

Personal Prayer

Lesson 35 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will explore vocal, meditative, and contemplative prayer styles.
- The participants will be encouraged to deepen their personal prayer lives and to address the difficulties that sometimes accompany prayer.

Content Summary

1. Vocal prayer, which uses words either spoken aloud or recited silently, focuses on your conversation with God that grows over time. Memorized prayers are the first way most people learn to pray vocally.
2. *Meditation* is a term used broadly and somewhat loosely. When you meditate you use your thoughts, imagination, emotions, and desires to ponder God's presence and activity in your life and in the world.
3. Catholics often use Scripture as a springboard to meditation. Liturgical texts of the day or season, holy writings, the Rosary, icons, and all creation are other doors through which you can enter into meditation.
4. Contemplation has to do with deep awareness of the presence of God arrived at not by rational thought but by love. Contemplation is union with the indwelling Christ that takes place in the heart at prayer.
5. We are all called to holiness in the ordinary events of our everyday lives. It doesn't take holiness to pray, but prayer will make you holier.
6. No matter the type or types of prayer you practice, it is important to deliberately schedule a time and place to pray each day.
7. Like all relationships, the relationship of prayer has its challenges. Those who do attempt prayer will sooner or later face other difficulties, particularly distractions and periods of dryness.
8. Distractions in prayer are similar to what happens when you try to carry on a conversation and keep getting interrupted. Respond to distractions just as you would to interruptions in conversation. Turn your focus back to the Lord.
9. In prayer, dryness is experienced as feeling separated from God. Sometimes periods of dryness, or darkness, are the gift and work of God, liberating you from imperfections and attachments. At other times dryness is the result of a lack of devotion to the relationship. If your prayer is dry because of lax practice or carelessness of heart, the remedy is conversion.

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