

Publication of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

PENTECOST *Today*

July/August/September 2005

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*Renewing the grace of Pentecost
in the life and mission of the church.*



Chairman's Corner

by Aggie Neck

The lifeline of prayer

It is essential to begin the practice of prayer with a firm resolution of persevering in it. (St. Theresa of Avila)

In the Gospel of Matthew we read, "Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." We know and can see from these words that prayer is not just about asking. It is also seeking and knocking. Seeking whom? The Lord Jesus, God Almighty Father, the Holy Spirit, this is whom we seek. Seeking leads to finding, finding to knowledge and wisdom about things that are really important. The one who knocks enters. What do we enter, what door will be opened? We enter into the presence of the living God who receives us with love and joy.

It seems that these things describe the perseverance of praying and seeing a breakthrough. This is exactly what we saw in the forty hours of prayer for America. Praying until there was an entering into the presence of God, and knowing we were being touched by that presence in profound ways. It was glorious, it was empowering, and it was anointed. I believe it was so because of the many hours of personal prayer that undergirded each of those who came with a vibrant faith that God would do something mighty as we gathered, and he did.

Prayer for the individual believer begins with the foundation of personal prayer time, that time alone with God. Prayer is a jewel with many facets. There are so many ways to pray. We can pray anytime, anywhere. We just need to learn how to pray at every opportunity, praying in the Spirit and using prayers and petitions of every sort (Eph. 6:18). The Holy Spirit helps us to pray, teaches us to pray, stirs our spirits to prayer and makes prayer become vibrant and alive.

"The habitual difficulty in prayer is distraction. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: **for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to**, and this humble awareness before the Lord would awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our hearts to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

Prayer is essential for the life of the soul. "If we only knew how to hear the cry of our own soul when we have neglected to pray for too long a time and so been deprived of the Holy Spirit, we would hear the cry 'I can't breathe. I'm suffocating!' If someone is about to faint we usually hold them and say, 'Breathe. Breathe deeply!' We need to say the same to those about to shrug their shoulders and give up the struggle against evil: 'Turn to prayer, and take deep breaths of the Holy Spirit'" (*Come Creator Spirit* by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa).

"Nothing is equal to prayer, for what is impossible it makes possible. What is difficult it makes easy" (St. John Chrysostom). Therefore, we can be people of hope. Our God can help us, will help us and does help us. **We do have time for prayer.** There is no amount of busyness that can shut out prayer. There is no place that can silence prayer. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Rom. 8) and we are drawn into higher levels of prayer because we long to spend more and more time with the Lord.

"Prayer ascends and mercy descends. High as are the heavens and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of man" (St. Augustine). Oh, praise the living God! Let our hearts rejoice and our prayers be bold and mighty! ♦

Aggie Neck is Chairman of the National Service Committee.

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Cover photo: Mary Anne Schaezner



Eucharistic adoration & intercession

The Burning Bush Initiative

The call to intercede for conversion of sinners and full Eucharistic Christian unity are the primary goals for this intercession.

by Fr. Scott Ardinger

Long live the Pope! Our great Pope, John Paul II, who is now with the Lord, called for a “New Evangelization” all throughout his pontificate. On the Eve of Pentecost, 2004 he blessed the Charismatic Renewal with a primary place in this New Evangelization. In that same moment of blessing, during Vespers, Pope John Paul II encouraged the initiative known as the Burning Bush, which is a call to “incessant adoration, day and night, before the Most Holy Sacrament; an invitation to the faithful to return to the Cenacle.” This initiative is a call to intercession before our Eucharistic Lord using the Charismatic gifts of the Spirit, primarily the gift of tongues to intercede for the Church and the world. The call to intercede for conversion of sinners and full Eucharistic Christian unity are the primary goals for this intercession.

Kim Catherine-Marie Kollins, who received the inspiration for this initiative from the Lord, has through her community in Europe begun Burning Bush Houses of Prayer. In July, 2004, I heard of this initiative through one of the Catholic Charismatic covenant communities in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, the People of

God community. I immediately recognized the Burning Bush as the very initiative the Lord put on my heart for the past 5 years. Since my ordination as a priest, almost 4 years ago, I have felt drawn to Eucharistic intercession and the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. So with the Burning Bush initiative already approved and even “encouraged” by our Holy Father, I knew I had to begin putting into motion the establishment of a Burning Bush House of Intercession in our Diocese, the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Through Fr. Michael Camilli, M.S.C., our Secretary for Evangelization who represents the Bishop in all the initiatives tied to Evangelization, which includes the Charismatic Renewal, we received permission to use the Retired Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Priests’ Villa chapel for our house of prayer. They have a beautiful small chapel in Center Valley, PA with Jesus in the Eucharist always reserved in the tabernacle. The agreement was that those intercessors who wished to come and pray would sign up for a four hour space of prayer, adoration, worship and intercession on any given day. A young adult named,

