

H. G. Bishop Moussa

Beloved brother, blessed sister,

It is during examinations that we feel how much we need God's help, Who when He met His disciples, "opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." (Lk. 24: 45). No doubt, we have different feelings during that time:

+ I feel that I have sinned a great deal against the Lord during the year; has the day of reckoning arrived?

Impossible! The Lord is bigger than that and much kinder. He deals with us as sons, not as slaves!

+ Am I going to achieve the success that I desire, and to the required degree?

+ Does God love me and will He help me in my exams?

+ I want to confess and take Holy Communion so that I may be close to the Lord and that He may bless my exams.

These and similar ideas occur to us at that time of every year.

+ I may feel that the matter is no longer under control, for I have neglected my studies throughout the year. Shall I fail? Impossible! "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7). Let us approach Him with the little and He will bless it; He will surely bless!

+ I may dread the final results. How will I face myself, my family, my friends?

But did not the Lord promise us saying: "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28: 20)? Is He not the loving God and "perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn. 4: 18). The future is in God's Hands, so let me do my duty and leave the result to Him, for He certainly gives what is good.

Beloved brother, blessed sister,

Let us put our trust in Jesus, the Omnipotent God, and the loving Shepherd, and let us have faith in Him, so that we experience something marvelous every day.

Let us sit at His feet, and if we feel guilty because of our sins, let us humble ourselves before Him in repentance, confident of His acceptance of us. He is infinitely welcoming and He is pure tenderness.

Come and sit with your father confessor, so that we may erase the past with all that is in it and let us unite with the Body and the Blood of the Lord and our hearts will be calmed and will be filled with peace.

Next, let us consider some important matters:

1. Before the examination:

+ Organize the time that is left to you so that you achieve the following objectives:

a. Studying what has not been learned yet.

b. Reviewing the whole syllabus.

c. Mastering it through answering exam. questions, solving problems, and doing exercises.

+ Being organized makes you productive. You do not feel distracted and heavily burdened, but allot to every day its share of work and effort without collapsing under the load. A suitable and practical schedule is important to achieve this.

+ Preserve your spiritual calm through a living fellowship with the Lord through regular prayers as well as arrow-like prayers. Be certain that this is a saving of time for inner peace is your way to work that is well done.

Be careful to organize meal times and sleep, and make sure you have enough of both.

2. During Examinations:

- + Do not talk too much with your colleagues outside the examination halls. Rather feel the presence of God so that His peace may fill your heart.

- + Pray calmly before reading the examination paper and read every question more than once so that you know:
 - a. what is required of you in each and every question.

 - b. the questions you will choose to answer.

 - c. any attempt to cheat is unacceptable to God as well as being illegal. So beware of depending on it or of resorting to it so that God does not refuse to help you.

- + Review your answers and do not leave before the time is up so that you do not have any regrets later on.

- + At home, review your answers quickly and without wasting time or getting upset so that you do not detract from your efforts for the coming exam.

3. After the examinations:

- + Submit all your efforts and your answers to the Lord Jesus Christ who loves you and prepares what is good for you.

- + Beware of imagining that your thoughts, desires, or your ambitions are going to make you happy. Real happiness is in Christ, daily satisfaction is in Him, and our eternal and infinite portion is in him. As for the things of the earth no matter how high or great, they are nothing but dust, believe me. Have a calm and serene spirit in the Lord and may He provide for tomorrow: "Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Mt. 6: 34).
May the Lord Jesus be with you... the only secret of your success.

A Prescription for the Examinations:

- + Organize your time, scheduling your studying at those times when you are most energetic.

- + Give your body sufficient rest, and do not get less than 8 hours of sleep daily.

- + Avoid fat and rich food. A nap after lunch is a good idea to renew your energy.

- + Avoid staying up too late; staying up late one night makes you feel heavy and lethargic the next day.
- + Do not take too many stimulants like tea and coffee, and beware of stimulating pills.
- + Break your study periods with short fervent prayers from the heart.
- + The temptations of the flesh increase when you are studying, so do not give in to them.
- + Reduce your television watching, especially the fictitious programs such as films and serials, for they will distract you from your studies.
- + Studying in groups is useful only on rare occasions.
- + Develop the habit of summarizing in writing what you have studied.
- + When you make a study schedule, do not overburden yourself.
- + When you start studying one subject, do not place the papers and books of the other subjects on the desk so that you keep your concentration focused.
- + Whenever you feel bored, get up and walk around the room for a little while; then offer a short prayer and go back to work.
- + Make your final revision consist of the answering of questions on past exam. papers.
- + Do not spend too much time on the details of a subject the night before the exam.

In the examination room:

- + When you enter the examination room, pray silently then read all the questions on the exam paper and begin by answering the easiest question and so on.
- + You may feel at the beginning of the exam. that you have forgotten everything. Do not be afraid; this is normal. Give yourself time then read the questions again and you will recall the information gradually.

- + Do not keep looking at your watch, and remember that the questions necessarily need equal amounts of time.
- + Do not pay any attention to what is going on in the room between the proctors and the students. And do not look around you a lot for the proctor might be severe.
- + Smoking is one the things that will spoil your concentration the most.
- + Save your time and concentration by taking all the implements you need.
- + Answer the question to the very end, if you can, for this will increase the marks you get on the exam when it is graded.
- + When you feel that you have written all you have, rest awhile, then reread the answers for you will certainly find something you can add to your them.
- + After the exam is over, do not linger to compare your answers with your colleagues, but rather concentrate on the next exam.
- + Naturally, this advice will be useless if you have not made enough of an effort in studying.
- + Remember always that God blesses your work. And the more effort you make, the more God blesses it.

The Lord be with you.