

Why We Need to Pray

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The Need to Pray



The world needs prayer more than anything right now.

- To be renewed in prayer is to be renewed in ALL aspects of our life. It is to be young again!
 - “On prayer the soul is purified from sin, charity is nurtured, faith takes root, hope is strengthened, the spirit gladdened. In prayer the soul melts into tenderness, the heart is purified, the truth reveals itself, temptation is overcome, sadness is put to flight.”
St. Lawrence



- More than communal prayer (mass, family prayer) we need to be grounded in PERSONAL prayer.
 - Without personal prayer, our prayer life is superficial and empty, an act without the heart behind it.
 - Personal prayer is the soul of Christian Life.



- Human life only makes sense when God sits at the center.
 - God can only take up an important role in our life if we spend time with Him daily.



- Prayer gives us a progressively deeper knowledge of God.
 - Through prayer we are able to move beyond our assumptions of God.
 - God is both mighty and tender, He is transcendent and near, He possess infinite power and yet remains gentle.
 - Prayer also teaches us that EVERYTHING comes from God. We shouldn't be disappointed with people for not giving us what we need, or with ourselves for being able to provide everything we need.
 - All good things come from God.



- Prayer gives us a progressively deeper knowledge of God.
 - Through prayer we are able to move beyond our assumptions of God.
 - Our hope should be in God alone.
 - God is enough.



- Prayer also teaches us to let go of the lies we tell ourselves about who we are.
 - We are compelled to recognize who we are: our wounds, our weaknesses, our inconsistencies, selfishness, hard-heartedness, and secret-complicity with evil.
 - Thankfully, God only reveals our sins to us in the same moment He is begging us to accept His forgiveness and mercy.



- Prayer also teaches us to let go of the lies we tell ourselves about who we are.
 - We will also experience the unique and personal love that God has for us, and only us.
 - God does not love two people in the same way since it is the very love of God that shapes our personality.



- Prayer teaches us to love.
 - Where prayer is lacking, so is love of neighbor.



- Where do we go from here?
 - What is prayer?
 - What are the characteristics of prayerfulness?
 - What are the fruits of prayer?
 - Prayer and Faithfulness
 - Prayer and Hopefulness
 - Prayer and Love
 - Prayer through Creation
 - Prayer through Scripture
 - Dealing with common Prayer Struggles
 - The Nitty-Gritty of having and maintaining a prayer life
 - How to Pray ALWAYS



Journaling Questions

Honestly assess your current prayer life. Is it healthy? Is it consistent and life-giving?

What is your relationship with God like? Do you feel like you know Him, and you allow Him to know you?

What is Prayer?

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Prayer





Prayer

Prayer is simply being in the
presence of God.

Prayer



- **Prayer is love.**

- When we love someone, we seek their presence and seek a deeper intimacy with them.
- Prayer is a genuine dialogue of love, to the point where we can be wholly possessed by our loving Father, vibrating with the Holy Spirit, and captivated with our Beloved.
- When we pray, instead of trying to produce love in our souls toward God, we should be basking in God's love for us.
- We try too much and trust too little.

Prayer



- Prayer is also a response to God's call.
 - God asked.
 - Jesus commanded.
 - Believing in and following God demands prayer.

Prayer



- Contemplative Prayer is the radiant awareness of mutual indwelling with God and His people.
 - We are a temple, made sacred by God. A temple where we can fully encounter and worship God--and be changed by Him.

Prayer



- Prayerfulness is a way of being.
 - Prayer is really the effort of breaking away from this world and spending time in loving relationship with God.
 - Prayer is for the soul what eating is for the body because prayer keeps the soul in contact with God, the source of all life.
 - Prayer is the quest to constantly, and in every way, clear away more space for God in your life.
 - Prayer is grounded in humility and right seeing.
 - I need God.

Prayer



- Prayer is NOT.

- Study

- One moment of prayer, of weak worship, confused contrition, trepid thanksgiving, or pitiful petition will bring you closer to God than all the theology study in the world.

- A Feeling

- Often times prayer can be dry and without feeling, but God is still there, speaking and listening.

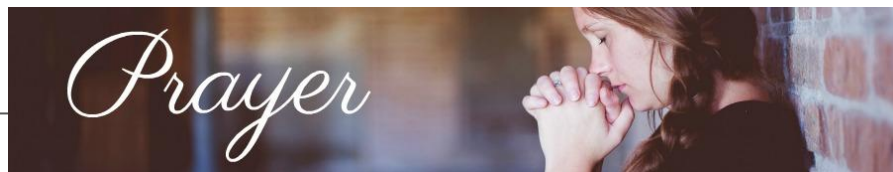
- A Series of Acts

- Because Jesus didn't call us to a new religion, He called us to a new life.

Prayer



- Prayer is the Only Way to make Spiritual Progress.
 - The absolute meaning of our lives is to become saints. And we will reach this end, either here on earth or in purgatory.
 - Holiness is simple: giving our ALL to God.
 - We are often too full of ourselves to see God.
 - Prayer is the way we let go of ourselves and approach holiness.



Journaling Questions

Essential questions to consider as we embark on prayer:

How am I opening myself up to God?

What is holding me back from encountering God every moment of my life?