Ms. Karen Rumore, who is from my parish, St. Jane Frances de Chantal parish in Easton, Pennsylvania agreed to become coordinator of the newly established Sacred Heart of Jesus Burning Bush House of Prayer. She contacted every parish and prayer group we knew and began to set up prayer teams to come and pray. A prayer team could be as small as one or two intercessors or as large as a group of ten.

The goal is for the Burning Bush to relocate with permission of our Bishop one day to a free standing house of prayer that would be accessible 24 hours a day. This initiative is very attractive to youth, young people, and college students as well as young adults and those who have been in the Charismatic movement for a long time. The vision the Lord has placed on my heart is that the Burning Bush would one day grow into a missionary and intercessory community, perhaps even a religious association of women and then a religious or even priestly association of men. I believe the Burning Bush is going to grow in America. I have already heard of groups gathering in Washington State and Louisiana. This is still very new for us, but I believe it is a wonderful move of the Spirit in the Charismatic Renewal. Anyone who senses the call to Eucharistic, charismatic intercession please consider beginning a Burning Bush House of Prayer or come to Allentown to see what the Lord is doing. There is a website you can visit to learn more, as well as an email contact. “Come let us adore Him!” ♦

Website

www.SacredHeartBurningBush.com

Email

Love@sacredheartburningbush.com .



Fr. Scott Ardinger is a priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Ordained in 2001, he has been involved in the Catholic Charismatic renewal since 1999.

Listen, that you may live

by Sr. Ann Shields

So many workshops, conferences and retreats today on prayer speak of various forms of prayer and the need to find the form of prayer that helps you, that meets your needs. Such a statement may be very reflective of the idolatry of self so prevalent in our culture. Everything today that is advertised, offered, sold, appeals to the assured personal benefits “you” will receive.

But prayer is, first of all, the means by which we enter into the presence of God to offer Him the praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving he deserves. It is a time to meditate on his word that we may be conformed to his teaching, growing in obedience to his word; that our wills may be more ‘docile’ to the voice and action of his Holy Spirit. It is a time to bring him our needs, asking for his strength and wisdom and guidance. It is a time to listen and wait upon him: “As the eyes of a servant are on the hand of his master, as the eyes of a maid are on the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until he have mercy upon us” (Ps. 123:2).

So, the first thing about prayer is about what we give to God—what we as a son or daughter owe our Father in heaven who gave each of us life in Jesus Christ. We were dead in our sin; we could do nothing to change our fatal condition until the Father who so loved the world gave us His only Son that we might have life. Familiar words, yes. But sometimes it is so familiar that we lose the enormity of that gift, of what we have received “without price”.

The Holy Spirit is given to us that we primarily might be able to worship God in spirit and truth. That we might be given that wisdom, counsel, fortitude and knowledge by which we reflect his image and become a sign of that image to the world.

“Shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus” (Cardinal Newman). That kind of prayer has no thought for self but simply that I be a temple of the Holy Spirit bringing his life in my daily thoughts, words and actions to those God gives me.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help me to be docile, that is, to be teachable. My part is to read God’s word daily, asking that my life be conformed to it. It is to read the catechism, the teaching of the Church, to inform my mind and my heart of God and the ways of God. In this way I develop a well-formed conscience and a way of life that reflects the centrality of Jesus Christ in my life.

It is a time to praise him and thank him and adore him for blessing me with the gifts of faith and hope and love; for the abilities to read and to understand.

contemplate the face of christ

It is time to ask the Lord that my will be more and more reflective of his. Adrienne von Speyr, in her book, *Handmaid of the Lord*, said of Mary that there was in her, “no hesitation, no calculation, no reserve.” Can we move more in that direction? Of course, if we are willing! So, praise and worship, thanksgiving and surrender are always our goals when we come to prayer. It is hard work to establish the foundation stones but IT IS WORTH IT!

Listen to John Paul II in section 32 of *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI): “This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer...we know well that prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray, as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master him-

self, like the first disciples: ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ (Luke 11:1). Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: ‘Abide in me and I in you’ (John 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ to contemplation of the Father’s face. Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the source and summit of the Church’s life, but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future, because it returns continually to the sources and finds in them new life.”

