

God's Story, Our Story

Lesson 6: Prayer (CCC 2559-2742)

Our Response to God's Revelation



"Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours.
God thirsts that we may thirst for him." (CCC 2560)

CCC 2558-65

1. Prayer is:

- a. *Our response* to God's revelation.
- b. *Raising one's mind and heart to God.*
- c. *Asking good things* from God.
- d. *Living communion* with God our good Father.
- e. In the context of God's *covenant* with mankind.

CCC 2559, 2562

2. Prayer must come *from the heart*, grounded in *honesty* and *humility*. "Man is a beggar before God."

CCC 2566-7

3. *Every man has a desire for his Creator*, for man is made for God and is in search of Him. Even if man forgets God or hides from Him, God calls to each person to prayer.

Gen 3:8

4. Prayer is *always God's initiative*. Even man's desire to pray is in response to His first loving and calling man.

Gen 4:26, 5:24, 6:9,
8:20-9:17

5. Before the fall, man enjoyed *full communion with God*.

Gen 18, 22

6. After the fall, prayer takes on different forms: *offering sacrifices, calling upon the name of the Lord, and walking with God*, as seen in the lives of Abel, Enosh, Enoch, and Noah.

Gen 28:10-22; Gen
32:24-30, CCC 2573

7. Abraham submitted to God and obeyed him; he erected altars, spoke to God, and interceded for Sodom; his faith was tested in being asked to sacrifice his son.

CCC 2575-77, Ex 3;
Ex 33:11; Num 12:3;
Ex 31:1-34:9

8. Jacob experienced prayer as a battle and test of perseverance.

CCC 2578
1 Sam 3:9-10, 12:23
2 Sam 7:18-24
1 Kings 10:61
CCC 2579-80
2 Chron 7:14

9. Moses encountered God in the burning bush, who revealed to him His name. Moses, a humble man, spoke to God face to face, and interceded for his people.

CCC 2581, 2584

10. Prayer in *God's Dwelling*:

- a. The prayer of Israel flourished in the tabernacle/temple.
- b. *King David* is a king "after God's own heart," because he prays with humility, fidelity, joy, trust, and love.
- c. Solomon built the Temple of Jerusalem as a house of prayer for all nations.

CCC 2587

11. The *Prophets*, whose mission was to educate the people in faith and lead them to conversion of heart, were nourished by their prayerful encounters with God.

12. *The Psalms* are a masterwork of prayer. They recall God's marvelous deeds while expressing the heart of the psalmist. The Psalter is the book in which the Word of God becomes man's prayer.

<p>CCC 2599-2602</p> <p>Mt 6:5-7 Mt 5:23-26, 6:14-15</p> <p>Lk 18:9-14 Lk 11:5-13 Lk 18:1-8</p> <p>CCC 1430, cf. Ps 51 CCC 2628-43</p> <p>CCC 2650</p> <p>CCC 2700-2719</p> <p>CCC 2725</p> <p>CCC 2728, 2734, 2737, 2742</p>	<p>13. <i>Jesus</i> taught us and showed us how to pray in his life and teachings. His own life of prayer was the perfect model of intimacy and communion with the Father.</p> <p>14. Conditions for effective prayer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conversion of heart, forgiving others Humility: The Pharisee and the tax collector. Faith, filial boldness and confidence Patience and perseverance. The importunate friend and the importunate widow. <p>15. <i>Six Forms of prayer</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Contrition</i> is interior repentance and conversion of heart. <i>Petition</i> is asking God to answer our needs. <i>Intercession</i> is asking on behalf of another. <i>Thanksgiving</i> is thanking God for His works. <i>Praise</i> lauds God for His own sake, because HE IS. <i>Adoration</i> exalts the greatness of God in silence. <p>16. Prayer cannot only be spontaneous: one must <i>learn</i> how to pray. <i>Sources of Prayer</i> include Scripture, the Psalter, liturgy, communal prayer, and the prayers of the saints.</p> <p>17. One should pray in <i>faith</i> and <i>hope</i>, with <i>love</i> as both the source and goal of prayer.</p> <p>18. Prayer can be expressed in <i>vocal prayer, meditation</i> and <i>contemplation</i>.</p> <p>19. Prayer is a <i>battle</i> that requires <i>effort</i>. <i>Difficulties and temptations in prayer</i> include: distraction, dryness, lack of faith, and acedia (lax ascetical practice, carelessness of heart).</p> <p>20. Prayer is a <i>vital necessity</i> for every person and should be sought in humility, trust, love, and perseverance.</p>
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Questions for Discussion

- Who initiates the prayerful encounter between man and God?
- What is more important, to pray written prayers, or to spontaneously pray from the heart?
- What did Jesus teach about prayer, by word and by example?
- What are some conditions for our prayer to be heard?
- What are some forms of prayer?
- What are some sources of prayer?
- Is prayer easy? Is it necessary? Why?
- Name some obstacles to prayer. How can we overcome these obstacles?