

# GROWING Together

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## BROTHER LAWRENCE, KITCHEN SAINT

On Christmas Eve, the worship minister urged us: "Be careful how you scrub your turkey roasting pan tomorrow! The Infant Christ most assuredly lies sleeping there! Don't miss Him in your hurry!"

The minister was pointing us to a well-loved spiritual hero, Brother Lawrence. Born Nicholas Herman in 1611 in Lorraine, France, he was the footman for France's 'Minister of Finance. He served as a soldier for many years.

"Count as lost each day you have not used to love God."

When he was 18 years old, Nicholas had a transforming experience of God. It was wintertime; he was gazing at a tree stripped of its leaves. He pondered how leaves would soon emerge again, then the flowers and in time, the fruit.

"The littleness of the work lessens not ...the value of the offering, for God regards...the love which prompts it."

While pondering, he was inwardly flooded with a deep sense of God's care. That sense never left him. It set him loose from the world's grasp. It kindled in him a love of God that never faded. He turned every moment of the rest of his life into prayer by simply talking with God – even during a military campaign, sword drawn.

At the age of 55, he entered a monastery in Paris and was given the name Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. He served the monastery as cook and shoe repairman for 25 years. Always friendly, he spoke easily with everyone. A visitor quickly discerned faith-filled wisdom in him.

Lawrence is remembered and loved for the simplicity of his prayer life: to find God, we need to love God for God's sake. He called his way of prayer 'practising the Presence of God'.

"Let all our acts be little acts of Communion with God."

No unusual knowledge or skills are needed. We begin by reminding ourselves constantly of God, and thus enabling ourselves to be more mindful of the Divine Presence. At the same time, we begin to develop the habit of inner dialogue with God. Gradually these intentional efforts awaken a joy and peace in us that comes to infuse our daily life. What we are doing no longer matters as much as doing it with this sense of God's Presence. When a thought or anything outward distracts us, we don't let ourselves feel guilty or upset. We simply realize what's happened and return to speaking quietly with God again.

In time, we grow accustomed to our inward sharing with the Divine, seeking guidance for the immediate, thanking and praising God while we go about our everyday responsibilities. The noise and clatter of the kitchen or office becomes as religious an experience as our participating in the Eucharistic prayer. Eventually it is impossible for us to forget God as it once was impossible for us to remember God constantly.

"When we are busiest, we ought to cease for one brief moment as often as we can to worship God, ...to touch God."

Moments before his death, Lawrence was asked what was on his mind. He replied "I am blessing God, praising God, adoring God, giving God the love of my heart. It is our one business."

"I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for the love of God."

Brother Lawrence is best known for his prayer: "Lord of all the pots and pans, ...make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates."

So, watch your roasting pan! God most assuredly lingers there!

All quotes may be found in Brother Lawrence. [The Practice of the Presence of God](#). Spire Books, Grand Rapids MI, 1958 (14th printing 2003).

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