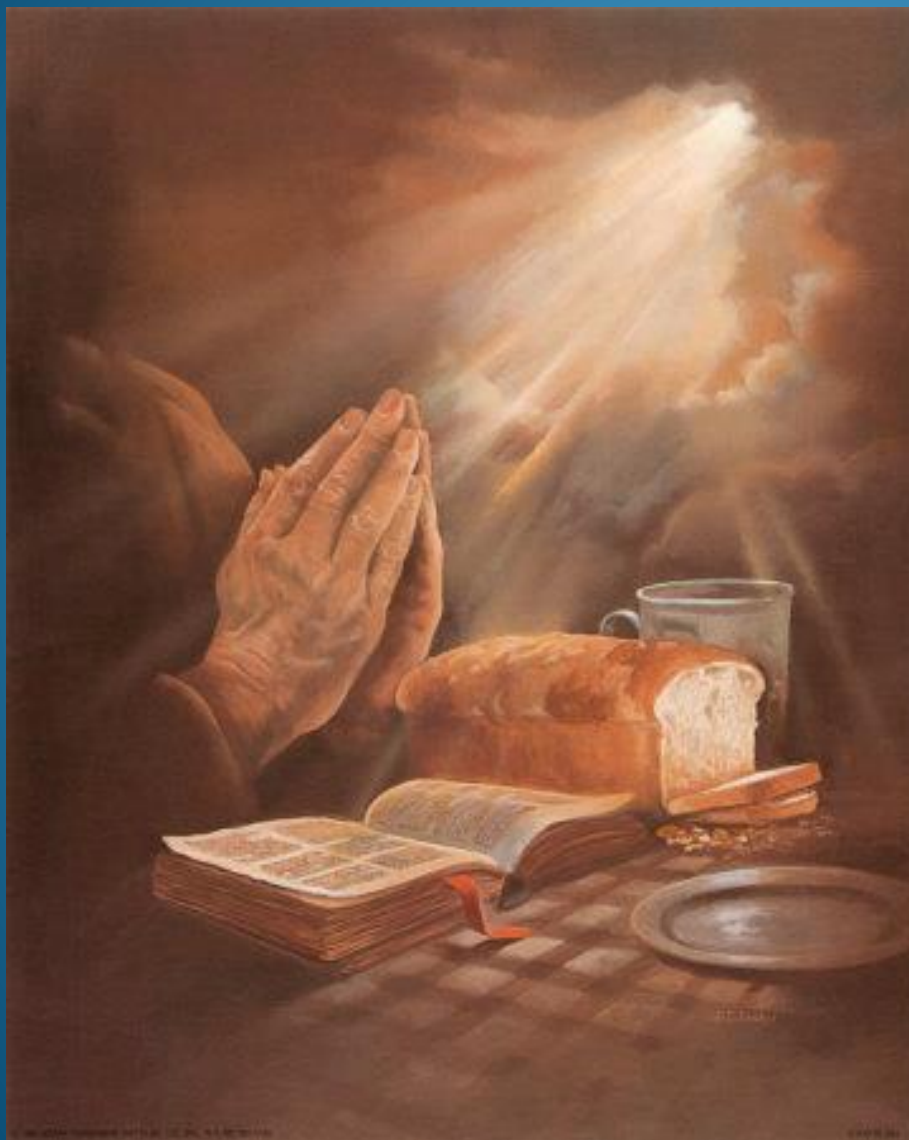


Prayer



RCIA

October 23, 2014

The Sign of the Cross

- Act of faith, trust
- Indicates symbolically the figure of Christ's Cross.
- “...let us not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the cross our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in every thing; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings and in goings; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake; when we are travelling and when we are at rest...” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem – 315-386 – in his “Catecheses”)

Role Model-Jesus

- Jesus' **filial** prayer:
 - done in **solitude**
 - always a loving adherence to the **Father's will**
 - was always **confident** in being heard
 - with filial **boldness**
 - with a **pure heart** and **thanksgiving**
- Jesus learned to pray from his mother, the Virgin Mary (& our mother)
- Jesus is the “way” of our prayer and Mary “shows us the way”... (CCC2620-22, 2674)

Question

- “**Where are you?**” God asked Adam and Eve in the very first prayer.
- God is still asking each person that question.
- God always initiates the conversation – our response comes from our free will by the prompting of the Holy Spirit

What is Prayer?

- “...For me prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy, says [Ste. Therese of Lisieux](#).
- “...Prayer is a conversation with God...” ([St. Clement](#))
- “...Prayer is a wine that makes glad the heart of men...” ([St. Bernard of Clairvaux](#))

What is Prayer?

