

Inquiry Session: Prayer

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Reflect on Your Experience

As much as we enjoy watching TV, reading the newspaper or a good book, or listening to our favorite music, there are times when, because of a particular situation or development in life, we need quiet time and a place to hold an inner dialogue of the heart.

For Reflection . . .

How do you clear a space for your own inner dialogue? Where are the places you go to listen to your heart?

Hear the Good News About Prayer

We can talk with God. This communication—when we raise our mind and heart to God—is called prayer. It is similar to a friend who speaks with another friend. Prayer does not always involve spoken words recited from memory, such as the Lord's Prayer or the Hail Mary. Prayer may very well be a conversation that takes place from the core and very depths of our being—what Sacred Scripture describes poetically as our *heart*.

Prayer can be a profound praise of God, or prayer can involve requesting good things from God. These requests in prayer can be made for ourselves or on behalf of another. Prayer can be a wordless cry of love, a deep feeling, or a surge of joy in the presence of the Holy One.

A common element in all types of prayer is that we are called to set aside pride and willfulness. When we approach God in humility, we are filled by the Lord's graciousness.

Read the Word of God

1 Samuel 3:1-11

(The call to listen)

Mark 1:35

(Jesus withdraws in solitude to pray)

Luke 11:9-13

(Asking and receiving in prayer)

Respond Through Action

Jesus promises that God hears our prayer and grants us what we truly need. Even when we underestimate ourselves, or God, and believe that what we have received in response to prayer is silence, the truth is that our prayer is heard and answered.

For Reflection . . .

What is your biggest need right now? How is God with you in that need? How is he responding and guiding you?

Witness to the Gospel

**SAINT TERESA OF ÁVILA
(TERESA OF JESUS)
1515–1582**

As a very young woman, Teresa was given permission to join the Carmelite Order as a nun. Eventually she pursued a stricter observance of the Carmelite life, establishing sixteen other convents. Teresa's spiritual maturity was evident even to her contemporaries. She authored several classics of the Christian life. In one she wrote, "God is the center of the soul." In another work she wrote, "Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us." Saint Teresa's feast day is celebrated on October 15.