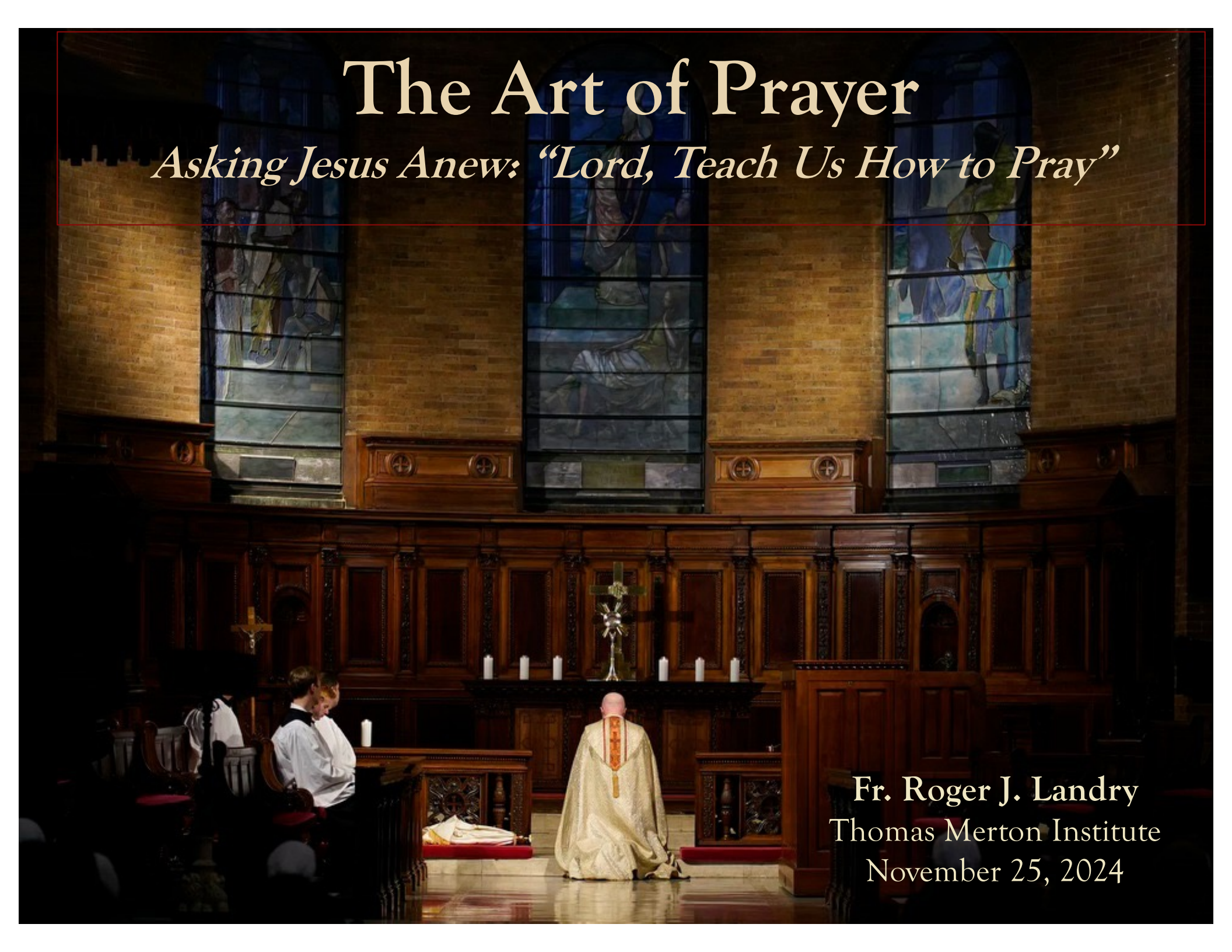


The Art of Prayer

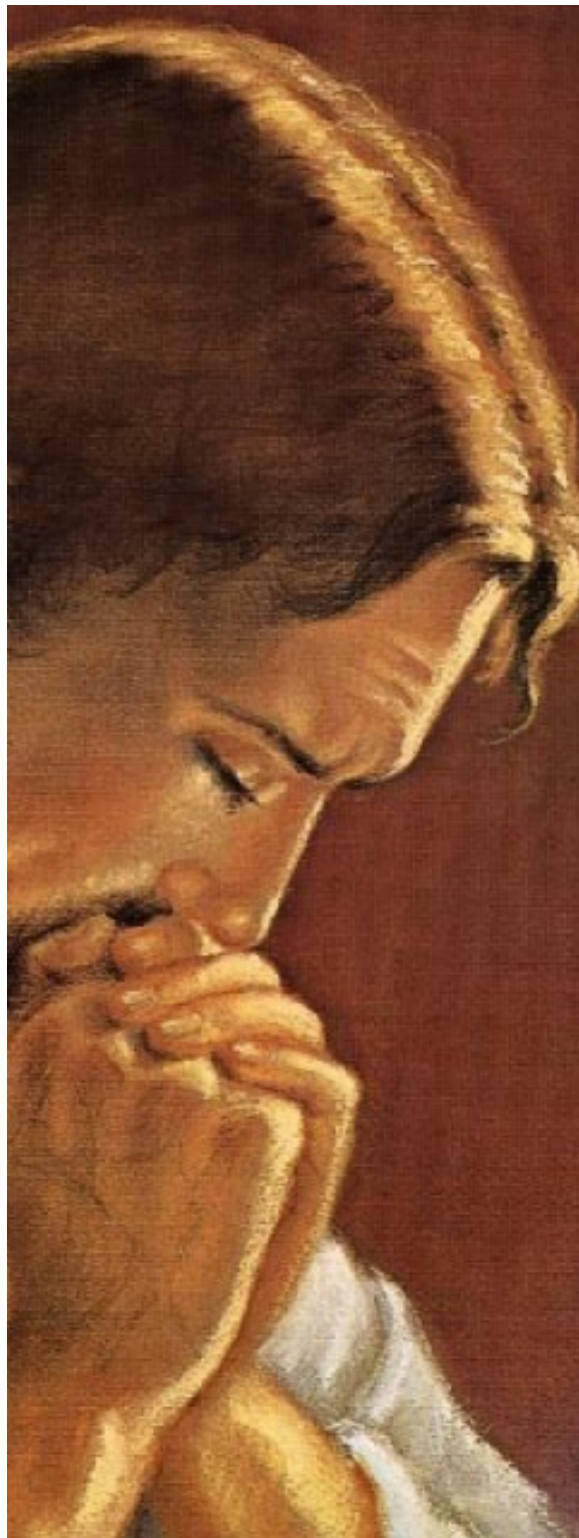
Asking Jesus Anew: "Lord, Teach Us How to Pray"