- “...Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself...” (St. John Vianney)
- “...Prayer is “an expression” of man’s desire for God.”



What is Prayer?

Christian prayer is :

- a **covenant, personal** relationship between the living and true God (Love) and man (image of Creator) in communion with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (fathoms our heart)(CCC 2564)
- “mystery” (to be delved into)
- “gift” to be ‘opened and used lovingly and often

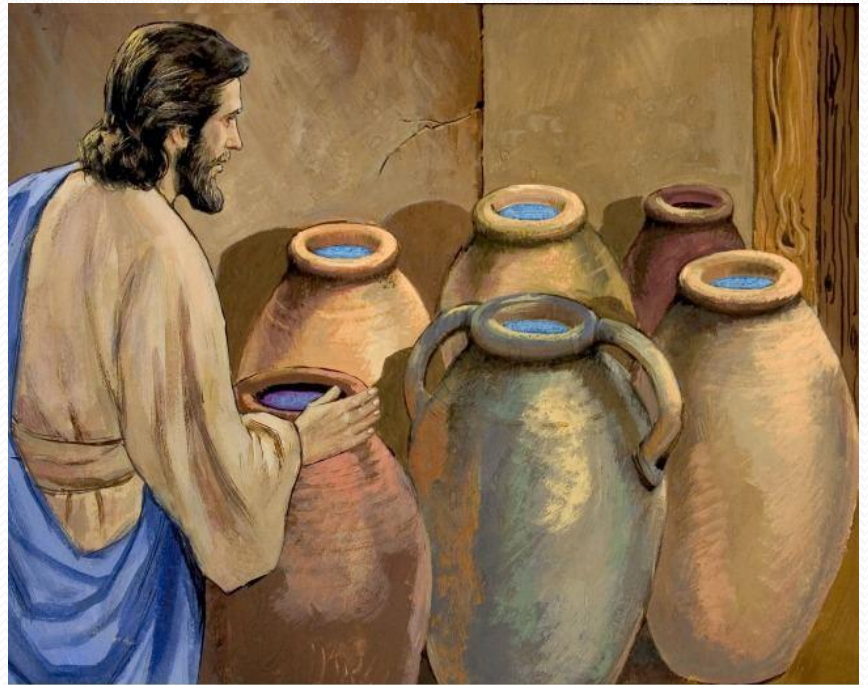
Kinds of Prayer

- **Praise, worship and adoration** (belong to God alone)
- **Thanksgiving** (ten lepers – Lk17:11-19)



Kinds of Prayer

- **Intercessory** (Moses arms—Exodus 17:11-12)
(wedding feast of Cana—Jn 2:1-11)



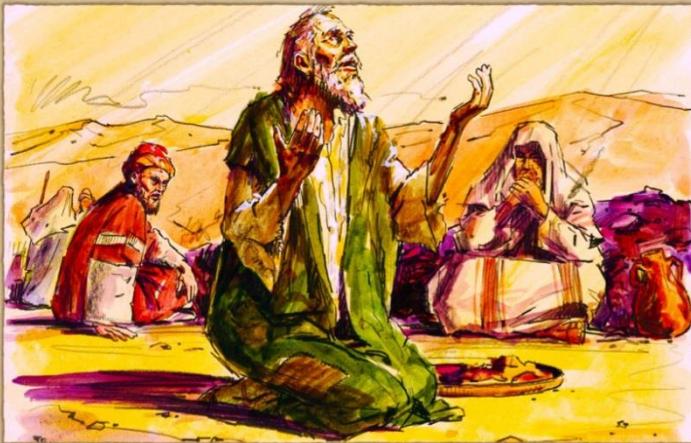
Kinds of Prayer

- **Petition** (woman with hemmorrhage touching the cloak of Jesus) (Mt.9:20-22)



Kinds of Prayer

- Repentance and blessing (Lk 15:11-32) (Book of Job)



Some Thoughts from the Book of Job



The Mass – Eucharist

- **Highest form of prayer** – contains and expresses all forms of prayer
- **Re-creation** of the Paschal Sacrifice
- There is only **ONE Mass** – one sacrifice offered by Christ through the priest
- “**Pure offering** of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God’s name” (Cf Malachi 1:11)

Liturgy of the Hours

- Divine Office
- Official prayer of the Church providing prayers, psalms, and meditation for every hour of every day.
- Richest single prayer resource of the Christian Church – not only of the clergy but of the whole People of God
- Has existed from the earliest times to fulfill the Lord's command to pray without ceasing.
- Purpose –to sanctify the day and all human activity
(Apostolic Constitution, Canticum Laudis.)

