

Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:

Message for February

Dear friends in Christ:

In 2015 we examined Prayer and aspects of the spiritual life in our Modern World, this year I thought we would consider principles of the Moral Life in our Modern World. This might be more intellectually stimulating than spiritually stimulating and your discussions will be very interesting (I feel) because the Moral Life is the most challenging aspect of daily living and a most relevant topic in today's world. It's where *the rubber hits the road* so to speak.

Early in the first century a document was produced in the Church containing the teachings of the Apostles. Before all the apostles were to go home to the Lord the Church wanted record of their sayings and so it produced this little work called *The Didache*. Didache means "Teaching" in Greek. I have reproduced a couple of sections of the Didache for your Upper Room participants to read together and then some reflection questions after some of the teachings. You will be reading the section on the Way of Life and the Way of Death. My questions will be evident by italization. Phrases that are bolded or underlined are my emphasis not the author.

In Christ;

Fr. David

Open with Sign of Cross and Prayer to the Holy Spirit Prayer

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

L: Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

L: Let us pray - God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

L: You, O lord, will open my lips.

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: Incline unto my aid, O God.

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

Please read and stop for discussion at the points of question.

THE DIDACHE

1:1 There are two ways, one of life and one of death! and there is a great difference between the two ways.

1:2 The way of life is this: First, you shall love God who made you. And second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you.

1:3 The meaning of these sayings is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what reward is there for loving those who love you? Do not the heathens do the same? But you should love those who hate you, and then you shall have no enemies.

1:4 Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts: If someone strikes your right cheek, turn the other also, and be perfect. If someone forces you to go one mile, go two. If someone takes your cloak, give also your coat. If someone takes from you what is yours, don't ask for it back. You really cannot.

1:5 Give to everyone who asks you, and don't ask for it back. The Father wants his blessings shared. Happy is the giver who lives according to this rule, for that one is guiltless. But the receiver must beware; for if one receives who has need, he is guiltless, but if one receives not having need, he shall stand trial, answering why he received and for what use. If he is found guilty he shall not escape until he pays back the last penny.

Father: Why does it seem so important not to ask for property given to be returned?

2:2 Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not corrupt boys; do not have illicit sex; do not steal; do not practice magic; do not practice witchcraft; you shall not murder a child, whether it be born or unborn. Do not covet the things of your neighbor.

Father: Did you realize that abortion is a reality not only in our time but in all time? This is the first time abortion is publicly written of and taught as an evil.

2:3 Do not swear or bear false witness. Do not speak evil of others; do not bear grudges.

2:4 You should not be double-minded or double-tongued, for a double-tongue is a deadly snare.

Father: Is there a better way to talk about or understand what this means practically?

2:5 Your speech should not be false nor empty, but fulfilled by action.

2:6 Do not be covetous, or greedy, or hypocritical, or malicious, or arrogant. Do not have designs against your neighbor.

2:7 Hate no one; correct some, pray for others, and some you should love more than your own life.

Father: I like how it says "correct some" not "correct all". What do you think that means? And who "should you love more than your own life?"

3:1 My child, flee evil of all kinds, and everything like it.

3:3 My child, don't be lustful, for lust leads to illicit sex. Don't be a filthy talker or allow your eyes a free reign, for these lead to adultery.

3:5 My child, don't be a liar, since a lie leads to theft. Don't love money or seek glory, for these things lead to thievery.

3:7 On the contrary, be gentle, since the gentle will inherit the earth.

Father: Interesting point that touches on the beatitudes (Christ's words). Have you seen other places where the Gospel is repeated here.

3:8 Be long-suffering and pitiful and guileless and gentle and good, and with trembling, treasure the words you have received.

3:9 Don't exalt yourself or open your heart to overconfidence. Don't be on intimate terms with mighty people, but with just and lowly ones.

3:10 **Accept whatever happens to you as a blessing, knowing that nothing comes to pass apart from God**

4:1 My child, remember day and night him who speaks the word of God to you, and honor him as the Lord. For wherever his lordship is spoken of, there he is.

4:2 Seek each day the faces of the saints, in order that you may be refreshed by their words.

Father: Who are these people to you? Whose words refresh you?

4:5 **Do not be one who opens his hands to receive, or closes them when it is time to give.**

4:7 Do not hesitate to give, and do not complain about it. **You will know in time who is the good Rewarder.**

Father: In other words, you can't out-give God

4:8 Do not turn away from one who is in want; rather, share all things with your brother, and do not say that they are your own. For if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more in things which perish!

4:13 Do not in any way neglect the commandments of the Lord, but keep what you have received, neither adding nor taking away anything.

4:14 In your gatherings, confess your transgressions, and do not come for prayer with a guilty conscience.

Father: Do you think you would be comfortable confessing your sins to this group before praying?

This is the way of life!

The Way of Death

5:1 The way of death, on the other hand, is this: It is evil and accursed—murders, adulteries, lust, illicit sex, thefts, idolatries, magical arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisy, double-heartedness, deceit, haughtiness, depravity, self-will, greediness, filthy talking, jealousy, over-confidence, loftiness, boastfulness—those who do not fear God.

*Father: This could be a good way of understanding what is “serious matter” when it comes to Mortal Sins”.
Missing anything?*

5:2 The way of death is the way of those who persecute the good, hate the truth, love lies, and do not understand the reward for righteousness. They do not cleave to good or righteous judgment; they do not watch for what is good, but for what is evil. They are strangers to meekness and patience, loving vanities, pursuing revenge, without pity for the needy and oppressed. They do not know their Creator; they are murderers of children, destroyers of God's image. They turn away from those who are in need, making matters worse for those who are distressed. They are advocates for the rich, unjust judges of the poor. **In a word, the way of death is full of those who are steeped in sin.** Be delivered, children, from all of this!

Father: Our delivery from this is made possible how (and go beyond the sacrament of confession in your answers)?

Please pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet in Conclusion

Next Month the Upper Room will be on Fear of the Lord