Fr. Roger J. Landry
Thomas Merton Institute
November 25, 2024

The Indispensable Necessity of Prayer

- The crisis of secularism, living as if God does not exist.
- Sometimes we forget that we have souls, not just bodies and minds.
- We can of course know of God's existence by reason but cannot really come to know God personally without entering into the personal relationship with him in prayer.
- And if we do not really know God, we won't really know ourselves made in his image and likeness.
- Being trained how to pray may be the single most important thing we need to learn in life.



Why Don't People Pray?

- Some don't know how to pray because they have never been taught. They do not know what to say or to think.
- Some don't believe in God or in a God with whom you can converse, who can hear, speak, love and respond.
- Some believe God already knows everything and so they do not see the point of prayer.
- Some have tried to pray but don't seem to get anything out of it.
- Some have tried to pray but have been bored, dry, restless or distracted. They think prayer is a frustrating waste of time.





Why Don't People Pray?

- Some do not think they (or others) have any needs that are beyond human capacity and problem solving. They don't need prayer.
- Some are afraid of admitting their desires, being honest about what they lack and need, of being vulnerable before God and themselves.
- Some are afraid of what God might ask if they pray. They're afraid of being asked to change.
- Some asked God for something and didn't receive it, discouraging them and making them question whether they were "doing it right" or whether "prayer works." They're afraid of being disappointed again.
- Some don't think they have the time to pray or are too tired to pray. Some simply do not get around to it.



Why Don't People Pray?

- Some have been turned off by people who pray and don't want to associate with them or what they claim everyone needs.
- Some think they have to be holy to pray. They do not feel close to God and think themselves sinful or unworthy compared to those they know who pray.
- Some learned how to pray with others and do not now have people with whom to pray.
- Like someone out of shape who doesn't want to put in the hard work to start exercising, some may be afraid of the exertion starting to pray may entail.

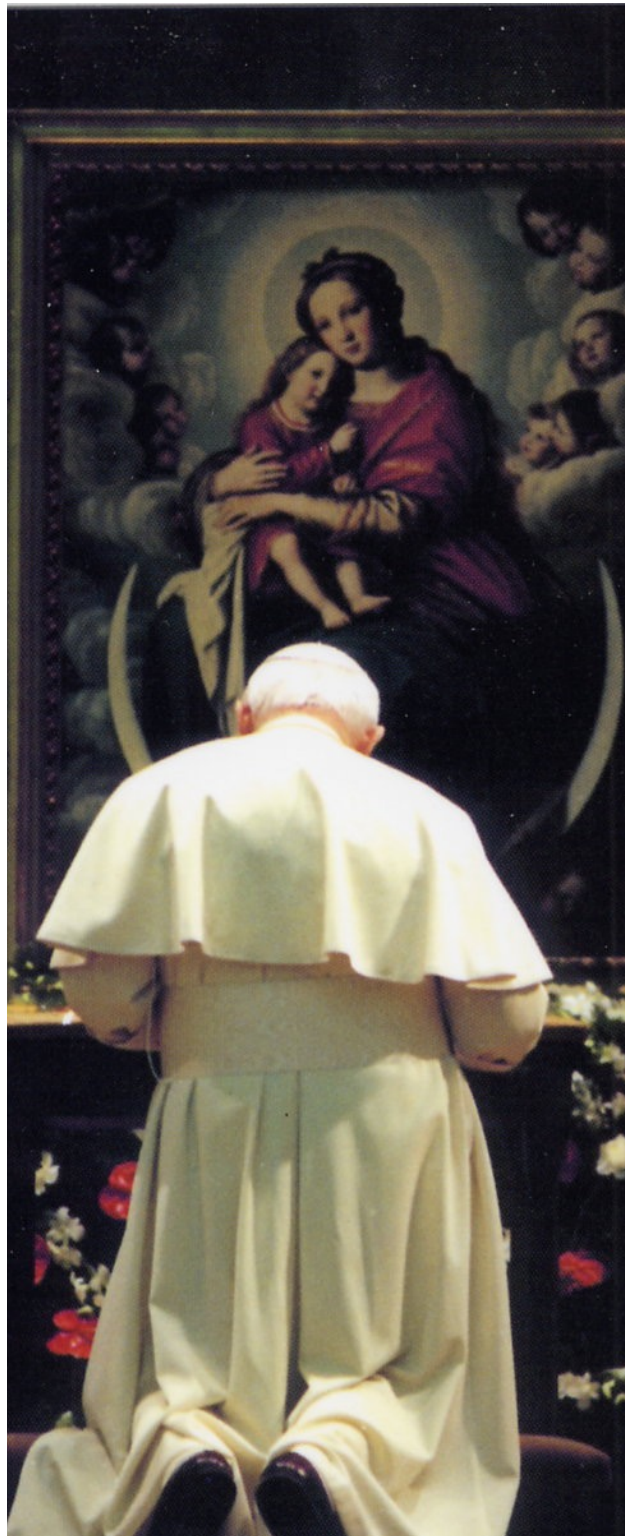
St. John Paul II on the Necessity of Prayer

- “Training in holiness calls for a **Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer.**” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 32-34)
- “Prayer cannot be taken for granted. **We have to learn to pray**, as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: ‘Lord, teach us to pray!’” (Lk 11:1).
- “It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a **shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life.** Especially in the face of the many trials to which today's world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but **Christians at risk.**’ They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of ‘substitutes,’ accepting alternative religious proposals and even indulging in far-fetched superstitions.”