When do we pray?

- “Prayer should be the breath of the soul” (Liguorian Bulletin)
- Pray “now” and “always” – CCC says that we cannot pray at all times if we do not also pray at specific times. The Holy Spirit is offered us **at all times**, in the events of each day – in humble, everyday situations.
- Origen: “He prays without ceasing who unites prayer to good works & good works to prayer...” (Apostles – prayer & **fasting**)
- St John Chrysostom: “pray ...while walking or seated ...buying...selling ... cooking... (in other words, always)

When do we pray?

- Pray in the **morning** when you rise – offering your day and asking God's blessing. (Apostleship of prayer)
- Pray **during the day**—short **mantra** prayers, grace before and after meals, Liturgy of the Hours, Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Stations of the Cross, and other **devotional** prayers.
- Pray in the **evening** asking God's pardon for the faults of the day (examination of conscience) and the grace to do better tomorrow. Pray for a good night's rest.
- Pray in time of **temptation** and for **final perseverance**.

Where do we pray?

- “here” and “**everywhere**” – in all circumstances and in every place.
- Mark 1:35 “...Rising very early before dawn, he [Jesus] left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed...”
- Luke 6:12 “...In those days he departed to the mountain to pray and he spent the night in prayer...”
- Luke 4:16 “...He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue, on the **sabbath** day.

Why do we pray?

- **restoration of love relationship**—CCC 2745
- “**Virtues**”, (St. Ephraem), “are formed by prayer. Prayer preserves temperance...suppresses anger...prevents emotions of pride and envy...draws into the soul the Holy Spirit...raises man to Heaven...”
- **Vital necessity** (CCC2744) “...How can the Holy Spirit be our life if our heart is far from him?...”
We receive the strength of God’s love (Romans 8:38-39)

Why do we pray?

- Sin and...(St. John Chrysostom) “...For it is impossible, utterly impossible for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly, ever to sin...”
- Salvation...(St. Alphonsus Liguori) “... Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned...”

How do we pray?

All prayer starts with “stilling the self” and ends with “contemplation” in some form.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

(Psalm 46)

How do we pray?

- Ste. Jane Frances de Chantal says' “...The great method of prayer is to have none. If in going to prayer one can **form in oneself a pure capacity for receiving the spirit of God**, that will suffice for all method...”
- Bishop Fulton Sheen says, Prayer begins by talking to God, but it ends by **listening** to Him. In the face of Absolute Truth, silence is the soul's language...”
- Ste. Faustina says, “...**Silence** is so powerful a language that it reaches the throne of the living God. Silence is His language, though secret, yet living and powerful

How do we pray?

- “**Lord, teach us to pray.**” Matthew 6:6-15
- **Personal** and **communal** prayer – “... there are as many paths of prayer as there persons who pray but it is the same Spirit acting in all and with all...so becomes the prayer of the Church ...” (CCC2672)

How do we pray?

- Types of prayer:
 - praise, worship and adoration
 - thanksgiving
 - intercessory
 - petition
 - repentance
 - blessing
 - fasting (from food, entertainment, etc.)
- Major expressions of prayer:
 - vocal
 - Meditation—(Lectio Divinae or praying with Scripture)
 - contemplation

The Lord's Prayer (& Others)

- Lord, teach us to pray (Matthew 6:9-14)
- Hail Mary...
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...
- Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity *Jesus, I love you.*
- Jesus , Mary and Joseph:
*I give you my heart and my soul; assist me in my last agony;
may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.*
- Prayer to the Guardian Angel

Major expressions of prayer

- All have in common -recollection of the heart.
- Vocal prayer ...external expression

- Meditation ... mind

St. Charles Borromeo: “In meditation we find strength to bring the mysteries of Christ to birth in ourselves and in others ...as in **Lectio Divina** or in the mysteries of the **Rosary**...”

- Contemplation - “...a close sharing between friends”

Helps to Prayer

- Prayer **posture**
- Prayer **Corner**
- Prayer **Journal**



“Difficulties in Prayer - 4 D’s

- **Distractions**
- **Discouragement**
- **Dryness**
- **Devil**



Prayer Homework and Discussion

- Hymn : *Open My Eyes...* (no. 391)
- Prayer for home:
Read and re-read either Luke 11: 1-13 or Matthew 6: 9-13
- Discuss:
 - What is your relationship, if any, with prayer?
 - Why, do you think, that prayer is necessary or very important? (Perhaps you might say it is not, then why not?)
 - When you are not “feeling like praying”, then why not just “skip” it?