

THE SHEPHERDS WALKING STICK

Tax season is upon us. I never used to worry about it because in the Philippines priests are exempted to pay tax, but now I can sympathize with everyone as you recover and organize all receipts and documents. Well, tax season perhaps is also a reminder that we have to set order in our lives always. While doing spiritual reading on the life of St. Thomas Aquinas, I found this powerful prayer which he composed and prayed everyday. It is titled For Ordering a Life Wisely. If you feel anxious and disorganized lately, then this prayer is for you: *O merciful God, grant that I may desire ardently, search prudently, recognize truly, and bring to perfect completion whatever is pleasing to You for the praise and glory of Your name. Put my life in order, O my God. Grant that I may know what You require me to do. Bestow upon me the power to accomplish Your will, as is necessary and fitting for the salvation of my soul. Grant to me, O Lord my God, that I may not falter in times of prosperity or adversity, so that I may not be exalted in the former, nor dejected in the latter. May I not rejoice in anything unless it leads me to You; may I not be saddened by anything unless it turns me from You. May I desire to please no one, nor fear to displease anyone, but You. May all transitory things, O Lord, be worthless to me and may all things eternal be ever cherished by me. May any joy without You be burdensome for me and may I not desire anything else besides You. May all work, O Lord, delight me when done for Your sake and may all repose not centered in You be ever wearisome for me. Grant unto me, my God, that I may direct my heart to You and that in my failures I may ever feel remorse for my sins and never lose the resolve to change. O Lord my God, make me submissive without protest, poor without*

discouragement, chaste without regret, patient without complaint, humble without posturing, cheerful without frivolity, mature without gloom, and quick-witted without flippancy. O Lord my God, let me fear You without losing hope, be truthful without guile, do good works without presumption, rebuke my neighbor without haughtiness, and—without hypocrisy—strengthen him by word and example. Give to me, O Lord God, a watchful heart, which no capricious thought can lure away from You. Give to me a noble heart, which no unworthy desire can debase. Give to me a resolute heart, which no evil intention can divert. Give to me a stalwart heart, which no tribulation can overcome. Give to me a temperate heart, which no violent passion can enslave. Give to me, O Lord my God, understanding of You, diligence in seeking You, wisdom in finding You, discourse ever pleasing to You, perseverance in waiting for You, and confidence in finally embracing You. Grant that with Your hardships I may be burdened in reparation here, that Your benefits I may use in gratitude upon the way, that in Your joys I may delight by glorifying You in the Kingdom of Heaven. You Who live and reign, God, world without end. Amen.