St. John Paul II on the Necessity of Prayer

- “It is essential that education in prayer should become in some way a **key-point of all pastoral planning.**”
- “Prayer develops that conversation with Christ that makes us **his intimate friends:** ‘Abide in me and I in you’ (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very **substance and soul of the Christian life**, and the condition of all true pastoral life.”
- “Learning this Trinitarian shape of **Christian prayer and living it fully**, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life, but also in personal experience, is the secret of a **truly vital Christianity.**”





Making Time for Prayer

- Prioritizing God in life
 - There is a temptation to make God just an “important part” of our life, trying to “squeeze in” time for Him, rather than building our life and centering our time on our relationship with him.
 - The importance of a fixed time for prayer
 - Learning how to say no to other goods to choose the “Pearl of great price.”
 - Avoiding the activist spirituality of Martha in the kitchen, trying to feed Jesus rather than be fed by him. *Fiat versus faciam.*
- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: “If we’re too busy for prayer, we need *two* holy hours.”



The Importance of Silence

- Zechariah's Medicine
- Elijah on Mount Horeb
- Benedict XVI:
 - “The word can only be spoken and heard in silence, outward and inward. **Ours is not an age that fosters recollection;** at times one has the impression that people are afraid of detaching themselves, even for a moment, from the mass media. For this reason, **it is necessary nowadays that the People of God be educated in the value of silence.**” (VD 66).
 - “Silence is the environmental condition most conducive to contemplation, to listening to God and to meditation. The very fact of enjoying silence and **letting ourselves be ‘filled,’** so to speak, **with silence,** disposes us to prayer. ... **God speaks in silence, but we must know how to listen.**” (Aug. 10, 2010)



The Importance of Silence

- Cardinal Robert Sarah in his 2017 book *The Power of Silence*:
 - “God is silence, and the devil is noisy. From the beginning, Satan has sought to mask his lies beneath a deceptive, resonant agitation. ... Our busy, ultra-technological age has made us even sicker. **Noise has become like a drug on which our contemporaries are dependent.** ... I am not afraid to call on all people of good will to enlist **in a form of resistance.** What will become of our world if it cannot find oases of silence?”
 - “**God’s first language is silence....**Everything else is a poor translation. In order to understand this language, we must learn to be silent and to rest in God.”
 - “God is silent. **He waits for our silence to reveal Himself.** Regaining the sense of silence is therefore a priority, an urgent necessity. ... **The true revolution comes from silence;** it leads us toward God and toward others.”
 - “By living with the silent God, and in Him, we ourselves become silent.”



What Prayer Is

- Prayer is an *art* not a *technique*.
- Prayer is fundamentally an exchange of persons, not just words, thoughts or affections. Mutual abiding (Jn 15:4).
- “We do not know how to pray as we ought but the Spirit himself intercedes for us” (Rom 8:26-27).
- The Holy Spirit helps us not by putting words on our lips but transforming us to pray as beloved children of God.
- God is the chief protagonist in prayer, but he desires our cooperation.

Prayer in the Old Testament

- Adam and Eve, the righteous Abel, the trusting Noah.
- Abraham, builds an altar, has faith tested, intercedes for Sodom, welcomes “three guests” at Mamre, and trusts “God will provide the Lamb.”
- Jacob, wrestles with God, showing the battle of prayer and the call to persevere.
- Moses meets God in the burning bush, spends 40 days and nights in prayer, prays in mediation, meets God in the tent, exits with his face aglow.
- Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” The whole OT is a school in which to learn to listen to the word of God.





Prayer in the Old Testament

- **David:** the prayer of a shepherd and poet, the prayer of joy before the ark, the prayer of repentance after sin.
- **Solomon:** the prayer for an understanding heart.
- **Elijah** and the gentle breeze, the prayer for miracles like with the widow of Zarephath, against the priests of Ba'al, "Answer me, O Lord, answer me."
- **The Psalms**, where the Word of God becomes man's prayer. "The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. ...Prayed and fulfilled in Christ, the Psalms are an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church. They are suitable for men of every condition and time" (CCC 2596-7).