Characteristics of Prayerfulness

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*Characteristics of
Prayerfulness*



Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- When you Begin to Pray:
 - Put yourself into the presence of God.
 - Ex: think of God present in your heart, picture Jesus there with you, visualize looking into God's eyes, look at the Eucharist if in Adoration
 - Create a “rite” of prayer for yourself.
 - Ex: light a candle, take a deep breath, sing a song, gaze at an icon

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- **While Praying:**

- Focus on God, not you.
 - Where God is present, He is also hidden.
 - God cannot be found and possessed except by faith and love, because He does not want to be united to us in any way except love.
 - God begs for our love, but respects our freedom. If we are to walk into His presence, we can only do so through love.

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- While Praying:
 - Remain in the present moment and allow God to find you right where you are.
 - Be open to God:
 - We are honest about who and what we are.
 - We aren't hiding from God.
 - We offer God our love freely, with no thought to our own benefit.
 - We open ourselves up to receive whatever God is willing to send.

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- **While Praying:**

- Right seeing--God is all around me, God is seeking me, God is here, now, will I stop hiding? Will I be honest with him?
- Lay down all concerns. We stop trying to figure things out and just place them in God's hands.
- Embrace stillness. Stop doing and thinking.

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- Time Spent Praying is **FRUITFUL WASTE**.
 - We shouldn't expect to get anything "out of" prayer.
 - Our time is a gift, no strings attached.

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- Themes of prayer:
 - Prayer should be an act of LOVE.
 - Repentance: We trust in His love when we confess.
 - Adoration: Profound love, meant only for the Divine
 - Should consume most of our time in prayer
 - Petition: An act of loving trust in God's willingness to care for us
 - Thanksgiving: Our response to the generous love of God

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- Posture during prayer:
 - Prayer itself should not be a form of corporal penance.
 - Positions that are too uncomfortable and cause the body to be a constant distraction of pain are not good.
 - Rest in the Lord, physically, spiritually, and mentally.
 - Sometimes, however, it can be helpful to reinforce our inner attitude by taking on a certain position.
 - Our bodies are part of the prayer and can help our minds be more fully present

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- Posture during prayer:

- St Dominic described 9 ways to pray. Here are 5:

- Bow in humbleness before the altar of Christ.
- Lay on the ground, flat on our face as we say, “Lord, have mercy on me, a poor sinner” as St. Dominic did.
- Kneeling before the Lord in reverence.
- Pray with your hands open and held before you, demonstrating your openness to God.
- Stand with your arms stretched out as if nailed to the cross, demonstrating your willingness to suffer with Christ.



Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- **Remain Faithful To Prayer.**
 - Prayer is usually an “appointment” we make with God and diligently keep. We might not feel anything, or even reach a level of calm or peace, but prayer is setting aside time for God and refusing to stand Him up.
 - We return to prayer even if it is dry or hard. We remain faithful.
 - Faithfulness to prayer is the major battle we will fight in this life.
 - The devil will work hard to keep you from prayer, for a person faithful to prayer is certainly lost to the devil.

Characteristics of Prayerfulness



- **Concluding Your Time of Prayer:**
 - End with Thanksgiving, even when prayer was hard or dry.
 - Add a simple “rite” to conclude your prayer.
 - Ex: Say a Hail Mary, Kiss an Icon, Blow Out Your Candle.



Characteristics of Prayerfulness



Journaling Questions

It's time to make a plan for your prayer routine:

When will I set up an “appointment” for daily prayer with God?

Where will I set up a small “chapel” that I can use daily for my prayer time?

What are the fruits of prayer?

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The Fruit of Prayer



The Fruit of Prayer

- The Fruit of Prayer:
 - If prayer is genuine, it WILL bare fruit.
 - The benefits of prayer are neither instantaneous nor measurable.
 - The real fruit of prayer is grace--God's gift of Himself that we open ourselves up to receiving when we come before Him in prayer.



A woman with long dark hair is shown in profile, looking upwards with her mouth slightly open in a prayerful expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The title 'The Fruit of Prayer' is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the middle of the image.

The Fruit of Prayer

- The Fruit of Prayer:
 - The goal of prayer is to see as clearly as possible what God has given us each day, so that we might turn and give as generously to those in our lives.
 - Prayer will also lead us out of ourselves into TRUTH. We will see that we aren't God and that being consumed with our own desires, hurt, and ego is foolishness.



The Fruit of Prayer

- The Fruit of Prayer:

- If our prayer is real, it should bare fruit. Because real prayer brings our heart closer to God. So are we really praying, or are we just talking to ourselves?
- In order for prayer to be fruitful, our prayers don't have to be directly answered. Effective prayer instead infuses the events of life with new light so we are able to see people and things more clearly in ways that might not have been possible before.
- Prayerfulness slowly teaches us to have eyes that see and ears that hear.



The Fruit of Prayer

- What about feelings?
 - Feelings can accompany prayer.
 - God is all goodness and sometimes just being near God in prayer we can experience the sweetness of His presence, a small taste of heaven.
 - God is an ocean of peace, and sometimes while in prayer we can float in that peace.
 - However, not feeling these things is common and normal. Often God prefers to teach us to love in the darkness.

