

**“Lord, teach us to pray!”** (Luke 11:1)

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**, nn. 2558-2567 (intro), but all of Part Four of CCC.

- We could not pray if God does not love: We love because he first loved us: “prayer is the ENCOUNTER of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we might thirst for him” (CCC 2560).
- “It is the whole man who prays....It is the HEART that prays” (CCC 2562-2564) = a “heart-to-heart” ENCOUNTER.
- “The life of prayer is the habit of BEING IN THE PRESENCE of the thrice-holy God, in communion with him” (2565).
- Pouring out our hearts before him (ARRR). Being with in adoration. Lectio Divina. Fruit of frequent Mass.

**There are no rules, but... Some basic practical wisdom from experienced pray-ers:**

**“The Battle of Prayer”**: obstacles within & without: world, flesh, Evil One: “obtuse spirit of world” “clouded intellect, weakened will, disordered appetites,” “Father of Lies” ...and vicissitudes of creatures bound by space & time.

1. **Every day**: Set time, set place, set routine EVERY DAY (just like eating EVERY DAY!).
  - a. “We cannot pray ‘at all times’ if we do not learn to pray at set times” (2697).
  - b. SAMPLE routine: Gratitude; Litany of Humility; ARRR; *lectio divina*; mostly silence...examen & review w/ journal. Liturgy of Hours (Office of Readings & Morning Prayer); intercession for others.
  - c. Anne and our vows daily (2x), every day....
  - d. **Every day is “first day” again: simply return.** “Your Father knows your needs before you ask him...”
2. **Stay in stream of Grace** (participation in Life of God, eternal life, divinization):
  - a. Eucharist: Lord’s Day (Sunday) => Feasts => daily if possible (Alyssa’s point)
  - b. Remove obstacles, be healed: Confession. Monthly.
  - c. Live in Liturgical Time: Year of Salvation “sets minds on things above.”
3. **Cultivate the Art of Silence (recollection)**: “Go into your storeroom [of HEART], shut the door [to what pulls me from wellspring]....” Crowded heart & mind tends to “crowd into” RELATIONSHIP; a well-ordered life fosters well-ordered prayer: the ability to “be with Him,” present to the Presence.  
*Cell phone or God? Radio or God? News or God?*  
 “Keep sane & sober for your prayers...” (1 Peter 4:7). **Go to bed on time.**
4. **Distractions in prayer**: (see Fr. Traynor, *The Parish as a School of Prayer*, pp. 38-40)  
 Basic wisdom: **a gentle return** (Example: the distracted deacon or priest at Mass ☺)
  - a. *Upon noticing the distraction*: Gentle return. “Thank you, Jesus, Holy Spirit! Thank you for gift of making me aware. Now I’m not distracted!”
  - b. *If same type of distraction repeats*: speak to God about it forthrightly, express confidence in him, express desire for him. Make gentle return.
  - c. *If same type of distraction yet again repeats*: now must pay attention and pray with it (ARRR)— Acknowledge and Relate so as to Receive how God sees it so can Respond appropriately with contrition, thanksgiving, repentance, whatever. It may well be an area I am attached to, some sort of “putting creature ahead of Creator,” some area I wish to carry rather than allow him.... *Holy Spirit may be at work here, convicting me, healing me, pointing out & directing me....*

- The value of Scripture or spiritual reading. Distracted prayer constantly returning is still prayer; and *God's love does not depend on my distraction.*

5. **Write it down: Journal.** Fruits of *Lectio Divina* + "Awareness examen" => Notice patterns!

6. **Live in reality rather than fantasy:**

- a. "If only I were a monk/ nun/ priest/ deacon / different job/ less work/ didn't have children / had ten children / lived in Montana..." rather than accepting our station in life NOW...
- b. "As soon as...": "I get that degree / study this book / get over my sickness / lose 10 pounds..."
- c. Prideful waste of time wishing I were more spiritually advanced; refusal to accept the "thorn in the flesh": "A great deal of time can be wasted in the spiritual life complaining that we are not like this or not like that, lamenting this defect or that limitation, imagining all the good we could do if, instead of being the way we are, we were less defective, more gifted with this or that quality or virtue, and so on. Here is a waste of time and energy that merely impedes the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts" (Fr. Jacques Philippe, *Interior Freedom*, 32-33).

**Antidote: accept ourselves just the way we are...and be ready & willing to let HIM change us.**

7. **Live in humility, recognize poverty, receive ALL from the Father who cannot not love us, for God Is Love:**

- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs the Kingdom..."
- SEEK & ASK, KNOCK, FIND...and the DOOR WILL BE OPENED.
- Paul planted, Apollos watered, but GOD GIVES THE GROWTH.
- **Signs of growth in prayer:**
  - o Charity (Love): spiritual & corporal works of mercy, preferring those most difficult to love.
  - o Humility & virtue & deep joy
  - o The gift of suffering.
  - o The gift of prayer (contemplation).

### **Prayer is an Art to be Learned, a Relationship to be Cultivated**

Though it begins with a "surge of the heart" (2558), like any art, as with any relationship, prayer must be learned: "Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray" (2650).

**The master teachers:** Creation, our fathers in faith (Abraham, Moses, David, the Prophets), PSALMS, JESUS, the HOLY SPIRIT, MARY, Mother Church, Saints & Pray-ers of all ages.

### **School of Discipleship (Relationship) => Pillars of Catechetical Institute => School of Prayer**

- What to expect in prayer - Liturgy of the Hours
- How vocal / liturgical prayer, meditation, the gift of contemplation relate
- Ignatius' Rules for Discernment of Spirits - Discerning God's Will, making decisions
- Ignatian Examen & Repetition
- Deeper Obstacles, inner healing, prayer & depression
- Prayer and Virtue and Stages of Spiritual & Human Maturing; Suffering
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### **Cor ad cor loquitur: Heart speaks to heart! A Personal Response to His Loving Presence**

"A vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer." CCC 2558

**RECEIVE the GIFT of God!**