“...Prayer can progress as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the Divine Beloved, vibrating at the Spirit’s touch, resting filially within the Father’s heart,” NMI, #33.

Listen to those words: everyone of us, baptized in Christ, can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, enter into an intimacy, a union with the Divine Lover; we can have a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that causes us to vibrate, much like a good violin will “sing” at the touch of a breeze; we can rest with utter confidence near the heart of the Father as a son or daughter. That, brothers and sisters, is a portion of your inheritance, which can be yours now. Don’t get caught up in what the

world offers, even if it has a Christian label. Don't get caught up in the false dichotomy between contemplative and charismatic prayer. Both are necessary; both are available to you by the graces of Baptism and Confirmation.

contemplate the suffering face of christ

How do we get there? Obviously, it is all based on grace and our willingness to follow the Lord's action as He leads each of our souls. But there are some practical steps which facilitate our openness to grace.

In addition to the prayerful reading of God's word daily and the teaching of the Church through the Catechism, as I mentioned above, John Paul II urged us in his encyclical, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, to read, to pray through the lives of the saints. See how they surrendered to God; see how they prayed; see how they served. Let that kind of spiritual reading inspire and encourage you.

In the same document he speaks of the call to holiness: 31b and 32. "Such an ideal must not be misunderstood as though it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few uncommon heroes of holiness. The ways of holiness are many according to the vocation of each individual." So, as you approach prayer, learn from the wisdom of others, yes, be inspired and encouraged, but let God form you in your relationship with him, as he wishes.

John Paul also asked us to take time as often as possible, some time each day, to **contemplate the face of Christ**—all of us. How do we do that?

First, is the very difficult task of 21st century man and woman to quiet the heart, the mind, and the body. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. He is a most excellent teacher. Sometimes it takes me fifteen minutes to quiet my heart from distractions, burdens, plans, etc. But if I ask the Holy Spirit to help and just wait, the quiet of being in the presence of God begins to settle and brings peace to soul and body.

Then John Paul advised us to **contemplate the suffering face of Christ**. I use Isaiah 52 and 53—the suffering servant passages—to reflect on what Christ has done for me. I gaze upon him with wordless thanks. Day in and day out, such reflection and contemplation changes me. Sometimes it's five minutes in a day, sometimes a half hour or an hour.

Then we are asked to **contemplate the risen face of Christ**. I reflect on the passages of the resurrection and again a quiet settles on me, giving birth to hope and confidence. (It is not my personality). It is simply obedience to what the Holy Father asked of us that produces grace and gives me what no technique can ever do. I've prayed that way in part for the last four years with no obvious fruit until recently, to my surprise, I noticed that I am beginning to see his face, so to speak, in the sometimes distressing disguises of others.

Where I would normally be impatient or irritable, or threatened, I find that I see with new eyes and treat people with greater respect and patience. I know that fruit is from those times of contemplating the face of Christ. But, even if I saw no fruit it would be right to persevere to honor and love him!

Only after this time is given to God do I approach intercession. When we pray for others and their needs or our own, the first thing we need to deal with is to be able to pray in Jesus' name. "Whatever you ask in my name I will do." When I was much younger, I used to preface or conclude all my prayer for others by asking "in Jesus' name," as if the mere articulation of the name did the job!

contemplate the risen face of christ.

When we ask in someone's name for anything we are expressing their desire or intention, not ours. An example I often use is this: When I was a child, my father would often send me to the corner grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread or extra milk, etc. I would tell them, "My dad asked me to get this and he will pay at the end of the week." They believed me because, in truth, I was asking according to his will, his intent, not mine. I am sure if I asked for a dozen candy bars or a quart of ice cream I would have been quizzed: "Was that really what my father told me to do?"

To ask in Jesus' name is to ask according to his purpose and plan. We can come to the Lord with all kinds of needs: relationship difficulties, financial and health concerns, addicted relatives and friends and all our myriad human concerns. God DOES want to hear those needs. But he tells us in Mt. 6, seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be yours as well. So, to ask in Jesus' name is to ask for what is first in God's heart: That this person be converted, that this person repent of sin, that this person find true happiness in the hope of eternal life. God wants for all those we pray for, that they come to a deep personal relationship with him, that they know the freedom, peace and happiness of being his sons and daughters. Pray for those things first and daily. Then mention to God all the human and practical concerns. But put first in your prayer what is first in God's heart.