A woman with long dark hair is shown in profile, looking upwards with her mouth slightly open, as if in prayer. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The title 'The Fruit of Prayer' is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the middle of the image.

The Fruit of Prayer

- Examples of the Fruits of Prayer:
 - Becoming aware of our sins
 - Finding space to process and reflect
 - Embracing fear, and not be ruled by it
 - Acknowledging past hurts
 - Acquiring the ability to see past our own fears, hurts, and plans, and no longer be consumed by them
 - Understanding ourselves a little bit better

A woman with long dark hair is shown in profile, looking upwards with a serene expression, suggesting a state of prayer or contemplation. The background is softly blurred, focusing attention on her face.

The Fruit of Prayer

- Examples of the Fruits of Prayer:
 - Understanding God a little bit better
 - Becoming a bit more understanding of others and their motives
 - Becoming more intune with the voice of God and being able to tune out the scream of society
 - Moving past our sins once they are forgiven
 - Understanding our past sufferings
 - Moving toward understanding of our current suffering
 - Surrendering control into the hands of God



The Fruit of Prayer

- Answered Prayers:
 - Although God answers prayers in His way, God refuses nothing to those who refuse Him nothing.
 - Sometimes the answer to our prayers will be the answer He gave to St. Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9)
 - Because our salvation is more important than having an easier life



The Fruit of Prayer

Our prayer will be fruitful if we
remain grounded in FAITH, HOPE,
and LOVE



The Fruit of Prayer

Journaling Questions

What fruits of prayer have I experienced in the past?

What is keeping me from experiencing the fruits of prayer now? Am I open to them? Do I quiet my mind and soul to receive them? Do I spend enough time with God?

Prayer and Faithfulness

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Prayer and Faith



- First of all...
 - The difference between The Faith and faith:
 - The Faith: the set of beliefs we hold as truth as Catholic Christians
 - faith: the work of believing and trusting in God



- Prayer is essentially an act of faith.
 - As soon as we start to pray we are making an act of faith:
 - That God exists
 - That it is worthwhile to spend time with Him, listen to Him, and speak to Him, and that He loves us
 - That He care enough about me to spent time with me



- Although it is not mandatory that we understand The Faith in order to have fruitful prayer, the more we understand what we believe, the more our faith will be a light and a strength for us.
 - However, although it is good to know the truths about God, everything we understand about God is **still not God**.
 - God is infinitely beyond our ability to understand.
 - To fully understand something implies being able to dominate or control it. We will never be in this position with God.



- Prayer does not depend on what you are able to understand or feel.
 - It is faith that keeps us connected to God during times of dryness.

Prayer and Faith

- Mary is the ultimate example of faith.
 - She pondered in her heart.
 - She believed in the darkness.





Prayer and Faith

Journaling Questions

Praying is an act of faith. Each time I sit down to pray, by simply doing that, what am I professing to believe?

Prayer and Hopefulness

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Prayer and Hope



Prayer and Hope

- Prayer is an act of hope.
 - Prayer recognizes that we need God, can't manage by ourselves, and rely on Him for what we need.
 - Prayer leads us to humility and spiritual poverty, which cannot be separated from the virtue of hope.
 - When we place our hope in God we are, at the same time, recognizing our own weakness and brokenness.



Prayer and Hope

- Salvation requires humility and hope.
 - We learn who we are, and how limited and fallen and small we are, and then place our hope not in our own abilities, but in God alone.
 - The prayer that is able to reach God's heart in heaven is the prayer that springs from our own loathing of our sinful nature.
 - We are often so full of pride and self-love that God can't communicate Himself to us.



Prayer and Hope

- God sends us the blessing of virtues not based on our merits or qualities,
 - But based on our hope.



Prayer and Hope

- Human beings are not purified from the outside inward, but starting from the inside.
 - No effort we make will lead us to holiness.
 - It is God, who already dwells inside us (we know through hope), that will ultimately lead us to holiness.



Prayer and Hope

Journaling Questions

Praying is an act of hope. What is the link between hope and humility?

Prayer and Love

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- Prayer is an act of love.
 - We make time for the things and people that we love, so when we remain faithful to our appointments to pray, we are loving God in the most important way we can.
 - Fulton Sheen, Why do we pray?
 - "We pray as much as we desire to, and we desire to pray in ratio with our love. But the capacity for prayer belongs to every soul, and even those who do not acknowledge any love of God pray under stress."



- Prayer is a school of love.
 - Prayer teaches us patience, faithfulness, humility, and trust, which are all expressions of love.



- Prayer is LOVE.
 - Prayer is not about “thinking a lot.” Prayer is about “loving a lot.”
 - Prayer demands that we accept God’s love in faith and hope.
 - To be really in love with another, we need to be completely open to what and who they are, and what they want to give us.
 - We often think of prayer as a duty, but it is a privilege, a privilege to bask in God’s love.



- Love allows us to focus in prayer.
 - Your mind might wander while in prayer, but it is our love, anchored and focused on God, that keeps us focused in prayer.



Journaling Questions

How well am I doing at loving God?
What can I do to improve the way I
love Him?

Prayer through Creation

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A scenic landscape featuring mountains in the foreground and a dramatic sky with a bright sun setting or rising behind clouds. The text "Finding God in Creation" is written in a white, cursive font across the bottom of the image.