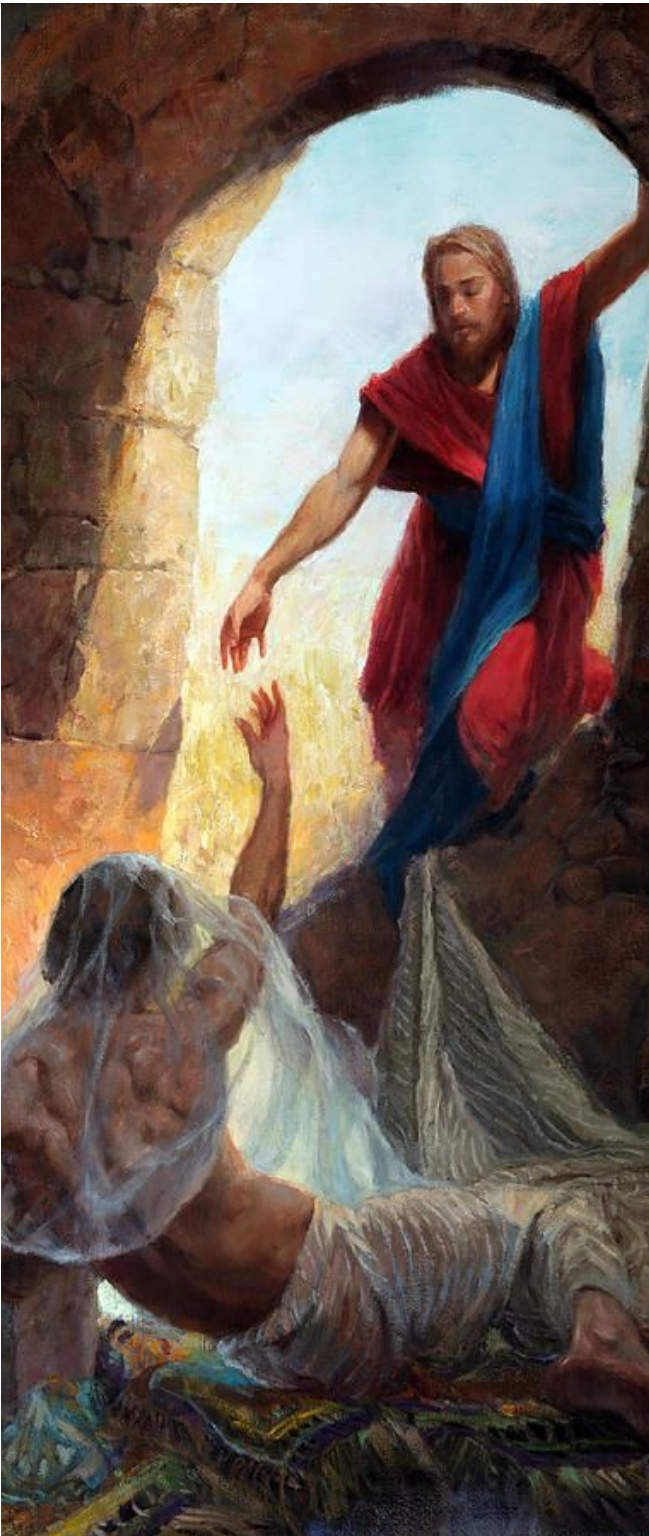
Learning to Pray from Jesus

- “He was praying in a certain place and when he had ceased, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” (Lk 11:1)
- Jesus came from heaven to earth to instruct us to pray and to teach us how to receive and respond to the Father’s love.
- Jesus teaches us to pray through:
 - His example of prayer
 - His actual recorded prayers in the Gospels
 - What he reveals to us about the proper dispositions needed for prayer
 - What he reveals to us in the *Our Father*



Jesus' Example of Prayer

- Prayer was something Jesus was always doing.
 - Taking himself apart in solitude, at night or early in the morning, apart from others like on mountains, to have quiet time with the Father.
 - We see him praying
 - For 40 days in the Desert
 - Before calling the 12 apostles
 - Before his Transfiguration
 - Before several of his miracles, like healing the deaf mute, raising Lazarus from the dead, or the multiplication of loaves and fish.
 - During the Last Supper
 - In the Garden of Gethsemane
 - On the Cross
- In his prayer, he says to us, “Follow me!”



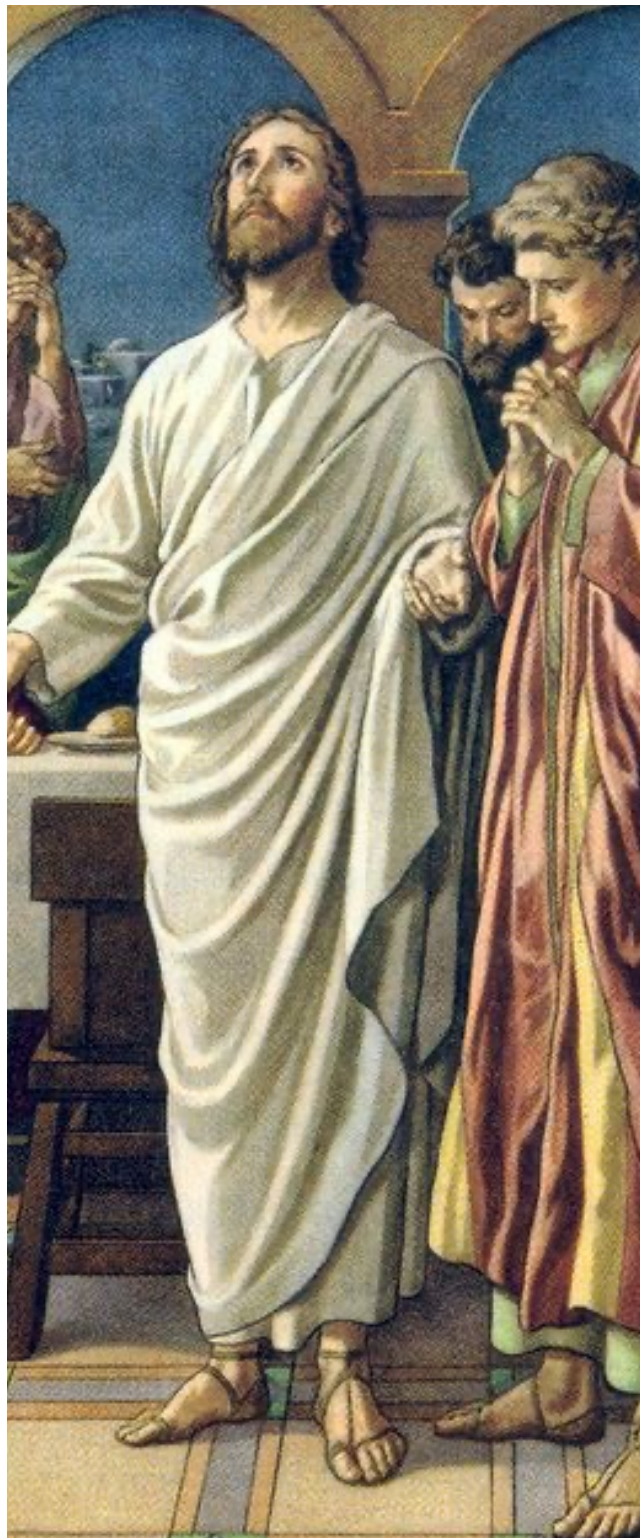
Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- For the most part, we don't know the content of Jesus' vital prayer life. Often he prayed in silence or with sighs:
 - Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." (Mk 7:34)
 - Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation" (Mk 8:12)
- But some of his prayers have been recorded by the evangelists:



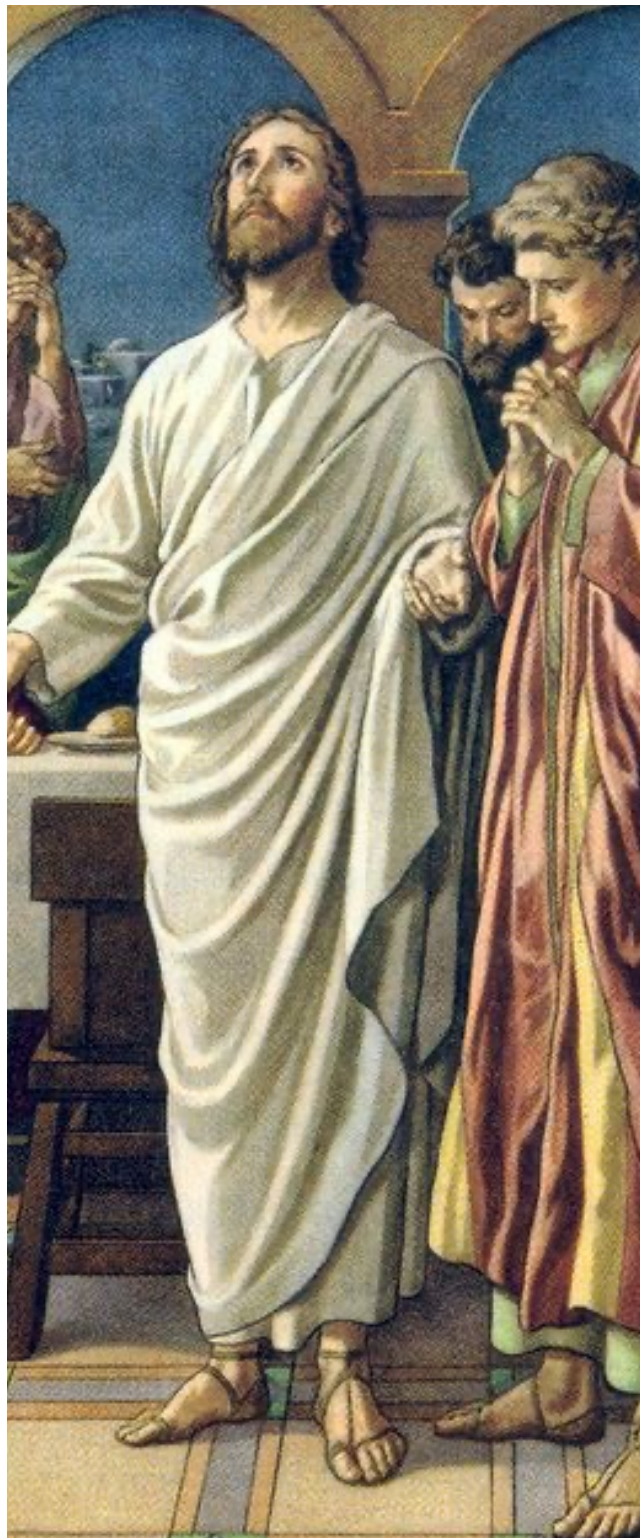
Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- Praising the Father for revealing the truths of the kingdom to the childlike (Mt 11:25-28)
 - At that time Jesus said in reply, “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.
- Asking the Father for the miracle of raising Lazarus on the fourth day (Jn 11:41-43)
 - Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”



Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- Jesus' great priestly prayer (Jn 17:1-26)
 - “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you. ... I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.”
 - “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and ... I have been glorified in them.
 - “Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are.”



Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- **Jesus' great priestly prayer (Jn 17:1-26)**
 - “I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one.”
 - “Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth.”
 - “I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me... and that you loved them even as you loved me.”
 - “I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me.”

