

90-Year-Old Man Spends Three Hours Praying Each Day

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Charles E. Sive Jr. prays from about 3 to 6 a.m. each day at St. Jude's Chapel of Perpetual Adoration. At 2:30 a.m. every day, while most of the city sleeps, 90-year-old Charles E. Sive Jr. is having his grapefruit, toast and coffee. By 3 a.m., he's in prayer at St. Jude's Chapel of Perpetual Adoration, where he remains until it's time to catch the 5:52 a.m. bus for his job downtown. "I pray for a lot of people that are doing good works," the devout Catholic says. "I pray for us to get more priests and more nuns. I pray for the family and the children, for anything if I know what the needs are."

Sive does this because of a pledge he made in July 1986 when his wife, Anne, was gravely ill with cancer. "She had this bad cancer — it was supposed to be one of the worst. So I pledged, if my wife lived, I'd spend an hour every day," he says. She survived and he increased his prayer time to three hours, choosing the early morning hours before the day begins for most people. "In the chapel, there is prayer 24 hours a day — we believe Jesus is there," Sive says.

Because the Blessed Sacrament (in which Catholics believe Jesus Christ is present) is in the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration, someone must be in the chapel in prayer at all times. People from various parishes sign up for specific prayer hours and commit to at least a year. Ed Dahm says the chapel was his father's idea after his mother died. "Mom and Dad lived right across from St. Jude's," Dahm says. "Their hobby was going to church, so when Mom died, Dad gave some money to remodel the chapel. . . It opened 13 years ago this October."

With his schedule of three hours a day, every day, for more than 10 years, Sive may be the prayer pacesetter. "In my life," he says, gesturing to his right side, "if Jesus had an office over here and the Blessed Virgin had an office over there, I'd have a path worn between them . . . The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Lord Jesus have been good to me." Sive recalls the first time he really noticed. "In my young days, maybe God was on one side of the track and I was on the other. But when it was someone I loved, it was different. In 1937, when our son Richard was 5 years old, someone backed over him. He was in the hospital all summer." That's when Sive made his first big pledge. "I made a

pledge to the Blessed Virgin Mary, if my son would be OK, I'd drink no alcohol." Sive says he has made other pledges and given up other things over the years. "As time goes on, you realize there's a bigger power than you are," he says.

Sive's cheerful face and his philosophy of life are well known to people who work in the vicinity of Washington Boulevard and Barr Street. He has been the APCOA Parking attendant on the southeast corner of that intersection for many years. A salesman in the meat packing industry, he retired in 1965, but accustomed to being on the road and constantly active, he soon got on his wife's nerves. "I'd be asking her things like, 'Why are you putting cocoa in that cake?' She'd say, 'Why do you care? I've been doing it this way for years.'" Sive chuckles. He knew it was time to find something to do. "I took this job for three months, and I'm still at it 26 years later. I started at the St. Joe Hospital lot and then came over here." He works 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. "I give most of my parking lot money away. It goes to needy families, to the YMCA camp, to Urban League. And I give to Mother Angelica on EWTN and the Sisters of Providence," at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. "If I can make it, I'm going to work to the end of the year, but my legs are getting bad," he says.

Sive grew up in St. Joseph, Mo. His father was a foreman for Armour & Co. and Sive worked there summers. He didn't see his future in meat packing so he enrolled at St. Joseph Junior College, now Missouri Western State College, and got a job operating a motion picture projector for \$125 a week. He and Anne married in 1931, and like many couples in the Great Depression, suffered some setbacks. "After a year, I was back at Armour making \$18 a week," he says. But he worked his way up, got into sales and found his niche. "I guess I had the personality to be a salesman," he says with a smile and a twinkle. "you have to get to know people, and you have to keep going." In 1936, he was transferred to South St. Paul, Minn., and in 1945, switched to Marhoefer Meat Packing Co. and moved to Fort Wayne. He finished out his sales career with Cincinnati Butchers' Supply, selling equipment to the meat and rendering industry in seven midwestern states. He and Anne, 88, have four children — Shirley Niebur, Rockville, Md.; Richard, Fort Wayne; Kenny, Shawnee Mission, Kan.; and Maryanna Halstead, Richmond, Va. — plus 10 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

With his schedule, Sive is in bed by 7 or 8 p.m. every day. He gets home from the parking lot about 2:30, ready for an early supper. He doesn't eat lunch. "I'm not missing a thing," he says patting his stomach. "My wife's a good cook." Sive, who will be 91 on

Aug. 31, also offers some food — food for thought. “You can’t judge a person by what they think when they’re young or what some guy did 40 or 50 years ago. People change . . . When I was 22 years old, you couldn’t have told me I’d vote Republican some day. But I’ve been a Republican since 1954.”

“Here’s what I think: Instead of spending millions of dollar’s on a state prison, let’s spend that money on inner-city kids. Let’s educate them; let’s train them. It costs \$7,000 a year to educate and \$30,000 a year to keep someone in prison. . . - There’s too much brain power lost in the inner city.” ” In the old days, fathers had rules for their kids . . . Kids knew if they behaved themselves, they got (into) no problems.” “Women don’t get the opportunities that men get.” “I get on the lawyers that park here. I tell ‘em while Clinton’s in China, he ought to exchange some of our lawyers for some of their engineers.”

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