Finding God in Creation



- **God is present in His creation.**
 - The whole world was made as a gift for humanity.
 - God expresses His goodness through the world around us.
 - All of nature carries the imprint of God's love.
 - Nature contemplated with eyes of faith has great power to console and strengthen us.



- **God is present in His creation.**
 - However, when we live our life in a world of screens and cement and office buildings, we can often times feel cut off from God--and from ourselves.
 - Living this way can also lead us to believe that we are the master and creator of our world, and we don't need God.
 - Therefore, it is important that we all experience nature, when and as we can.



- God is present in His creation.
 - Simple ideas for experiencing God through nature:
 - Take a walk.
 - Plant a seed and watch it sprout on your windowsill.
 - Read about the wonders of nature and the universe.



Finding God in Creation

Journaling Questions

Write about a powerful encounter you had with God in nature.

Prayer through Scripture

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- **Sacred Scripture as Prayer (Lectio Divina):**
 - Without deep knowledge of Sacred Scripture, we run the risk of faith becoming too general, and our relationship with God too vague.
 - Scripture is the Divine Word of God, and He uses it to continue to speak to us today.



- **Sacred Scripture as Prayer (Lectio Divina):**
 - An encounter with scripture is an encounter with God.
 - The Bible allows God to speak to us directly and it also give us the words to respond to God.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:

Download the bookmark!

Lectio Divina
PRAYING WITH
SCRIPTURE

BE STILL
Find a quiet, private place and select a few lines of scripture to reflect on.

READ
What does it say?
Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words and concepts.

MEDITATE
What catches your attention?
Mentally "chew" on the words and images. What sticks out to you?

PRAY
How does your meditation connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up.

CONTEMPLATE
Savor being in God's presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart.

RESOLVE TO ACT
What will you do?
Make a plan of action in response to what God has spoken to you through scripture.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Find the stillness and come into God's presence.
 - Quiet your mind and body.
 - God won't compete with distractions.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Read the passage carefully and slowly, many times over.
 - Mendicant, or “chew” on the word.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Meditate on a few words or phrases. Search for meaning.
 - Murmur, Repeat and Ruminare. It is a physical activity, not just mental.
 - What does this tell me about God?
 - What does this tell me about myself?
 - What specific invitation for my life can I find here?



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Pray.
 - Ask God to reveal the connection between this verse and you.
 - Ask Him to speak to you.
 - Remain quiet, your mind empty, so you can hear Him.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Contemplate the verse further, making room for quiet and listening.
 - Allow yourself to slip into simple wonder.
 - Sit with God.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Act on what was revealed to you through this encounter with God in His word.
 - Write these thoughts down and resolve to act.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
 - Act on what was revealed to you through this encounter with God in His word.
 - Write these thoughts down and resolve to act.



- **Lectio Divina:**
 - The more we interact with scripture, the more it will sink into us and come to our aid when we most need it.



- **Lectio Divina:**

- It is a beautiful practice to begin your day with meditating on scripture.
 - It helps us put God first.
 - We are better able to listen and sit with God before the stress of the day has begun.
 - It helps us embrace an attitude of listening that day.



- **Lectio Divina:**
 - You can pick whichever verse you want to reflect on.
 - It can be a beautiful thing to meditate on the daily readings. Keeps you in harmony with the seasons of The Church and prepares you for mass if you are able to go.



- **Lectio Divina:**
 - It is also a very beautiful practice to keep a prayer journal where you record all of the things revealed to you in your meditations on scripture and all of the things you have resolved to do.



Journaling Questions

What role does Scripture play in your prayer life? Do you need to spend more time with Scripture? How do you plan to do this?

Recited Prayers

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Recited Prayers





- Recited Prayers
 - NOT a “lesser” form of prayer!
 - Recited prayers are an ancient practice of the Catholic Church.
 - Since our minds are so prone to wander, repeating prayers helps to break through the distraction and focus on God.
 - We repeat the most perfect words in the hope that they will penetrate our hearts and our entire lives.



- Recited Prayers
 - Most prayers are based on scripture:
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Other prayers come from Church tradition:
 - The Glory Be
 - Or were revealed to us from heaven directly:
 - The Fatima Prayer
 - The Rosary



- Recited Prayers
 - When we recite prayers often, these beautiful words can become the rhythm of our lives.





- The Rosary

- Evolved for many centuries, but was officially given to St. Dominic by Mary herself.
- St. Catherine of Siena (who lived before St. Dominic) encouraged the faithful to use prayer beads and recite these words from scripture.
- Mary, through St. Dominic, took this practice and gave it more meaning and beauty.



- The Rosary

- The Rosary combines repetitive prayers, physical movement, and contemplation.
 - We say the holy words of the Angel and Elizabeth, addressing Mary and begging for her aid.
 - We hold the beads of the rosary, so that our body, not just our mind, is engaged in the prayer.



