!

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*“Belief has attained the level of faith when it motivates life and shapes the mode of living.”
(*1114:6)*
