

How do I develop a more active prayer life?

Objective:

"Praying is the easiest thing on earth, and justly so, for God linked salvation to this simplest of actions. To those who pray assiduously (with great care and perseverance), God grants, bit by bit, so much light and strength that even a drowning sinner is able to raise himself up definitively through prayer, even though he be immersed in mud up to his chest."

"Prayer is the first step toward God. It is always decisive, especially prayer to her who is the Mother of God. Devotion to her draws innumerable souls away from the devil, souls whose sins would otherwise have cast them into his hands."

Quotes from "Letter from Beyond"

Song Suggestion: Prayer of St Francis (Blue 368, Red 721)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

1Thes 5:17-18.

Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for all is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 32:6

"Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him."

Mark 11:24

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Catechism 2567

God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.

Catechism 2627

TWO fundamental forms express this movement: our prayer ascends in the Holy Spirit through Christ to the Father - we bless him for having blessed us;97 it implores the grace of the Holy Spirit that descends through Christ from the Father - he blesses us.

Vignette:

Why is it so hard for me to remember to pray throughout the day? Each night when I lay my head on my pillow, I realize I hadn't thought to pray at all. As I drift to sleep I manage to thank God for all His blessings...pretty lame.

TOMORROW, I will start by praying 5 minutes every morning and five minutes every night with my wife.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What is the goal of prayer? Why is prayer so essential to our life as a disciple?

How often do you pray? What benefits can you share from your prayer life that others might learn from?

Do you ever read the Bible? Do you read for long periods, or just a passage to reflect on? How can the Bible drive your prayer life?

What's the hardest thing for you in establishing a prayer life? Time? Priority?

Do we incorporate in our prayers gratitude and thankfulness to God?

Action Plan:

1. How can you begin a prayer life? It's like running a 5k or 10k race after not running for a long time. You have to build up to it. Can you take one day a week and pray or meditate on your faith? Perhaps Friday Rosary with Bob Hilmer is a starter. Keep at it until you get to an everyday prayer life.
2. Choose a prayer type that fits what you need and can do. Not everyone can pray the rosary.

Recall that there are 3 types of prayer:

Vocal prayer, founded on the union of body and soul in human nature, associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart, following Christ's example of praying to His Father and teaching the Our Father to His disciples.

Meditative prayer, we use our minds to ponder the will of God in His plan for our lives. What does God ask of us--- aids for this are in Scripture, the holy Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day, and writings of the Spiritual Fathers and Mothers. Varied methods include Lectio Divina of St Benedict, the radical simplicity of Franciscan spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire.

Contemplative prayer involves hearing and obeying God's Word. It is a time of silent listening and love. Emptying oneself not for its own sake, but for the sake of being filled with God and entering into a deeper relationship with Him.

Author: Tony Heekin....with the help of many before me.