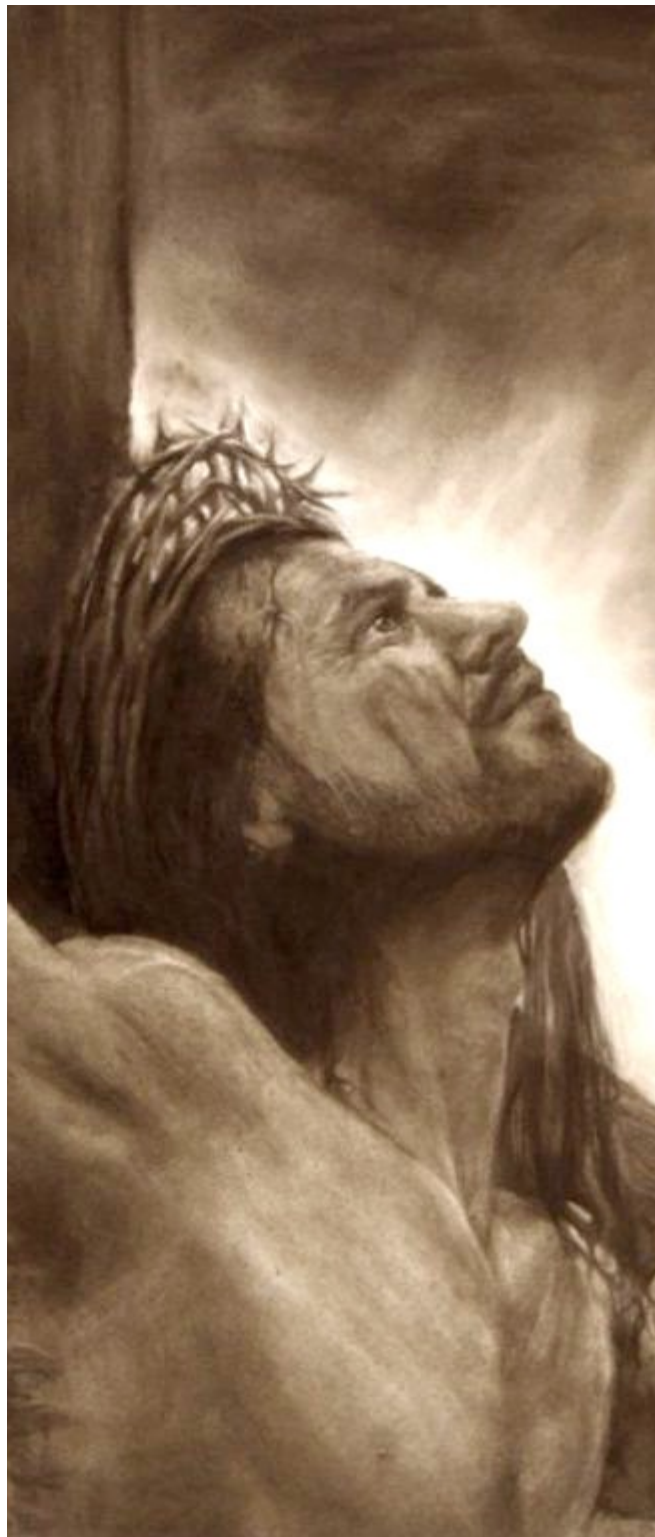
Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- Prayer to do the Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-45)
 - Three times: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will."
 - When he returned to his disciples, he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."



Jesus' Recorded Prayers

- Prayers from the Cross
 - Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).
 - At three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which is translated, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34, citing Ps 22)
 - Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”; and when he had said this, he breathed his last (Lk 23:46).





Pope Francis on Jesus' Prayer

- *Pope Francis' Nov. 4, 2020 Catechesis:*
“From Jesus' example we can derive some *characteristics of Christian prayer*”:
 - **Primacy:** it is *the first desire of the day*, something that is practiced at dawn, before the world awakens.
 - **Insistence:** Jesus himself says to us: knock, knock, knock. Prayer is not sporadic but disciplined.
 - **Solitude:** Those who pray do not escape from the world, but prefer deserted places and silence, where God speaks.
 - **Focused on God's will:** “Not my will, but yours be done,” as one entrusts oneself to the will of the Father.

Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- To the Father, as beloved children confident in the Father's knowledge and love.
 - “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?”
 - “Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wildflowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?”



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- To the Father, as beloved children confident in the Father's knowledge and love.
 - “So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:25-33)
 - “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him” (Mt 7:7-11)



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- Helped by the Holy Spirit
 - [*Like Jesus himself*] At that very moment he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I give you praise, Father...” (Lk 10:20)
 - “When they lead you away and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say. But say whatever will be given to you at that hour. For it will not be you who are speaking but the Holy Spirit” (Mk 13:11)
 - “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth” (Jn 14:16-17)
 - “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name – he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you” (Jn 14:26)
 - “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me” (Jn 15:26)



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

○ Helped by the Holy Spirit

- “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you” (Jn 16:12)
- He enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ... All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:4-5, 14)
- “When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim” (Acts 2:1-4)



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- In his name — asking together with him.
 - “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it” (Jn 14:13).
 - “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you” (Jn 15:16)
 - “Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. I have told you this in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father. On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God” (Jn 16:23-6).
 - “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20).



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

○ Faith


- Jesus said to him, “Everything is possible to one who has faith”(Mk 9:23)
- “Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Mt 17:20).
- Jesus said to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive” (Mt 21:21-22).
- Then he touched [the blind men’s] eyes and said, “Let it be done for you according to your faith” (Mt 9:29).
- Then Jesus said to her in reply, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed from that hour” (Mt 15:28).
- “I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours” (Mk 11:24)



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer


- Humility and repentance
 - “Humility is the foundation of prayer” (CCC 2559)
 - “Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity – greedy, dishonest, adulterous – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:9-14)





Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- Conversion of heart
 - “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23)
 - “I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust” (Mt 5:44)
 - “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions” (Mt 6:14).



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- **Rectitude of intention**
 - “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you” (Mt 6:5-6)
 - “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be” (Mt 6:21)
 - “Seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:32)

- **Sincerity**
 - “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words” (Mt 6:7).

Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

○ Perseverance

- Jesus said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, “Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,’ and he says in reply from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.’”
- “I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.
- “And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened” (Lk 11:5-10).



Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

○ Perseverance

- Then Jesus told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being.
- And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.'
- For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, "While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me."
- The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk18:1-8)





Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

- **Vigilance**
 - “Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come” (Mt 24:42)
 - “Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Mt 25:1-13)
 - “Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt 26:41)

- **Union with the will of God**
 - “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21)
 - Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work” (Jn 4:34)

Jesus' Revelation about the Attributes of Christian Prayer

○ Jesus also hears our prayer

- St. Augustine wonderfully summarizes the three dimensions of Jesus' prayer: "He prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our Head, and is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore, let us acknowledge our voice in him and his in us."
- CCC 2616: "Prayer to Jesus is answered by him already during his ministry, through signs that anticipate the power of his death and Resurrection: Jesus hears the prayer of faith, expressed in words (the leper, Jairus, the Canaanite woman, the good thief) or in silence (the bearers of the paralytic, the woman with a hemorrhage who touches his clothes, the tears and ointment of the sinful woman). The urgent request of the blind men, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David' or 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' has been renewed in the traditional prayer to Jesus known as the Jesus Prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!' Healing infirmities or forgiving sins, Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith: 'Your faith has made you well; go in peace.'



