

## USING WELL THE MARVELOUS GIFT OF SPEECH

Let your speech always be gracious  
so that you know how you should respond to each one.

Colossians 4: 6



We pause and remember that we are created in Your image, O God.  
You created us a little less than the angels and crowned us with glory and  
honor. We are Your beloved people and You are always in our midst.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, the Eternal Word,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### PSALM 19

May the words of my mouth and the reflections of my heart  
find favor before You O God.

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the sky proclaims its builder's craft.  
One day to the next conveys that message;  
one night to the next imparts that knowledge.



There is no word or sound; no voice is heard;  
Yet their report goes forth through all the earth, their message,  
to the ends of the world.

God has pitched there a tent for the sun;  
it comes forth like a bridegroom from his chamber,  
and like an athlete joyfully runs its course.  
From one end of the heavens it comes forth;  
its course runs through to the other; nothing escapes its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.  
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.  
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.  
The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.  
The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.  
The statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just;  
More desirable than gold, than a hoard of purest gold,  
Sweeter also than honey or drippings from the comb.  
By them your servant is instructed;  
obeying them brings much reward.



Who can detect heedless failings? Cleanse me from my unknown faults.  
But from willful sins keep your servant; let them never control me. Then shall  
I be blameless, innocent of grave sin.  
Let the words of my mouth meet with Your favor, keep the thoughts of my  
heart before You, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

**SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 4: 10 – 15**

Moses said to the Lord, "If you please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor recently, nor now that You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue."

The Lord said to him, "Who gives one man speech and makes another deaf and dumb? Or who gives sight to one and makes another blind?

Is it not I, the Lord?

Go, then! It is I who will assist you in speaking and will teach you what you are to say."

Yet he insisted, "If you please, Lord, send someone else!"

Then the Lord became angry with Moses and said, "Have you not your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent speaker. Besides, he is now on his way to meet you.

When he sees you, his heart will be glad. You are to speak to him, then, and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and will teach the two of you what you are to do.

**SCRIPTURE: ECCLESIASTES 5: 1–6**

Keep your foot when you go to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and you upon earth: therefore let your words be few.

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

When you make a promise to God, defer not to pay it; for He finds no pleasure in fools: pay that which you have promised.

Suffer not your mouth to cause your flesh to sin;

do not tempt God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands.

**SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 15: 8–11, 15–20**

"This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts."

Jesus summoned the crowd and said to them, "Hear and understand.

It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles that person; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one."

Then Peter said to Him in reply, "Explain this parable to us."

He said to them, "Are even you still without understanding?

Do you not realize that everything that enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastely, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person. The Gospel of the Lord!

## **REFLECTION by DE LA SALLE**

**You should entertain no less horror for indecent words than for swearing, since they are no less contrary to civility and often are more dangerous. It shows a lack of respect to use dirty language. In this matter even double-meaning words are not permitted for you would offend against politeness as well as propriety. The same should be said of words which suggest some indecent idea or image.**

**When you happen to be in a group where some of those present use language which is too free or wounds decency, you must be careful not to laugh. If you can, you should pretend not to have heard, and at the same time try to turn the conversation in some other direction.**

**It can be said that you make your real self known by the sort of language you use. Using language which is filthy and which shocks people's sense of decency is one way of letting them know how impure and corrupt you really are. (Christian Politeness)**

**You snakes – how can you say good things when you are evil. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. Matthew 12:34**

## **RESPONSE: PSALM 34**

**I will bless the Lord at all times; praise shall be always in my mouth.**

**My soul will glory in the LORD that the poor may hear and be glad.**

**Magnify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together.**

**I sought the Lord, Who answered me, delivered me from all my fears.**

**Look to God that you may be radiant with joy and your faces may not blush for shame.**

**In my misfortune I called, the Lord heard and saved me from all distress.**

**Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies.**

**Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.**

**The LORD has eyes for the just and ears for their cry.**

**Every good and perfect gift is from above,  
coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights .**

**James 1:17**

**PRAYERS of INTERCESSION**

**That we may treasure the gift of speech;**

**Lord, help us to always praise and give thanks with this gift.**

**That we will proclaim the love of God, of Jesus, our Savior, and of the Holy Spirit;**

**Gracious God, make us bold in proclaiming You.**

**That we will always use our speech to build up and not tear down, to bless and not to curse;**

**Compassionate God, help us to be positive in all our speech.**

**That those who are prone: to untruths will realize the deception of their speech;**

**Loving God, be with us when tempted to lie or bear false witness.**

**Free us from all fear of truth.**

**That we will upright and decent in all of our speech;**

**Holy God, let our speech be pure, encouraging and undefiled.**

**Let us pray: O God, You Who have cured the deaf and the dumb, come into our lives and cure us of any fault we encounter with the awesome gift of communication. May we use this gift to the fullest. Amen.**

*Actions speak louder than words;  
let your words teach  
and your actions speak.  
Saint Anthony of Padua*

**HYMN: YOU ARE GOD'S WORK OF ART**

**You are God's work of art created in Jesus the Christ**

**You have been enlightened by the Lord.**

**Walk as children of the light.**

**Keep the flame of faith in your heart,  
and may you meet Him when He comes.**

**Blessed be our God,  
Who chose you in the light of Christ.**

## PRAYER

O God of Goodness and Wonder, we thank You for the awesome gift of life. You have called us from nothingness and have blessed us with our senses. May we who have been graced with the gift of speech always use it to praise and thank You, to encourage one another on our journey to You, and to bless others even if they need to be reminded of their wayward ways. Help us to be people of the Word, people of truth and righteousness. May every word from our mouths be to the honor and glory of Your name. Amen.



St. John Baptist de La Salle  
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,  
help us to have a holy reverence for the gift of speech and to use it with care.

Live Jesus in our hearts.  
Forever!

### *A THOUGHT*

*Jesus urged us not to swear at all:  
"All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No' if you  
mean no."*

*Only constant honesty with ourselves can make us  
really sincere.*

*The world knows an honest person.  
Many would not tell a downright lie,  
but few, even of the pious, always tell the truth.  
It was the truth in Jesus that devastated his enemies.  
In proportion as we live a recollected life, with Jesus  
as model, we attain a simplicity and lucidity of  
character which has less and less need for untruth.*

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