Again, listen to these words of Cardinal Newman's prayer—a prayer that Mother Teresa prayed daily and asked me to do the same: "Shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus." ♦

Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Sr. Ann Shields is the Superior of the Servants of God's Love, a



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Cenacle of Prayer for America

40 Hours of Prayer Pentecost 2005 in Miami

by Mary Anne Schaenzer, SSND

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy
Sacrament of the Altar!
Bendito sea Jesus en el Santísimo
Sacramento de Altar!

The Divine Praises, Alabanzas al Santísimo Sacramento, were proclaimed many times during the 40 hours of the Cenacle of Prayer for America, Cenáculo de Oración por América, May 13-15, 2005 in Miami, Florida.

“When the day of Pentecost came all believers were gathered in one place.” We were gathered for prayer in a kind of return to the Cenacle (Upper Room). Participants were welcomed by the planning committee composed of members of the United States National Service Committee, of the Renovación Carismática Católica Hispana de La Arquidiócesis de Miami and the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS). This latter is the organization that the Holy See considers in charge to “coordinate and promote exchange of experiences

and thoughts among catholic charismatic communities throughout the world” as Archbishop S. Rylko, President of the Pontificium Consilium Pro Laicis, reminded in his greetings letter to the assembly, quoting John Paul II.

Emphasis during this 40 hour period of prayer was on prayer for one America from the most northern location of North America to the most southern tip of South America. At the very opening of this sacred time flags representing the many countries of the Americas were processed in, many flag bearers wearing native dress of the country. Each one announced, some in their native tongue, “I am from...” or “I represent...” and then, “I am here to pray for America!”

Throughout the weekend, yes, even throughout the night, various numbers of participants were present before the Blessed Sacrament. There were a variety of expressions of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Eucharist was celebrated on both Saturday and Sunday. Prayer forms included song and jubilation, tongues and

silence, the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, worship, intercession and thanksgiving. Interspersed throughout were meditations and reflections, and processions. Blocks of prayer time were conducted in the two predominant languages, Spanish or English. At the general sessions, excellent translation was provided via radio so that everyone could fully understand and participate. At other times the unity of the Body made translation unnecessary.

The Cenacle was a response to Pope John Paul II’s call in *Ecclesia in America* to intercede with Mary under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother and Evangelizer of America, for a fresh “outpouring of the Holy Spirit...so that the new evangelization [of America] may yield a splendid flowering of Christian life.”

In addition the Cenacle was a response to the call in this year of the Eucharist, “to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ’s real presence...in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass” (*Mane Nobiscum Domine* #18).



Opposite: Blessed Sacrament exposed, above: Nicolás de Jesús Cardinal López Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo, left: Flag procession
Photos: Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner

In our Eucharistic worship we prayed in preparation for Pentecost so that the “spirituality of Pentecost will spread in the church as a renewed incentive to prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation” (Pope John Paul II, Eve of Pentecost, 2005).

One of many highlights was the Saturday evening procession with the Eucharist to Bayfront Park, downtown Miami, where we spent an hour in song and prayer, and also listening to a meditation exhorting us to recognize that we come to Pentecost with the conviction that the Spirit is prompting us to live the Gospel.

On the eve of Pentecost, 2004, Pope John Paul II encouraged the initiative known as “Burning Bush” promoted by Renewal in the Spirit. During this weekend we became a burning bush, touched with tongues of fire by the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Tom Forrest, in the homily for Pentecost, stated, “The task ahead of you is never as great as the power behind you.” (An article that I read on the airplane expanded my reflection on that one statement as follows.) We could consider ourselves being prepared for liftoff. By the Holy Spirit we are empowered with the thrust of a forward force that works to overcome our drag, our resistance, and gives us a lift, a push upward that works to overcome the gravity of our heavy spirit. We are called to repent of dragging our feet and weighting ourselves down with resistance to the ways of God, and to allow the Holy Spirit to direct our lives in

such a way that we will be propelled and compelled by the power, the dynamite, of the Living God.

All present were blessed by the eloquent messages of many women and men. This variety of predominantly English and Spanish speaking people shines a light on the many expressions of the Body of Christ. On Sunday morning we interceded with God in song prayer to rain down the Holy Spirit upon us. The atmosphere was filled with expectation. We experienced dwelling and praying in the presence of God.

The Presider at Eucharist on the Feast of Pentecost was His Eminence Nicolás de Jesús Cardinal López Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo. One of the final words given at the celebration of the Pentecost Eucharist assured us that, “From this body I am stirring new gifts.” As one speaker proclaimed, God wants unity that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit may be in us and that we may be submerged in God. God moves in the human spirit, enlightens the mind, comes up on the human will, and comes upon our imagination.