- The Rosary

- The Rosary combines repetitive prayers, physical movement and contemplation.
 - Our minds contemplate the mysteries of the Rosary as we pray the prayers, and since the prayers repeat, we have space to contemplate.
 - We can also contemplate scripture as we pray the rosary, a virtue attached to each mystery, or special prayer



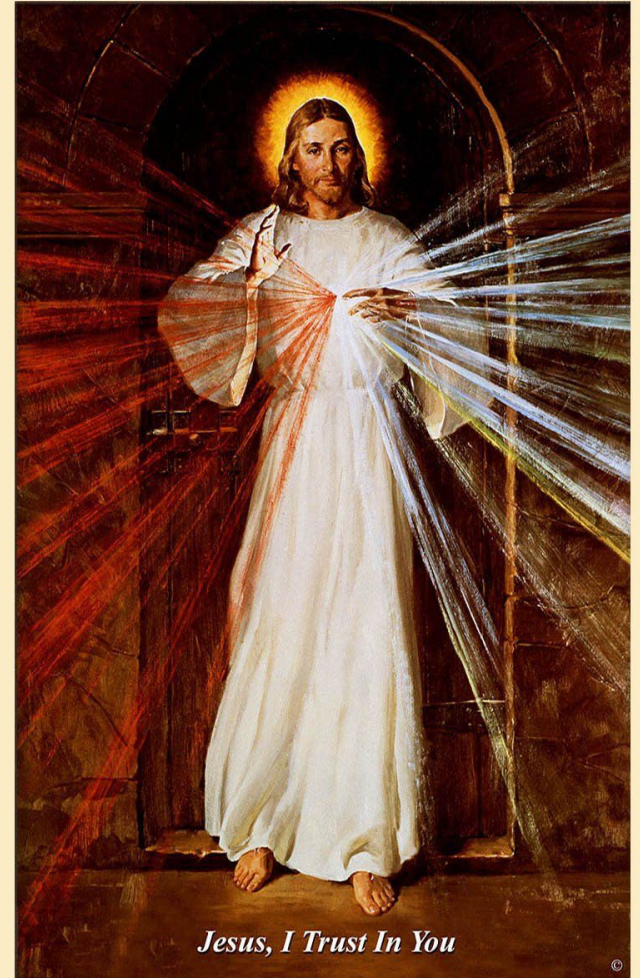
- The Rosary

- In Fatima, Mary told the visionaries that we NEED to pray the Rosary.
- A daily rosary can be a beautiful gift to God, and a powerful way to gain the protection of Mary.



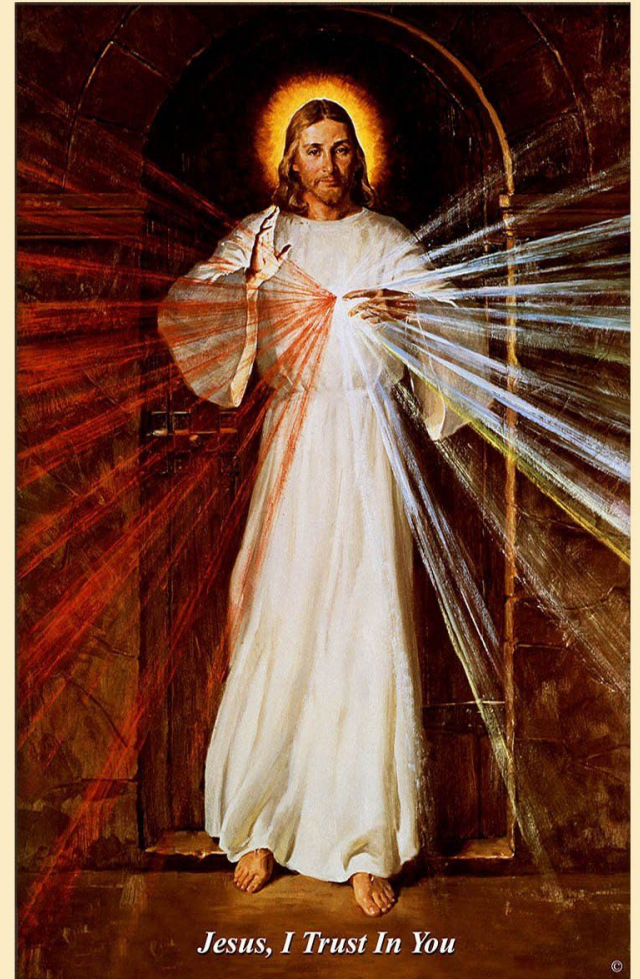


- The Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - St. Faustina, a Polish Nun, received the image of the Divine Mercy and the Chaplet from Jesus Himself in a series of visions.



