

The Accidental Chaplet

"Oh Elisa, you can't break this up...you made this for me!" I was stunned when I looked into Richard's crystal blue eyes as he said this to me! This was such an unexpected and wonderful moment for me as I heard these words spoken with such genuine and heartfelt tenderness and gratitude. What a sweet response from this gentle and humble elderly southern gentleman.

Richard then continued by asking me; Elisa, while we are at Mass could you ask Jesus how we could use this little chaplet for something else? Maybe we could pray it another way? Well Richard, I'll ask him while we are here at Mass and I'll let you know. During the Mass I did pray and ask Our Lord to let me know what he thought about Richard's request. By the end of Mass I hadn't received much of a heavenly response. After Mass I told my friend that I would be very happy to undo the prayer beads and make them correctly. The look on Richard's face told me he really didn't want me to do that. I then recalled that look on his face as he said these words... "Elisa, you made this for me!" Ok Richard... I'll ask again.

Here is the rest of the story; I had promised to make Richard a St. Therese, 24 Glory Be Novena Chaplet. The way I construct this chaplet is a crucifix, one bead for the Golden Arrow Prayer and 24 beads for each year of St. Therese of Lisieux's life. These prayers can be found in the Pieta Prayerbook. This is a chaplet I pray in particular for priests for their vocation. The week before, while we were at breakfast, after First Saturday Mass, I promised a young seminarian named Jason I would pray this novena for his vocation. When I showed Jason the wooden chaplet Richard asked if I would make one for him so he could join me in this prayer. I did this for Richard but in my haste made the chaplet incorrectly. I did not realize my mistake until I placed it in Richard's hand. This was the beginning of The Accidental Chaplet.

After Mass I knelt in prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the conversation went like this:

Well Lord, Richard really does not want me to break these beads up. What should we do? This time the response was immediate. "Always begin with praise". Hmmm....I immediately knew what he meant...The Divine Praises. Done! That prayer is prayed on the crucifix.

How about the next bead? You see the first section of the chaplet was the same configuration as a rosary. That was the easiest part of the chaplet. After the Divine Praises we pray a sweet little prayer that the heart of Jesus is praised adored and loved in every tabernacle of the world...got it Lord...we'll call that...Heart of Jesus prayer...we'll make that bead red. Everyone knows...hearts are red.

What's next Lord; what do you want to do with these next three beads? That response came pretty quick and was easy to figure out. Three beads? Ok...one prayer said three times in honor of the Most Holy Trinity. This prayer is a refrain of a song to the Most

Blessed Sacrament. O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine. All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine. Let's use crystal beads for these prayers. Got it...Hey Lord, we're doing great! Our chaplet is coming along pretty good! The next bead was a little tougher. I was then prompted to get my Pieta Prayer book. What happened next was really something. The second I put my hand on the book I knew that next bead was supposed to be the Spiritual Communion Prayer that was in the Pieta book. Awesome Lord!...we'll go with that! We should make that bead red also! Spiritual Communions take place primarily in the HEART!

The next part of the chaplet was really a funny exchange between myself and Jesus. I really felt this part was him. The only thing left, or so I thought at the time, was the 24 beads. That really had me stumped. I knelt there for a long time saying to Jesus. How can we use the 24 beads? I hadn't a clue....24, 24, hmmm what prayer could we say 24 times and what significance could it have? We can't say the Glory Be...that would be too much like the Glory Be Novena. We can't say an Our Father...that's too long and doesn't seem to fit. A Hail Mary would be too much like the rosary...that doesn't work either.

I then had an image of Sister Catherine in my mind as she entered St. Margaret's Church with her music students or any of the students she was training to be altar servers. I saw this image played over and over in my mind's eye. I was a teacher in this school and had witnessed this scene many times. I didn't get it. I had no idea what that meant. I could just about feel Jesus looking at me like...duh!!! Hello Mc Fly...Oh my...I can't believe she's not getting this! I really felt like this was actually happening! Sorry Lord, I'm dense...and then it did hit me.

Every time Sister Catherine entered the church with her students, she would immediately guide them to the altar rail in front of the tabernacle. In unison, all in her care would genuflect with such reverence as they made the sign of the cross. They would then softly pray this prayer as their knees touched the ground; "Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, I Adore You!" I had so often witnessed and admired this beautiful act of reverence for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. That was it. That was the prayer Jesus wanted on those 24 beads. What a pure prayer of the heart from these children and their teacher. We'll make those beads crystal. Ok Lord, sounds great but what is the significance of 24? And here continued my Mc Fly moment! I was clueless for a good 10 minutes or more. I think Jesus was having great fun with this one! 24, 24, what is 24?

That is when I had the thought of Sister Lorraine and a teaching she had given on "intentionality" and particularly the intentionality of our heart when in prayer. I have often pondered these words and that particular teaching. That was the clue that lit the lightbulb in my head; finally! There are 24 hours in the day! We can offer to Our Lord, with this little prayer, the intention of our heart, to "be" in adoration of him for that day...that 24 hours. This can be our intention every day we pray this chaplet...positively stunning! We're finished Richard! Oh happy mistake!...we have a new prayer! An

Adoration Chaplet! No Lord, not finished? Jesus' response? Almost, but it will keep for another day.

