

NOVENA TO ST. CHAVARA

O St. Chavara, You loved the *word of God* and held it in deep veneration. You found great joy and bliss in the *word* and made it very breath of your soul. You yourself became the self-expression, loving formulation and living translation of the **word of God**. You made the **Word** your food. Through the **word** you entered into the heights of sanctity. O Saint you identified yourself with Zacchaeus calling yourself as poor slave. You identified yourself with strayed sheep for whom the resolute shepherd climbs up hilltops and mountains and descends the sea. Further you called yourself the converted younger son of Jesus. O St. Chavara you find in the parable of the prodigal son your own story. You become the metaphor of the returning son of Jesus' story. The new re-turned son leads a life of compunction and gratitude in the Father's house. Let us therefore focus our attention on Jesus saying: "The kingdom of God has come, repent and believe in the Good news." The only way to approach the Kingdom is to repent. The attitude of repentance is turning to God.

Now let us listen to St. Chavara's spirituality of Turning and Re-turning.

"God turned to creation in order to make the whole universe turn to Him. The state of remaining turned to God is the vocation, purpose and fulfillment of human existence and that of entire creation. Union with God and its bliss will depend upon the degree of turning. The very call of man is to turn to God who had first turned to him. When man turns without God to other persons and things, it becomes an act of turning away from God which brings forth the feeling of absence of God as if God has turned away from him or punished him. God wants to make the turned away man re-turn to Himself. The miseries induce him to turn back to his creator. Ones' humanness depends upon the degree of his turning to God. The more intense and deep the turning more one attains the perfection. Jesus the Son of Man remains in the state of being totally turned to the Father and has become the visible manifestation of the presence of God in the world."

Let us pray

Lord Jesus as you burned the fire of love towards the word of God that enabled St. Chavara to translate and live the word in his life, Grant us the grace to love the word to treasure the word to give flesh to the word in our lives by personalizing and assimilating

the word of God. Help us in the process of turning to you completely and perfectly that we may experience constantly your indwelling presence. Amen

Sr. Grace

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