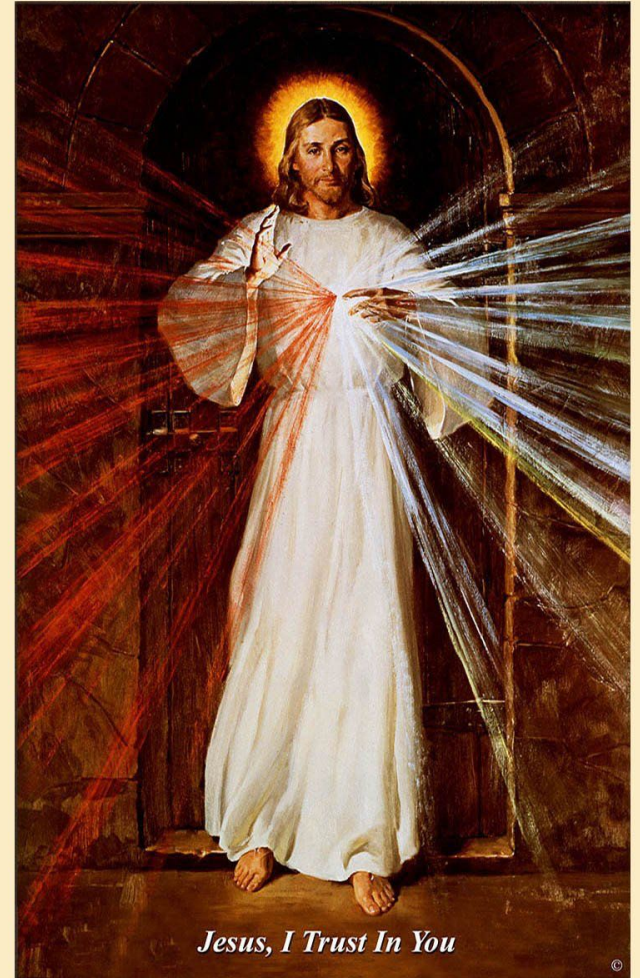


- The Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - The message of Divine Mercy:
 - God loves us – all of us.
 - And, He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him, with trust, to receive His mercy.
 - After receiving His mercy, we must let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.





- The Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a prayer recited with a Rosary.
 - A handful of short prayers are recited as we beg mercy for ourselves and the whole world.



Recited Prayers

- Prayers of The Divine Mercy Chaplet:

- Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.
- For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
- Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.



A photograph showing a pair of hands holding a small, ornate silver crucifix. The hands are positioned as if in prayer, with fingers slightly curled. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light.

Recited Prayers

Journaling Questions

What role do recited prayers play in your prayer life?

What do you struggle with when it comes to recited prayers? Does it feel prayerful? Do you understand the reason behind recited prayers?

Silent Prayer

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A serene sunset scene over a beach. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, reflecting on the wet sand. A person stands in the distance, looking out at the ocean. The words "Silent Prayer" are written in a white, elegant script across the lower left of the image.

Silent Prayer



- Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):
 - Offers an opportunity to listen to God and bring ourselves before Him
 - Even two minutes can be powerful.
 - Regularity is more important than length of time.
 - Your only job is to be present. Most of the time you will not meet an immediate surge of grace, or feel anything at all.



- Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):
 - Material objects are moved from without (like a billiard ball), but we are spiritual beings.
 - We are moved from within.
 - Retreat inside yourself, to the quiet place you share with God, to your internal tabernacle, to find direction, meaning, and rest.



- **Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):**

- Find silence, read a bit of scripture, take a word or phrase and repeat it quietly to center yourself, and then relax with the Lord.
- When your mind wanders, simply redirect yourself.
- Prayer is utterly “useless” or wasted time.
- Persist in prayer and the fruit will slowly reveal itself.
 - Mother in nursing-home example



- Types of simple, silent prayer:
 - In order get the awareness of God's presence, we must first WANT it, and seek it, and be willing to sacrifice for it.
 - Often, it is parts of ourselves that get in the way of meeting God.
 - We should be willing to part with those things holding us back from God.





- **Stop, Look, Listen**

- **Stop**, and give God the moment. Time is the test of love. We give what we love time.
- **Look** at God with the eye of your soul.
 - Best description of adoration: "I look at him, and he looks at me."
St. John Vianney
 - Prayer can happen anywhere and at any time. To enter prayer we simply need to live in the presence of God.
- **Listen**- can be through reading scripture, especially what Christ directly says in the Gospels
 - Allow silence so you can hear.





- “Jesus” Prayer

- If you have faith in Christ, hope in Christ, and love for Christ, you can pray the most powerful prayer in the world, because you have real contact with the great power in the universe: Christ Himself.
- Simply repeat the name of Jesus.
- This can be prayed at anytime.



- “Jesus” Prayer

- When you pray this prayer, do not concentrate on the name, the word, the sound, or the letters. Do not think of the name of Jesus. And do not try to meditate on scenes from the Gospels, or truths from theology, or to imagine what Jesus looks like, as you do in some other forms of prayer.
- Just reach out to Jesus in blind faith. Invoke Him as your Savior, Lover, Lord, and God.



- “Jesus” Prayer

- The name of Jesus is what sprung the world into existence. He is THE WORD.
- The name of Jesus is what has freed us from sin.
- To invoke the name of Jesus is to place yourself in His real presence, to open yourself up to His power and His energy.



Journaling Questions

How good am I at focusing on God,
in the silence?

Why is the name of Jesus so
powerful?

Prayer and Work

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Prayer and Work





- Prayer in our Work

- Mary and Martha

- There are times when we are called to sit at the feet of Jesus in useless inaction.
 - There are other times we are called to work, and care for the Lord through the way we care for and serve those in our lives.



- **Prayer in our Work**

- The key is changing our motives:
 - Instead of cooking dinner because we are hungry, we cook dinner because we love God, the God who wants us to cook dinner right now.
 - Instead of just changing a baby's diaper, we change the diaper rejoicing in the life God has given us to care for, and the wonder of the human body.



