



# God Guides Us

## Through Our Thoughts

This is the seventh in a series on the ways that God guides us. God uses the gift of reason – the thinking process – to provide helpful direction for everyday life. Thoughts are indeed significant!

There are both good sources and bad sources for our thoughts. Good thoughts come from God whereas anything that is uncharitable toward ourselves or others is from the “enemy.” The enemy here refers to the devil, “the father of lies,” or any influence he has upon people and the world. We do not have to accept these thoughts as our own. The important thing is that we reject a thought when we recognize it as ungodly, as it is not a sin if we reject such a thought immediately. A saying that captures this point of rejecting unwanted thoughts is “...**you can’t stop birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.**”

We want to protect our mind from thoughts that are not of God. If we have the standard of truth – Sacred Scripture and the Teachings of the Church – then we have a means to determine if we should accept or reject any particular thought. That is why it is essential to be reading the Bible. God will only guide us through thoughts that are in line with His Word.

Some people have experienced God guiding them through their thoughts in an unforgettable way. Powerful instances like these, when God’s guidance “breaks through” in a big way, are less common. Far

more often are the subtle signs that God puts in our thoughts; those that “quietly” lead us toward Him in peace, helping us to leave behind uncertainty, anxiety and frustration. These gentle, God-given signs can happen in any place and at any time. God is always with us and He will guide us in our thoughts, not only during prayer, but also in any other life situation or circumstances.

We refer to thoughts from God as “inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.” Continuous noise proves to be a blockage for people who are seeking God and who want to hear His voice. A way of facilitating the process of listening to our thoughts, and what God might want to speak to us through them, is to provide times of quiet both around us and within us so that we can be open to these promptings from God. **The more we turn our thoughts to God, the more we will be tuned into how He is willing to guide us in our thoughts.**

The best way to become increasingly aware of God’s presence is our focused attention. There are simple things that we can do to be more available for Him to speak to us in our thoughts:

- Take opportunities during any moment i.e. waiting in line, preparing a meal, to be quiet and make a decision “on purpose” to turn your attention to Our Lord.
- You may repeat a prayer, such as “Jesus, please guide me!” or “Jesus, I trust in You!”

There is a person who can show us how to have an ongoing exchange of thoughts and words, a conversation

with God. Brother Lawrence, a 16th Century Carmelite monk, who served in a monastery kitchen in Paris, models these simple ways for us. His way, as expressed in his book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, is a helpful guide for those who seek to know how God guides us, when we practice conversing with Him.

Brother Lawrence’s desire was simple: He persevered in focusing his attention on Jesus no matter what he was doing. He spoke with God while he washed the dishes and he thanked God doing menial tasks. He sang to God in his heart while setting tables and asked God for His blessing while he cleared them. Brother Lawrence grew continually mindful of God in this practice, recognizing Jesus’ presence continually within His soul. Even amidst “the clatter of my kitchen,” he stated, “I am united with God in great peace” and can still hear His words of guidance “while people are chattering at the same time.”

Now is a good season to spend some quiet time on a daily basis to converse with Jesus. **As you share your thoughts and feelings with Him, you will begin to sense the reality of His caring Presence in the everyday moments of your life, becoming more and more aware of His guidance along the way.**

By Ann & Carol Lankford

