

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for teaching us how to pray to our Father. You show us how to be gentle and humble in bringing our needs to you and to our Father. Inspire us to be able to rest and find comfort in you. Make us comfortable to make our needs known to you. We ask this in your most holy Name. Amen.

Scripture Reading *Matthew 11:25-30*

In this Gospel, Jesus gives us a demonstration of his personal prayer that he directs to his Father. He also offers us comforting words, which encourages to come to him with our needs as he is gentle and humble of heart.

What is prayer?

- Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene).
- Prayer is a "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (CCC, 2558).
- "Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him" (CCC, 2560).
- "Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation" (CCC, 2561).
- We must avoid heaping empty phrases on our prayer life.
- Prayer can be expressed through words, but also gestures and postures.
- Prayer can involve drawing, writing, looking at art, or even just staring out a window.

What is liturgical prayer?

- Christians pray both as a member of a believing community and as an individual. Therefore, "the rhythms of prayer within the life of the Church are both liturgy and personal" because "in the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal" (NDC, 112).
- Liturgical prayer is the public prayer of the Church. It is the participation of the People of God in Christ's work. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy. The Sacraments are the preeminent experiences of liturgical prayer.
- Personal prayer is an essential aspect of the human person's relationship with God. Personal prayer expresses the covenant relationship that binds God to the person and the person to God.

Incarnating THE **KERYGMA** CATHOLIC PRAYER

What is the purpose of prayer?

- The purposes of prayer are found in the psalms and echoed in the personal and liturgical prayer of the Church. The four purposes of prayer are:
 - **Petition:** We express awareness of our relationship with God. It is centered in our desire and search for the Kingdom of God to come, in keeping with the teaching of Christ.
 - **Adoration:** We acknowledge that we are a creature before our Creator. It lauds God for His own sake and gives Him glory.
 - **Contrition:** We ask for forgiveness, which is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and the Son and with one another.
 - **Thanksgiving:** Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving for all that God has done for us. The meaning of the Christian life is learning to say “thank you” better.
- “The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer: it is ‘the pure offering’ of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God’s name” (CCC, 2643).

How can I pray with Scripture?

- Scripture can be used in multiple ways in order to pray:
 - Use the words of Scripture.
 - Keep a journal of lines that “pop out” to you.
 - Read the Scripture as if God was speaking directly to you.
 - Use the images of Scripture.
 - Picture the different images of Scripture, such as a vine and branches, a shepherd, a shield, a bird, etc.
 - Use the stories of Scripture.
 - Pay attention to how different stories of Scripture strike you.
 - Put yourself (pretend to be a character or even a bystander) into a story of Scripture.

CATHOLIC PRAYER



What is *Lectio Divina*?

- *Lectio Divina* (sacred reading) accepts the idea that God speaks to us through the Scriptures which provides an opportunity to speak back.
- The four steps of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation should not be thought of as four mechanical steps but ideally describe a holistic approach to penetrating the word of God.
 - *Contemplatio* (**Contemplation**): When the mind is lifted up to God, so that it tastes the joys of everlasting sweetness. Sweetness itself – we contribute nothing – it is gift!
 - *Oratio* (**Prayer**): The heart's devoted turning to God to drive away evil and obtain what is good. Tasting the flavor.
 - *Meditatio* (**Meditation**): Application of the mind with one's own reason to seek the knowledge of hidden truth. Chewing – making the story mine.
 - *Lectio* (**Reading**): Careful study of the Scriptures, concentrating all one's powers on them; it should involve a physical act. Putting it in one's mouth.

What is the difference between meditation and contemplation?

- **Meditation**
 - Meditation leads to contemplation.
 - Meditation involves actively focusing.
 - "Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking" (CCC, 2705).
 - "Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire... this form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to be in union with him" (CCC, 2708).
- **Contemplation**
 - Contemplation is the fruit of meditation.
 - Contemplation is simply resting quietly in God's presence.
 - "Contemplative prayer... is nothing else than a close sharing between friends, it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us" (St. Teresa).
 - Contemplative prayer is a union with the prayer of Christ and a communion of love that makes us share in Christ's mystery.
 - It helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts where Christ's Spirit dwells.