



Prayer [P1]

Why, What & How

For an elaboration,
See <https://www.a-z.ctn.sg/post/prayer-p1>

"The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane" by Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506).

Opening Prayer – Prayer Before Meditation

My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here; that you see me, that you hear me.

I adore you with profound reverence; I beg your pardon for my sins, and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful.

My Immaculate Mother, Saint Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

Amen.

1. What is Prayer and Why Pray?

Love Relationship and Communion

Prayer is the ***love relationship*** and ***communion*** that we have with our God, and it is both a *gift of grace* and *our personal response* to him.

“For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux,
Story of a Soul, Ms C, 25r

Prayer is an “an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently **to be alone with Him** who we know loves us”

St. Teresa of Avila

“[P]rayer is *the living relationship* of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit.”

CCC 2565

“[T]he life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in ***communion*** with him.”

CCC 2565

“Prayer is both a **gift of grace** and a **determined response on our part**. It always presupposes **effort**.”

CCC 2725

“[P]rayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God.”

CCC 2725

The "**spiritual battle**" of the Christian's new life
is **inseparable from the battle of prayer.**"

CCC 2725

Three Temptations Against Prayer

Three Temptations Against Prayer

1. No Time to Pray

Fr. Joseph Aytona, CPM

“Make time to pray”

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/3224313354529709>

Three Temptations Against Prayer

2. God will not answer my petition

- Pray in accordance with the Lord's will
- Pray in faith
- Pray with perseverance

Three Temptations Against Prayer

3. Sinned gravely and feel
hypocritical / unworthy

“... in spite of any wrong they who practice prayer do, they must not abandon prayer since it is the means by which they can remedy the situation; and to remedy it without prayer would be much more difficult. May the devil not tempt them, the way he did me, to give up prayer out of humility”.

St. Teresa of Avila

2. How to Approach Prayer?

The Church gives us several models of prayer, with **Jesus** as our perfect model of prayer, who modelled for us *trust, humility, listening, adoration, thanksgiving* and *the fulfilment of God's will*.

See also **Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and John the Baptist**

3. How to Pray?

- Vocal
- Meditative
- Contemplative



The Angelus (1857-1859), by Jean-François Millet. The Angelus is a *vocal* prayer traditionally prayed at 6 am, 12 pm, and 6 pm.

Prayers that punctuate our time help bring a 'liturgical rhythm' to our daily life.

Meditative (Mental Prayer)

Engages	Material	Objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts / Intellect • Imagination • Memories • Emotion • Desire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture (esp mysteries of Christ) • Writings of spiritual masters / saints • Holy pictures / sacred art • Creation / nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify / deepen convictions of faith • Confront reality of our own life • Prompt conversion of heart • Strengthen will to follow Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolutions

“Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower.”

CCC 2707

“[To abandon prayer] was no more [...] than putting myself right in hell without the need of devils to urge me on.”

St. Teresa of Avila

“*[W]ithout mental prayer the **soul is without light**”, and that “without meditation there is **not strength to resist** the temptations of our enemies, and **to practice the virtues** of the Gospel”.*

St. Alphonsus Liguori

4 Step Structure of Meditation

- (1) Concentrate
- (2) Consider
- (3) Converse
- (4) Commit

Fr. John Bartunek, who draws from the long-lasting and fruitful traditions of Ignatian and Carmelite spirituality

“Contemplative prayer is the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love. It achieves real union with the prayer of Christ to the extent that it makes us share in his mystery.”

CCC 2724

“One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: **one makes time for the Lord**, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter.”

CCC 2710

2 Devotions that Engages all 3 Expressions of Prayer

- Rosary
- *Lectio Divina*

4. Spiritual Maturity

Prayer as the Doorway to the Interior Life

Human Maturity	Spiritual Maturity
Childhood	Purgative
Adolescence	Illuminative
Adulthood	Unitive

St. Teresa of Avila's "Interior Castle"

Diamond
castle, 7 sets of
"mansions",
middle =
center of our
soul, where
God resides



*“[T]his castle has [...] many dwelling places: some up above, others down below, others to the sides; and in the center and middle is the **main dwelling place where the very secret exchanges between God and the soul take place**”.*

St. Teresa of Avila

“As far as I can understand, the gate by which to enter this castle is prayer and meditation.”

St. Teresa of Avila

5. Prayer Fuels Mission & Mission Inspires Prayer

Summary of Key Points

1. Prayer is a love relationship with and a communion with the Holy Trinity. It is both a gift of grace and our personal determined response to God. Prayer is a battle, against ourselves and the devil who does everything he can to turn us away from union with God.

Summary of Key Points

2. The Churches gives us several models of prayer, with Jesus as our perfect model of prayer, who modelled for us trust, humility, listening, adoration, thanksgiving and the fulfilment of God's will.

Summary of Key Points

3. There are three major expressions of prayer – Vocal Prayer, Meditation and Contemplative Prayer. The Rosary and *Lectio Divina* engages these expressions.

Summary of Key Points

4. We can progress in spiritual maturity, in phases predominantly classified as “purgative”, “illuminative” and “unitive”, and prayer is the doorway to enter into this “interior castle” of our soul.

Summary of Key Points

5. Prayer fuels mission. Mission inspires prayer.

Closing Prayer – Prayer after Meditation

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections and inspirations that you have communicated to me in this meditation. I beg your help in putting them into effect.

My Immaculate Mother, Saint Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

Amen.

Reflection/ Sharing Questions

Reflection Question 1

“Excuses”: Examine and share your usual “excuses” for the lack of a sustained prayer life. Help each other to demolish such “excuses”, and to firmly and finally renounce them by the grace of God.

Reflection Question 2

Dispositions: In the context of a prayer life, what tangible step(s) will you take to grow in the dispositions of trust, humility, listening, adoration, thanksgiving and/or the fulfilment of God's will?

Reflection Question 3

Sustained Prayer Life: What tangible steps will you take to develop and maintain a sustained prayer life (vocal, meditative and/or contemplative)? Write down this “life of prayer” and help keep each other accountable to it.