

## Meeting Our God in the Hectic Activity of Everyday Life

It sounded so basic when it was introduced last year. Who doesn't think of God? But GOD FIRST, above all else? When sufficient reflection was taken, many realized that perhaps this initiative was not going to be as easy as first thought.

Some people embraced the GOD FIRST initiative as an opportunity to re-establish a oneness in their lives — spiritual and temporal as one. It was going to be a jump-start for what was felt as a stagnant journey with God. Some took it to heart only after a period of time. And there were some who didn't even consider it for their lives because they wrongly believed what was being asked might be too exacting or restricting.

Think about it. It is meant to be life-changing. What was done spiritually would definitely make a person think about what is done in the secular society.

### YEAR ONE

Our primary concern last year at this time was the taking what we already knew and providing appropriate understanding according to age and life situation. A few ways of prayer may have been foreign to some, but by-and-large the speakers took the known and attempted to give it greater structure for individuals at various stages in life.

We recall how we were invited to see God first in our lives, our decisions, our acting in response to life, and, hopefully, in how we were allowing God to tell **his** story of salvation for us.

Scripture was — and remains — a critical part of our initiative. It is **God's story** of how he has revealed himself to his people over and over again — and how this divine revelation continues today for us.

After that, how we began to move with an awareness of this greater gift was suggested. Outreach ministry to the poor and needy was the focus during the second part of last year. "How have I grown in my relationship with God, and allowed that to move me in caring for others as God cares for us?"

All of this remains present to us. Hopefully, we find these ways of greater prayer and greater concern for others continuing to grow in our lives.

Many people continue to seek to make GOD FIRST a more meaningful part of their daily living. They talk about it one-on-one and in the confessional, and of their successes and failures in allowing it to take shape in their responses to God. They sometimes speak of their slowness to respond or lack of understanding they feel necessary to respond.



For some, their response opened them to new and wonderful experiences of seeing and being joined to God in and through their caring for others in need. This aspect of faith —

# GOD FIRST

Year Two, Part 1

*The Prayer of Awareness*

our reaching out beyond our vested interest and those involved with them — remains something that we must grow into more and more, in our own individual responses

and as a community of faith focused on the Lord. It's ongoing growth.

### YEAR TWO

There is no special reading list that we need to plow through in a specific timeframe.

There are no special evenings with special speakers on the calendar.

There is nothing — absolutely nothing — to take us away from the activities of our life.

Sounds almost too good to be true.

Can this be GOD FIRST?

Yes.

There is only one thing for us to learn.

***“The Prayer of Awareness  
of the Presence of God.”***

There's a basic description of GOD FIRST for the next four months on the reverse side of this insert. What will be provided for adults — young and old — will also be provided to our children in our school, CCD, and Youth Ministry programs.

The purpose for this semester is to make this Prayer of Awareness of the Presence of God a real practice that we don't even think about. The prayer, the practice, and God's presence in our lives are to infuse real Life into our everyday life, and allow us to see God revealed wherever we may be.





# GOD FIRST

*Growing in Our Awareness of the Presence of God*

## WHERE LIFE MEETS GOD

### ***NO MEETINGS OR SPECIAL SESSIONS***

To grow in our awareness of the Presence of God does not require us to be present for special meetings or sessions at any time. Some people may choose to begin support groups later on, but these are not an immediate need in most cases. *Spiritual growth without the meetings!*

### ***NO NEED TO CHANGE YOUR SCHEDULE***

To grow in our awareness of the Presence of God does not require that we eliminate activities from our lives, although in some cases it would probably be beneficial for us in all of life.

### ***NO REQUIRED PRAYERS OR TIMES***

Grow in your awareness of the Presence of God while on the fly — sitting in the car, watching TV, waiting for the ballgame to begin, while sharing in an activity. There are no parameters to inhibit this growth other than ourselves.

### ***IN GENERAL...***

*Every person — young and old alike — can grow in the awareness of the Presence of God with very little effort. All that is needed is an individual decision to let God meet us in life.*

## HOW IT WORKS BEGINNING NEXT WEEK

Realize that it is simple!

If you can read a sheet of paper, you've got it made!

In comparison to some of the material we read during the course of a day, this is easy.

**First**, each week an insert — one sheet of paper — will be included in the Sunday bulletin — and also will appear on the parish website — during the course of the next three-to-four months. These will be progressive, in that they will build upon each other for the sake of our expanding our prayer and faith life as the year goes on. So if you're into reading the computer screen rather than the archaic paper, flip up the parish website instead of one of those other connections often made.



**Second**, individually we reflect on how those things presented in the bulletin can be applied to our individual life.

**Third**, focus on this teaching and practice for the next week, allowing it to become part of our life and faith.

### **What is found in the bulletin insert and on the website:**

1) will provide instruction, explanation, and tools meant to help us develop in our own life the amazing *Prayer of Awareness of the Presence of God*;

2) will give us scripture passages to reinforce the whole initiative of our growing awareness of God's presence in our lives;

3) will offer the teachings of Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, a Parisian Carmelite lay brother whose life and influence has made this the foundation for every Christian seeking to develop a more powerful and peaceful prayer life.