

My Two Hundred a Day Prayerful Conversations with God

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Early in my conversion, I heard Dr Charles Stanley say he spoke with God two hundred times a day. Wow, I thought. Being the linear guy I am, I pulled the calculator out and figured I was awake sixteen hours a day. So 16 hours times 60 minutes equals 960 minutes, divided by 200 equals 4.8 minutes. So every five minutes or so, I say a prayer / or have a conversation.

So what do I say? How do I do it?

I'd like to tell you several examples and hopefully you can develop your own. It takes time. It needs to be a habit done out of pure love. It should teach giving.

You will receive resistance from the devil. he doesn't like this idea – at all!

You will strengthen your faith. You will become strong. You will stop fearing. You will have peace – real peace for the first time in your life. For me, a cluttered life left me. I really don't have much need for anything. I don't ask – I trust. I may outline what I am thinking, but I leave it to Him to solve. I'll simply lay it out, and ask Him to handle it and it works! Because it is so easy, many don't try. Why not try? My family life has become stronger. My work has excelled. I am a fundraiser at a University. My goal yearly is to raise about six hundred thousand dollars. Over the past few years, it is approaching more than fifty million dollars! God receives all the credit. I allow Him to use my being.

Every morning when I wake up, I say to good morning and tell Him how much I love Him (1). He is now always first.

The year two thousand and four was the worst year of my life. Sometimes God brings you pain to shake or wake you up. Looking back now, it was only eight months. If God came down and told me I would have to suffer for eight months, so I could get what I have today, I would have happily said yes. Did I?

I had no job. From May of that year, I earned less than three thousand dollars. Among other things, I had to park my car in the driveway and not use it in order to save money. I was run out of a community where I earned a living by dealing with a person I should have never dealt with. Very high up in political circles I might add.

I was away from the Church. I didn't know how to approach God. I was of the earth, acting out of fleshly desires, not Godly desires.

A friend's brother passed away during this time. I knew a firefighter who perished in the Towers. I knew a Priest who had just passed away. My wife visited a woman for three years in a nursing home who spoke only a few words to her the entire time they knew each other. She died of natural causes. My father died in June. I was estranged. I didn't attend his funeral.

My oldest son Robert, who is now thirty-five, is mentally retarded. My wife innocently changed programs he attended. He had a dramatic set back. We rocked his boat. He lost forty pounds. He is my

size. He would walk backwards. He would chew food, only to spit it out. Was he attacked in the new program as we believe he was? We will never know. Only God knows.

I remember a Friday evening in October. Robert was in distress. We walked the neighborhood for hours. So much so, my back was killing me. I could hardly continue. Throughout, I prayed. I asked Michael, Brian, Father, Agnes, and Daddy to intercede for me. Because Michael had only passed the evening before and was devout, I credit him with his help that night. Looking back, that evening was Robert's low. Within a short time, his old program would welcome him back. There, he remains safe.

I would even go as far to say that was Michael's first miracle.

So I continued to pray to these individuals. I would start my new job (which I hold today), in the beginning of January. Things became good again. Stability returned. Something you could expect that a middle aged, college educated successful executive would enjoy. My highs and lows would be for eighteen months, start to finish. How could I stop this, I wondered? Yet, now that things were good, I stopped thinking of God. I stopped praying. Driving down Broad Street in Newark one morning I realized this. I hadn't thought of Him for weeks. I had to pull over to ponder it. It may have been the beginning of my conversion, a day I previously thought to be July 5th.

I get up early – five am. I attend 7 am daily Mass. My wife often accuses me of dilly-dallying. Guilty! I do it in the quiet of the morning when no one is awake. I admire the cat and thank God (2). I'll once again remind God how much I love Him (3). I will often pray to the Holy Trinity and tell each of them how much They each mean to me (4). After I have made my coffee, organized my clothes and brought the laundry basket out, I sit in a rocking chair in our Bedroom, for almost a half hour. There, I'll kneel before a portrait of Jesus and bless myself (5). I admire my sleeping wife and thank God for her (6). I start to think of the day ahead. I ask God to bless everyone I encounter (7). I often hear the gentleman downstairs leave for work. I pray to Jesus to bless him (8). His family and his work (9). I ask for a blessing for my boss and my Dean (10). I invite God to speak for me today (11). Think for me today (12). Understand for me (13). Hear for me (14). I ask for protection (15). "Cleanse me and wash me with your Precious Blood (16)." If someone I know dies, or a tragic accident happened on the news, I beg our Lord to allow he or she to be resting on and in Your Heart (17).

When I am in the car, and encounter something that gives pause, I say, "thank you Lord for always protecting me, You always protect me, and I appreciate it (18)." I pray this several – several times a day.

If something pops in the mind that is unsettling and has no business being there, usually a negative thought or emotion that happened long ago and not a thing can be done about it, I pray, "I forgive you, I ask to be forgiven, now I ask to forget you (19)!" The thought never returns.

The past? I no longer live there. I've moved. There is no need to give you a forwarding address.

On my way out of the house, I say good morning to all the birds and thank God for them (20). I admire the squirrels playing, His plants and flowers, and the bees already hard at work (21).

Because "Do not be afraid" is in the Bible 397 times, I no longer buy fear. Any commercial that ties fear into their pitch, gets an automatic "Father forgive them for they do not know what they do (Luke 22:34) (22)."

When I arrive at Church, I thank the good Lord for this wonderful blessing (23). That I am able to travel one half mile and attend Mass every morning. What a privilege! "Lord it is good for us to be here (Matthew 17:4) (24)" is what I might pray as I approach the altar. "My Lord and My God (John 20:28) (25)" is what I pray during Consecration. In the beginning of the Mass when we are asked to atone, I'll pray, "God, have mercy on me a sinner (Luke 18:13) (26)." Many of you know I am the Lector. I may miss Mass four times a year. As I approach, I ask Jesus in the Tabernacle to say the Words for me, because "You are Perfect, You bring new meaning to the word perfect, thank you (27)!" At the end, I thank Him for the incredible honor He bestowed on me. I tell Him I love Him and thank Him again (28)! As Elizabeth said upon greeting Mary, "Who am I . . . (29)?" My favorite Professor Dr Dianne Traflet, ever so beautifully describes Mary taking you by the hand as you enter heaven, and says, "Come, I would like you to meet my Son, Jesus. She'll pause and then say, "Jesus, there is someone here . . ." I imagine Mary standing alongside the Priest as we approach the altar, and I hear her ask, "Would you like to hold my baby, Jesus (30)?" The fifteen minutes spent after receiving Jesus is most precious. Why do people sit with their eyes wide open? My friend in Cleveland, my children, my wife, my boss, those who are sick, etc (31). Upon leaving, I ask "stay with us, Lord (Luke 24:29) (32)."

If I hear or see Emergency vehicles, I ask they all be protected and the event they are responding to be nothing (33)."

On the way to work, as I approach the bridge, I will often see a Fed Ex plane taking off from Newark Airport. I'll pray, "Lord, wouldn't it be neat if everyone receiving a package from that plane today be blessed with a conversion greater than mine (34)."

Driving parallel to the airport on the NJ Turnpike I'll ask that every plane be blessed and be kept safe and that everyone traveling receive Your Son's love (35).

I often think that my prayer had something to do with the "Miracle on the Hudson" a few years back.

It is not even 8:00 am and already there are thirty five conversations.

I can go on, but you get the point.

Let us sit quietly for five or so minutes. Then I would love to hear thoughts, questions, comments.