- **Prayer in our Work**

- We must seek unity with God by doing all of our work and activities in His presence and seeking to please Him and doing His will with everything we do.
 - Create a constant dialogue with God.
 - We will be better able to see Jesus in our brothers and sisters if we grow closer to Jesus each day in prayer.
 - We find God when we are taking care of our neighbor.



Journaling Questions

Are you able to pray while you work? Does that seem possible?

Think about specific jobs you are called to do each day. How can you turn this job into a prayer?

Dealing with Prayer Struggles

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Prayer Struggles



Common Struggles with Prayer:

- Too Busy
- Too Boring
- Too Distracted
- Too Much Shame (the shadow of sin)
- Suffering
- Progress is too slow





Too Busy

- Our culture has waged war on the interior life by keeping us so busy and entertained and distracted that we lose sight of all the deeper things.
- We are attentive to so many things that we ultimately aren't attentive to what really matters.
- **Prayer is useless, wasted time.**
 - We should enter prayer without the hope of getting anything out of it.



Too Busy

- We don't want to miss anything, or waste any of our precious time.
 - The voice that tells us we need to do just one more thing first...is the voice of the enemy--and often we let him win.



Too Busy

- How can we pray when we are SO BUSY?
 - Simple Prayers--the "Jesus Prayer"
 - Develop an awareness of "solitude."
 - The world does not own me.
 - Create a prayer ritual.
 - Prayer is simply lifting your mind to God. It can take just 2 minutes.



Too Busy

- How can we pray when we are SO BUSY?
 - Come to God as you are, where you are, in your ugliness and sin and disorder. Don't wait for perfection to come to God.
 - Make your EVERY ACTION, EVERY THOUGHT a prayer.
 - Unceasing Prayer from St. Francis de Sales
 - Ask God to be attentive to you (SACRAMENT)
 - Offer Him the moment you are in (SACRIFICE)
 - Accept whatever comes out of the moment (SURRENDER)



Too Busy

- We need to make room for **silence**.
- “God’s first language is silence.” Pope Benedict.
 - God reveals Himself in silence.
 - God also reveals us to ourselves in silence, which is why we don’t like silence.
 - Silence allows us to think our own thoughts and feel our own feelings--something we rarely do due to distraction and noise.
 - Be mindful of falling into “business” even in prayer.
 - Don’t tell God the things you think He wants to hear. Don’t just blow your way through recited prayers.
 - Enter into silence with God.





Prayer is Boring

- Based on a false notion that prayer should be exciting or emotionally charged
- Prayer is like eating. It is meant to be part of our day. Something we need.
- Prayer is not entertainment.
 - We are so used to being constantly entertained that it might take time and discipline to truly settle into prayer.



Distraction

- We all get distracted. It is normal.
- Don't beat yourself up, just refocus, again and again.
 - Mother Teresa said "God does not demand that we be successful; God demands that we be faithful."





Too Much Shame (distance created by sin)

- There is something in us that fears prayer as a maggot fears light.
 - We must do violence to this voice that tells us to fear prayer, for it is not ourselves. It is the enemy.
- Sin is a separation from God and it can keep us from prayer.



Too Much Shame (distance created by sin)

- There are 2 parts to forgiveness: God's giving it and our receiving it.
 - Because God offers infinite goodness, He will always give forgiveness, but will we be open to receiving it?
 - Receiving forgiveness is dependent on:
 - Repentance--I want to be forgiven.
 - Confession--I know I need forgiveness, and I am asking for it.
 - Faith--I am open to accepting forgiveness that I know flows generously from God.



The Distance of Sin

- Sins that have been forgiven are forgotten by God.
- The devil wants to remind us of our sins and he wants them to remain between us and God.
- To overcome the shame of sin, we need to approach God like a child: Trust Recklessly in His Goodness.
- To be perfect, in the Hebrew understanding, is to WALK WITH GOD. It does not mean to never fail. Our lives are “perfect” when we let God touch every part of our lives, even the sinful parts.





Suffering

- Prayer brings us closer to God. Suffering unites us with Christ on the Cross.
- Suffering comes from sin, our own sins or original sin, not from God. But, God can use suffering for His greater glory, just as you used Christ's suffering on the Cross.
- Suffering trains us to rely on faith, not feelings.
- Christ showed His love through suffering.
- When we suffer, we are often given an opportunity to show our love for God and others.
- God is often nearer to us when we suffer.



The Slow Progress of Prayer

- Brother Lawrence: "She seems to me full of good will, but she would go faster than grace. One does not become holy all at once."
- There is RARELY instant gratification with prayer. Prayer is not a drug or magic. Problems and pain often remain...and God is not our dog waiting to do whatever we ask.
- We will fail in prayer. Our prayer will be imperfect. Be patient with yourself and get back up.
- Don't become discouraged by your faults.
- Turn your eyes away from yourself and toward God.



Journaling Questions

Of all the struggles listed in this video, which is my biggest struggle?

What tools do I know have to address this struggle?

Creating a Prayer Routine

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A close-up photograph of a person's hand with red nail polish writing in a calendar. The calendar has a grid with some dates already filled in with green and blue ink. A small plant with green leaves is in the foreground, partially obscuring the calendar. The text 'Creating a Routine' is written in a cursive font over the image.