What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- Introduction
 - Direct response to petition to teach us to pray
 - Tertullian: The Our Father is a “summary of the whole Gospel”
 - Does not show us a formula – hence the different versions in Matthew and Luke – but it does reveal a sequence of what we should be desiring most in prayer. The first three draw us to the glory of the Father and the final four commend our most basic needs to him.
 - “We dare to say!” – Filial boldness. Many sincere people hesitate because they wonder whether they can actually say it!
 - The Holy Spirit helps us to cry out “Abba, Father”




What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- God and us
 - “Father” – all prayer is directed to him. We are his beloved adopted children. The name is already praise!
 - “Our” – We pray together in communion with the whole Church. “Where two or more are gathered.” We pray in spite of sad divisions. Our petitions exclude no one and can help overcome divisions.




What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer


- “Who Art in Heaven” – Heaven is less a place than a way of being. We seek to be with him as citizens of heaven. He is our true homeland.
- “Hallowed by thy name” – “Hallow” is not causative but implored. God’s name is holy and we give witness to that holiness through holiness of life, so that others in seeing our good deeds may glorify him.




Our Father who art in
heaven, hallowed be thy
name, thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth
as it is in heaven. Give us
this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our tres-
passes, as we forgive them
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And lead us not into temp-
tation, but deliver us from
evil. Amen.



What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer



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- “Thy kingdom come” – Jesus’ whole preaching was about the Kingdom of God’s being at hand and growing. This phrase refers to the definitive coming but also spurs us to bring the values of the kingdom to this world.
- “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” – The way we enter God’s kingdom and hallow his name is through doing his will, loving him and others. He has made known to us the mystery of his will and we echo Jesus’ “Not my will but yours be done.” We want to fulfill his plan of salvation in the world. God’s family is constituted by those who do the will of the Father in heaven.



What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- Petitions regarding ourselves and others
 - “Give us this day our *epiousios* bread”
 - “Give us” comes from children who trust in his providence. God’s generosity in providing for us not just material food but his Word (“man does not live on bread alone”) and the Eucharist, each day.
 - “Forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven...” – This is an astonishing prayer for mercy, opened to receive it through our being merciful like the Father. We must forgive our enemies from our heart.



What Jesus Teaches Us in the Lord's Prayer

- Petitions regarding ourselves and others
 - “Lead us not into temptation” – We’re asking for the strength to remain faithful when tempted in battle, to choose God.
 - “Deliver us from [the] evil [one]” – We ask for protection from the devil, his empty promises and evil works. It’s a prayer for final perseverance.



Learning Prayer through Mary

- Mary taught the early Church how to pray.
- Was continuously overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.
- Woman of faith – “Blessed are you who believed”
- Woman of Silence.
- Woman of the Word with contemplative memory
 - Synthesizes Scripture, as we see in her *Magnificat*.
 - “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19,51).
 - The spirituality of the *ancilla Domini* and *fiat*.
- Woman who asks questions: “How can this be?”
- Woman of intercessory prayer: she goes to Jesus directly as in Cana.
- We seek to pray in communion with her. The importance of the Rosary, the *Angelus*, the *Memorare*.



Forms of Prayer

- This refers to the “content” of our prayer. Just as in human conversations, we’ll *praise* others if they’ve done something well, we’ll *thank* others for kindnesses, we’ll *ask for their forgiveness* if we’ve hurt them in any way, we’ll *ask them for things* they might be able to help us or others with. It’s similar with God.

- Our conversation with God, from our end, can take the form of:
 - **Praising, adoring and blessing** Him for who He is
 - **Thanking** Him for his abundant gifts to us, to others, to the world
 - Sorrowfully **begging his forgiveness** for our sins and those of others.
 - **Interceding** with him for what others need
 - **Petitioning** him for what we need

Expressions of Prayer

- This refers to the actual “structure” that guides our prayer with the Lord. There are essentially three traditional expressions of prayer:
 - **Vocal prayer** – When we pray with the words given to us by others. *Mens concordet voci*. Need to align our minds to what our words say. We begin with *words*.
 - **Meditation** – When we “chew” on particular texts or items, breaking them down to understand them. We begin with *thoughts*. The two most famous methods are:
 - St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Compositio Locis*.
 - The Benedictine *Lectio Divina*
 - **Contemplation** – When, helped by God, we pray fundamentally from the heart through *affections*. It’s a gaze fixed on God, a silent love, by which God gives an interior knowledge.





Fonts of Prayer

- This refers to the raw materials we use to seek, find, love, obey and become more like God.
- There are several wells that enable us to drink of the Spirit:
 - **The Word of God**
 - **The Liturgy of the Church**
 - The theological virtues (**faith, hope and love**) by which “God speaks” in human behavior.
 - **Day-to-Day life**, the events that occur during the day, bringing them to the Lord of history.



Guides of Prayer

- This refers to those who can teach us to pray better. There are several:
 - The saints
 - The spiritualities and charisms – Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, Salesian, Opus Dei, etc. – that have been handed on.
 - The Christian **family**, as a domestic church
 - Ordained **Ministers**
 - **Religious** Fathers, Sisters, Brothers
 - Catechists
 - Spiritual directors
 - Prayer Groups



Prayer To, Through, With and In The Eucharistic Jesus

- US Bishops' National Eucharistic Revival (2022-25).
 - Crisis in Eucharistic faith and practice.
 - Diocesan, Parish, National and Mission phases. But most important is *personal* phase.
- Learning to Pray the Mass
 - Preparation and desire
 - *Ars Celebrandi* – truly praying the Mass.
 - Listening to Jesus speak
 - Adoring Jesus – *proskinesis* and *ad-oratio*
 - Receiving Jesus with reverential love
 - Thanksgiving
 - Leaving transformed
 - Living a Eucharistic Life
 - Eucharistic frequency
 - Source and Summit, Root and Center?
 - Can we live without the Eucharistic Jesus?