One participant wrote of being in awe of all that took place during this weekend. Others commented on the deep peace that they experienced. Now we are challenged to allow the living God to move through us and to open us to all ways that the Holy Spirit chooses that the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. We must have the

Prayer Card



Pray for the renewing of the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church.

Father of light, from whom every good gift comes, send your Spirit into our lives with the power of a mighty wind, and by the flame of your wisdom open the horizons of our minds.

Loosen our tongues to sing your praise in words beyond the power of speech, for without your Spirit man could never raise his voice in words of peace or announce the truth that Jesus is Lord.

Opening prayer for Pentecost

power of the Holy Spirit to be productive and to bear fruit.

Let us all, wherever we may be, receive the divine breath, the holy breath that Jesus breathes upon us. Let us receive the good breath of the Holy Spirit that is renewing the Eucharistic Church which we are. ♦

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You can order audiotapes in either English or Spanish for \$5 per tape plus shipping from Renovacion Carismatica Catolica Hispana, 500 NW 22nd Ave. Miami, FL 33125.

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Sr. Mary Anne Schaezner is a member of the editorial board of Pentecost Today.

Challenges of the Prayer Room Ministry

by Michele Greischar

Suggested Prayer intentions:

Please pray for the following initiatives, activities and concerns of the National Service Committee:

- ◆ For all who are involved in preparations for the National Leaders Conference that will be held in Chicago, November 11–13, and for many pre-registrations.
- ◆ For all who attend the various Charismatic Priests, Deacons and Seminar-ians retreats this year, that this experience will bear fruit in their lives and in their dioceses.
- ◆ For a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all who attend World Youth Day in Cologne in August.
- ◆ For God's protection and provision for all who serve Catholic Charismatic Renewal at the National, Diocesan and Parish level, that we will be effective in helping the Church to spread the Spirituality of Pentecost "as a renewed thrust of prayer, holiness, communion and proclamation."
- ◆ For the NSC, as they meet for their annual retreat in September, that they will clearly discern the Lord's direction for the coming year.

Scripture, like life, is full of paradoxes. "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; ...For everyone who asks, receives, ..." (Luke 11:9-10). These are strong statements, deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of prayer ministers. We pray in expectant faith for the needs of others, and we thank the Lord that in his mercy our prayers have been answered. But what happens when someone returns to the prayer room with the same problem and the same need? I am reminded of the parable of the persistent widow and the dishonest judge, wherein Jesus illustrates "... the necessity for them (us) to pray always, without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1-8). In this parable, Jesus teaches his disciples the importance of returning to prayer when it is needed. Sometimes situations and/or people need extended prayer.

The challenge in these situations, I think, is more for the prayer minister than for the supplicant. Our efficient knowledgeable selves have prayed in faith. We have followed the "right formulae." Could we ministers be failures at prayer? Surely not. It must be someone's fault. We are tempted to blame, shame or reject the supplicant. We've prayed; God hears; God answers; stop coming for prayer. But it's not always that simple. Here's our paradox. At times, we forget that prayer is not an assembly line process, but God's own mysterious creative process.

I believe that "repeat supplicants" are gifts sent by God for those ministering healing. Tapping our very core of love and patience, and challenging us to see them with God's eyes rather than with ours, they demonstrate clearly to us that God alone is the healer; we are only his ministers.


Therefore, we must become more attuned listeners to the Spirit of God within us. With his wisdom, we may be led to other avenues of prayer.

If instead of shaming, blaming or rejecting the repeat petitioner, we joyfully invite the person into an experience of God's deep unconditional love, walls to healing can be lowered in the recipient as well as in the ministers.


One effective way of dealing with these cases is Soaking Prayer. Here, a team can set aside time exclusively for prayer in the Spirit for the person. There is no need to repeat the description of the situation or any progress. The team is simply committed to praying for a specified amount of time on a regular basis for the fullness of God's love to soak into the person. We do this unconditionally, regularly and with great thanks and praise for God's goodness. Concretely, we might invite the repeat supplicant to come each week for a period of ten minutes of soaking prayer. It is necessary for those praying to be committed to this form of loving prayer, as well as to holding the boundaries of time. When we pray soaking prayer for others, we ourselves are greatly blessed, experiencing the promise of James 5:16: "...pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Practically, we might sensitively check whether the person is receiving medical or psychological help. Always, we respect the individual's integrity. Just as we might take multiple vitamins while eating a healthy diet, so we might receive multiple prayers while availing ourselves of professional sources. One does not negate the other.

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