Creating a Routine



Okay...so that's a lot of information.
How do we translate this into an
actual prayer life?



Create a Prayer Routine.



#1 Set a Time to Pray Every Day

- Look at your day. When is there a small chunk of time that is free of distractions, quiet, and available to use for prayer?
- If you don't have a clear schedule, make it the **FIRST** thing you do when the quiet time appears.
 - Nap Time
 - Morning
 - Make sure it is a time you can use **EVERY DAY**



#2 Establish a Prayer Rite

- What will you do at the beginning of your prayer to get your body and mind in the spirit of prayer?
 - Create a small chapel in your home.
 - Create a special “prayer journal” that you only use for prayer.
 - Light a Candle.
 - Take a deep breath.



#3 Decide what you will do during your prayer time before you sit down to pray.

- Keep it SIMPLE!
 - Lectio Divina with the Daily Readings and then journalling
 - Rosary and then silent contemplation
 - Divine Mercy Chaplet
- Don't try to do everything.
 - REMEMBER: Study is NOT prayer!



#4 Start NOW!

- Don't put it off. God is waiting for you now!
- Start today, you can work out the details of your home chapel and prayer journal later.
- Now that you know how important prayer is, how could you wait one more day?



#5 Stick with your plan, EVERY DAY, for at least 30 days.

- Make an appointment with God and DO NOT stand Him up!
- Do not give in to resistance!
 - The devil does not want to see you pray, and he fears nothing more than you establishing a consistent prayer life.
 - The devil will try to distract you with “good things” like laundry and reading to the kids...
 - BUT, NOTHING is more important than prayer!



#6 Make your prayer time the CENTER of your day.

- We live out our priorities by how much time we dedicate to things.
- If you “don’t have time to pray,” then you simply don’t see it as a priority.
- Prayer and time with God should be your #1 Priority!
- It should be the immovable thing in your day.
- Prayer should be the one thing you do, even if you can’t do anything else.



My prayer routine:

- 6-7am: Daily Readings and Lectio Divina with my husband, time for prayer journaling.
- Beginning of Naptime: Rosary and Contemplation
- 10-10:30: Spiritual Reading and Night Prayer



Journaling Questions

Take time to draft out your prayer routine!

Remember:

- Pick a specific time and place.
- Start simple.
- Pray that God give you the grace to stick with it!

Praying Always

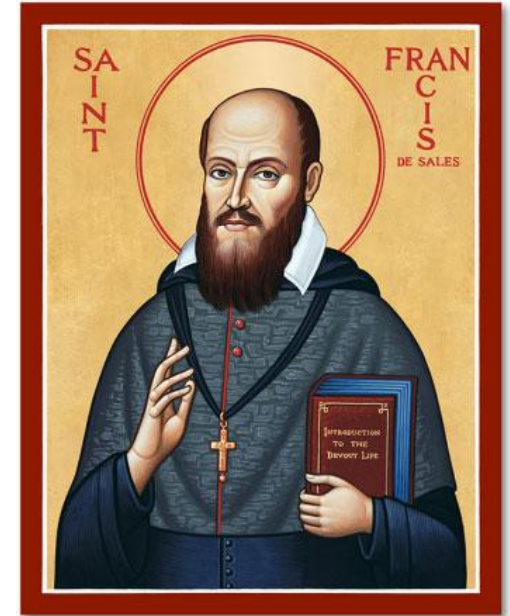
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St. Francis de Sales on Praying Always:

- In each moment we need to
 - ASK
 - OFFER
 - ACCEPT





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 - Of course, God is always with us and attentive. We are really just reminding ourselves of this fact, and directing our own thoughts and efforts toward God.
 - When you ask God to be with you, His graces will flow through that moment.
 - Therefore, every moment becomes a **SACRAMENT**.



St. Francis de Sales on Praying Always:

- In each moment we need to
 - OFFER
 - Offer that moment to God.
 - Offer the joys, the suffering, the boredom, whatever you might be experiencing to God.



St. Francis de Sales on Praying Always:

- In each moment we need to
 - OFFER
 - Offer that moment to God.
 - Offer the joys, the suffering, the boredom, whatever you might be experiencing to God.
 - When you offer who you are and what you are doing to God, every moment becomes a **SACRIFICE**.



St. Francis de Sales on Praying Always:

- In each moment we need to
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 - Solemnly accept whatever God decides to give you, do for you, or the direction He sends you in that moment.



St. Francis de Sales on Praying Always:

- In each moment we need to
 - ACCEPT
 - Solemnly accept whatever God decides to give you, do for you, or the direction He sends you in that moment.
 - When you resolve to accept whatever God has to send you, every moment becomes a moment of **SURRENDER** to God.



Therefore when we ASK, OFFER and ACCEPT every moment of our lives, we are able to live in God's grace, offer Him our lives as a gift, and surrender our own selfish desires to His perfect plans.



Therefore when we ASK, OFFER and ACCEPT every moment of our lives, we are able to live in God's grace, offer Him our lives as a gift, and surrender our own selfish desires to His perfect plans.

This is the key to the spiritual life.



Journaling Questions

Take this moment right now and in
your journal practice
ASKING
OFFERING and
ACCEPTING your current moment.