Prayer To, Through, With and In The Eucharistic Jesus

- Learning to Pray before Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration
 - Do we really believe it's Jesus?
 - Can we spend an "hour" – or some time – with him? (Mt 26:40). He wants to teach us to pray!
 - Jesus' words to St. Margaret Mary.
 - We can pray all five forms of prayer, all three expressions, various fonts, together with guides.
 - Recent books like *In Sinu Iesu* and St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia's *The Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle*.

- Learning to adore Jesus within and become walking monstrances
 - Jesus comes to abide within us as in a Temple. "Glorify God in your body!" (1 Cor 6:20).
 - Like Mary at the Visitation, we are privileged to take the Eucharistic Jesus out to the world.
 - We can show the difference the Eucharist makes. Is receiving Jesus in the Eucharist more powerful than a medical prescription?



Obstacles to Prayer

- **Dryness**
- **Distractions**, worldly cares and anxieties, pleasures
- **Discouragement**, normally when we feel that our prayers haven't been heard and we're a failure.
- **Fear** of what God might ask and trying therefore to control the conversation with God.
- **Lack of faith**
- **Lack of perseverance. Acedia.**
- **Lack of practical love for God** in living the Christian life.

FOREWORD BY MATTHEW KELLY

Plan of Life

HABITS
TO HELP
YOU GROW
CLOSER
TO GOD

ROGER J. LANDRY



Plan of Life

- In 2018, I wrote a book to try to help busy people integrate pray into their life so that they might become an “existence made prayer” and experience the secret of a “truly vital Christianity.”
- I wrote the book to help people learn habits and practices so that they might be able to “pray always without losing heart,” by learning how to keep awareness of God throughout the day, to abide in him and allow God to abide in them (Jn 15:4).
- It may be of help to you as you try to integrate a vibrant life into the busy years of medical school, residency, and medical practice.
- The book is divided into two parts: the “basics” and “beyond the basics.”

FOREWORD BY MATTHEW KELLY

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Plan of Life

- Here are the 12 basics:

The Holy Spirit	Heroic moment	Morning Offering	General Exam
Regular Prayer	Sacred Scripture	Keeping Holy the Lord's Day	Frequent Confession
Adoration	Charity	Holy Week	Rosary

- Then I focused on the following 16 practices in "Beyond the Basics":

Daily Mass	Spiritual Communion	<i>Angelus</i> or <i>Regina Caeli</i>	<i>Memorare</i>
Saturday devotions to Mary	Virtue of Penance	Fasting	Order and Organization
Particular Exam	Work	Study	Spiritual Reading
Retreats and Days of Recollection	Acts of the Heart: Faith, Hope, Love, Presence of God, Divine Filiation, Thanksgiving, Atonement	Aspirations	Christian Joy



Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts. You may also follow postings of articles, homilies and teachings on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

You can also subscribe to the podcast of daily homilies, lectures and talks through Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry



Most Recent Homilies

God's Comfort and the Conversion Required to Receive It, Second Sunday of Advent (B), December 6, 2020

Accepting, Following and Announcing Jesus without Offense, Second Sunday of Advent (EF), December 6, 2020

Walking the Way of the Kingdom Jesus Indicates, First Saturday of Advent, December 5, 2020

Running to Meet Our Light, Strength and Salvation, First Friday of Advent, December 4, 2020

Listening to and Acting on the Long Awaited One's Words, First Thursday of Advent, December 3, 2020

Going Hungry to Meet Christ in a Three-Fold Banquet, First Wednesday of Advent, December 2, 2020

Childlike Eyes to See, First Tuesday of Advent, December 1, 2020

Singing the Song of the Lamb, 34th Wednesday (II), November 25, 2020

Turning to the Lord Who Comes to Judge the Earth, 34th Tuesday (II), November 24, 2020

Following the King and Lamb Wherever He Goes, 34th Monday (II), November 23, 2020

Most Recent Articles

Our Duty and Salvation, The Anchor, November 27, 2020

Living the Reality of the Kingdom of Christ, National Catholic Register, November 19, 2020

The Knights Our Age Needs, The Anchor, November 13, 2020

Remembering Andrew Walther, November 7, 2020

Just a Parish Priest, The Anchor, October 30, 2020

Coming to Know the Original Three-Dimensional Carlo Acutis, The Anchor, October 16, 2020

A Good Shepherd Full of Christian and Priestly Virtues, The Pilot, October 5, 2020

Returning to the Sacrament of Divine Love, The Anchor, September 18, 2020

The Pastoral Malpractice of Liturgical Abuse, The Anchor, September 4, 2020

The Chosen, The Anchor, August 21, 2020

Most Recent Talks

Receiving the Lord Jesus as Mary and Joseph, Advent Day of Recollection for the Leonine Forum, December 5, 2020

Novena in Preparation for the Immaculate Conception, Leonine Forum, November 28 to December 8, 2020

Blessed Michael McGivney and the Call to Holiness, McGivney Festival Young Adult Prayer Vigil, October 31, 2020

Apprenticeship in the Art of Living, Duc in Altum Virtual Schools Summit, October 28-30, 2020

Preaching on Marital Love and Accompanying Couples toward the Full Embrace of the Church's Teaching, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020

The Divorced and Remarried, Challenges and Triumphs in Pastoral Care, Diocese of Gary Clergy Convocation, October 20, 2020

The Heart of the New Evangelization: Meeting, Knowing and Loving Jesus Back, New Zealand Evangelion's In his Name Virtual Conference, October 10-11, 2020

Christian Anthropology: The Human Person in the Modern World, Leonine Forum Opening Lecture, October 8, 2020

Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching, UNSRC Catholic Club, August 27, 2020

Making Better Confessions, Catholic Information Conference, July 24, 2020

For the Slides of this Talk

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The Art of Prayer

Asking Jesus Anew: "Lord, Teach Us How to Pray"

Questions?

Fr. Roger J. Landry
Thomas Merton Institute
November 25, 2024