To tell you the truth. I was fine with it. I thought it was awesome. I went home and prayed the chaplet. I thought it was a really sweet prayer but knew something was missing. Lord, you're right but my head hurts and this will have to wait for another day. In the meantime I called a couple of friends to tell them about the chaplet.

I printed up the prayers as they were. The title, Adoration Chaplet, looked wrong but I did not know what was wrong with it. As I held the chaplet in my hand I knew it needed a center so that people would know it was a prayer to Jesus in the Eucharist. That was an easy fix. I went online and ordered one and began making them with the center of a chalice and host...ok Lord, I'll fix the title and then we're done. Not so fast....and I knew it yet I did not want to do what Jesus was asking. He had me remember a penance I was given many years ago during a very painful time of my life. I dodged this particular request until I received a phone call from my friend Joann who asked me; Elisa, is there a prayer we should pray on the center? A few hours later my friend Connie called to ask me the very same question! OK Lord, I get it. I'll put the prayer in. We called that the Act of Love prayer. The prayer is stunning...that time in my life...well, not so much! Lord, are we done yet? Nope. I knew it. I asked a question I knew the answer to already.

A few days went by and some glowing reports were coming in from all who prayed the chaplet. Everyone who said the prayer loved it...and then the call came with this question. Elisa, do you have an ending prayer? It seems like there should be a prayer we say at the end. Hmm...I'll get back to you on that.

Lord, is there a prayer we should be praying at the end? There was another Mc Fly moment. I didn't know what it was I just knew Jesus was smiling with that look of ...oh my...she really doesn't get it. I think he was enjoying himself a bit. He finally had mercy on me and gave me a bit of humorous illumination with this response..."the song in your head". Huh? Holy Cow! Off and on, for three days running, I had the refrain from a song playing in my head. O Most Holy Trinity, undivided unity. Holy God, Mighty God, God Immortal, be adored! There it was...the ending prayer!...along with a free gift of the title of the chaplet. I knew it as I sang the refrain out loud. When I sang...God immortal...the words were there in my heart....Perpetual Adoration Chaplet.

As I looked down at the finished chaplet in the palm of my hand my heart was warmed by the simplicity of it. Only God himself could be the creator of something so simple yet so lovely and at the same time pack such a depth of love and intimacy into just a few minutes of uniting our hearts and minds to him. I said to Jesus; Lord, this is really a sweet prayer and praying it is wonderful. This is the response I received:

"It is like the peck on the cheek you give your husband on his way out the door as he leaves for work...all of your love is there in that moment!"

Jesus, only you could have done all of this with such charming sweetness! Thank you Lord for allowing us to love you like this! You have created a way for us to give you that peck on the cheek as we run out the door to our busy lives and yet accept it as if all of our love is there in that brief moment with you. Jesus, only you would do this for us and let us get away with it! That's how I know this chaplet is from YOU! Amen!

last but not least.....

The day Richard asked me not to "correct" the mistake I made making the 24 Glory Be Novena was the second Saturday of July 2013, the feast of Rosa Mystica. Most of the Perpetual Adoration Chaplet was put together that day. The prayer on the center (Act of Love Prayer) came about a week or so later. That happened mostly because I was stalling adding it in even though I knew it was supposed to be there. I explain my reasoning for that in the Accidental Chaplet story. The ending prayer was added that weekend. I remember sitting in my garden receiving the two phone calls telling me there should be a prayer at the end.

Here's the last but not least part. The entire time the chaplet was being put together I was trying to find a way to include Our Lady. She is the one who gave us Jesus with her Fiat. She is also the one who leads us to Jesus, as in the wedding feast of Cana. She told the stewards; Do whatever he tells you. She says that to us as well. Last but not least, Mary was the first tabernacle. First she held Jesus in her heart and prayers as she prayed for the Savior who was to come. Then on the day of the appearance of Gabriel the Archangel she literally became the first tabernacle when, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was conceived in her womb. I prayed many prayers asking Our Lord how to make Mary part of the chaplet prayers.

On August 22nd; there I was praying again wailing to heaven, Lord, how can we include Our Lady? She has to be part of it! I received an answer right away. *The introductory prayer: Our Lady of the most Blessed Sacrament, pray with us and teach us how to adore Jesus your son, and in his most precious name we pray... (The Divine Praises). Most of the prayers of the Perpetual Adoration Chaplet were given to me on July 13, 2013 and the chaplet was completed on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary, August 22, 2013. That's what I call a "Blessed Mother maneuver"! I think she was behind the whole thing!

*the pronouns of this introductory prayer can be changed to singular when praying alone. I wrote the prayer here exactly as it was given. I was only ever given the plural pronoun (us).