

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you call us to relationship with you through your Son and Holy Spirit. Enable us to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and to be committed to sharing the message that we have received from Jesus to all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading *John 17:6-11*

John's account of Jesus' Last Supper discourse shows the depth of Jesus' spirituality and his connection with the Father. In this passage, Jesus prays to the Father for those who follow him and whom he has entrusted his word.

What is the roots of spirituality?

- Spirituality is the human capacity for self-transcendence (moving beyond ourselves). It is the essence of where we may find God. Our anthropology has always had a keen disposition to God. "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in you, O Lord" (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 1).
- Religious spirituality is examining the work of the Ultimate Mystery in our lives and is specific to different religious traditions.
- Christian spirituality is rooted in the Paschal Mystery: God's self-disclosure and self-donation.

What are the general principles of spirituality?

- People have an interior life that needs attention.
- Spiritual formation is a struggle – it requires discipline.
- Spiritual discernment must exist – we must live an intentional life.
- Spiritual growth changes us – we are no longer the same.
- We can enhance our spiritual life by experiencing the faith of others. Our intimate circle in which we find ourselves plays a role in our spirituality. Friendship is key.
- We possess an ability to have a spiritual life because we possess a soul. The soul animates the body and is intertwined with the Spirit.
- Human growth and development is inseparable from the development of the soul, because grace perfects nature. We were designed for the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. When we allow our soul to be receptive, we are formed and transformed into the divine life we are meant to share.

- Spirituality should lead to a growth in virtue in which we build up ourselves and those around us. St. Francis deSales points to two key virtues in being successful spirituality: gentleness and humility.

What is the importance of introspection?

- "A life in Christ requires self-knowledge" (St. Theresa of Avila). We must be self-aware in order to experience God, since the Holy Spirit dwells within us. You don't have to find God, God has already found you.
- Growth and progress must be recognized as well as failings. One must maintain a dedication to the truth in one's self in order to maintain a life of balance. "Sin is not about what I do, but about who I impede" (St. Francis deSales).

What are the characteristics of Christian spirituality?

- **Triune**
 - The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that it belongs to God's nature to be committed to humanity and its history, as evidenced in the economy of salvation.
 - A spirituality that properly understands the Trinity is wholly oriented to God who is its source and its end.
 - God lives in shared existence therefore we must seek God in the ordinary.
 - Because the Trinity is both diverse and united, it is the paradigm for all human relationships.
- **Relational**
 - Based on the model of the Trinity, Christian spirituality is relational; we must be dispensers of God's healing touch.
 - "By their fruits, you will know them" (Matthew 7:16).
 - "See how they love one another" (Apology, 39).
 - Our spirituality is one in which we realize that we are not saved isolated from one another.
 - Someone who simply prays for one who is ill is a theist; however, someone who also ministers to a sick person is a Christian.
 - We are constantly called to a life of virtue, not to the "penancing of sin."

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY



- **Christological**

- Paschal Mystery
 - The fullness of God's expression to us is Christ.
 - Spiritual growth must be experiences in light of the Paschal Mystery: without suffering death, there is no resurrection.
 - Spirituality is grounded in the Risen Lord.
- Incarnation
 - The pivotal event of the world is the Incarnation – God becomes human.
 - The point of the Incarnation is that we may appreciate that we are sons and daughters of God.
 - The Incarnation of Jesus Christ gives us our divine calling.
- Scripture
 - "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).
 - As on the road to Emmaus, Christ unlocks the Scriptures for us.
 - We digest the Word of God, so that we become the Word. Scripture only gives life when we enable it, when we turn it into our flesh so that all may see it alive and not as a dead parchment, just as Jesus is the Word made flesh.
 - Scripture is also the mechanism that Christ uses to interpret us. We are uniquely fortified by the Word of God to act on behalf of our brothers and sisters.

- **Transformational**

- The Paschal Mystery enables us to constantly change our lives in the direction of God.
- God saves, but we must agree to be saved.
 - God is always present to us, but it is when we love one another that God is truly found.
 - Our freedom is found when we realize God's presence in our lives and are empowered by it.

- **Ecclesiological**

- The Church is the Body of Christ on earth today. It has the full possession of the Truth implicitly – it has the potential for the full truth.
- "Every member of the Church is called to the fullness of the Christian life" (LG, 40).
- The self-donation of Christ is embodied in the Church, a community of mutual giving and receiving whose dynamism is love.
- The mission of Jesus Christ has been entrusted to us. "We share the same baptismal call" (LG, 7).

- **Visionary**

- Christian life is about bringing eternal life in the here and now. We see something more than just the present.
- We are called to change the world in bringing about justice.
- We are called to look for and work for "the life of the world to come."

- **Pneumatological**

- We are not the primary agent in our spirituality; rather it is the Holy Spirit working through various ways.
- The Holy Spirit lives in us and makes us capable of self-transcendence. Our ability to recognize this action of God alters our way of life.
- We are led by the Spirit to embody Christ.
- The dignity of the human person is discovered in being a temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - Faith is our response to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always at work attempting to bring us into relationship with God.
 - Faith is primarily an affair of the heart, in which the Spirit stirs. The Spirit becomes present in our response to hardship and difficulty. Just as Christ gives his love back to the Father, we return to God our faith in Him.

- **Sacramental**

- God's grace + our faith = Sacraments
- Without the sacraments, there is no Church.
- It is through the Sacraments that we experience God in our lives in the most complete way, because through the Sacraments, we participate in the divine life. The Sacraments enable us to participate in the economy of salvation in the present time.
- The Sacraments give us strength and identity.