

What is Prayer?

“The Lord tells us: ‘The first task in life is this: prayer.’ ~Pope Francis, Homily

Trinitarian Love

- The Trinity is three persons with one essence, selflessly giving one to another. All creation springs forth as the fruit of this communion.
- In the Garden man shared in this divine life, but lost it at the fall. Jesus came to restore us to communion with the divine, so now we get to share in the divine life, through participation in Trinitarian love.

Relationship

- Relationship is about giving and receiving.
- Relationships can be very difficult or life changing because they change us.

What is Prayer?

- Prayer is our participation in this divine life. It’s in personal prayer and the sacraments that we receive divine life and become like Jesus. We receive love and become love.
- If we want the sacraments to be transformative, we need personal prayer.
- “In the new covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with His Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit.” CCC 2565
- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI at World Youth Day 2008 said that “Prayer is pure receptivity to God’s grace...”
- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in “A School of Prayer” said, “Of course when we speak of prayer...it is necessary to bear in mind that it is an inner attitude before being a series of practices and formulas, a manner of being in God’s presence before performing acts or worship or speaking words.”
- “Humility is the foundation of prayer.” CCC 2559
- Humility = Truth. If we come to God in humility, we come to him in truth, just as we are in total openness and vulnerability.
- Acknowledge, Relate, Receive, Respond

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day.” ~Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium

Relational Prayer

- **Acknowledge**-In order to be known and loved by God, we must become aware of what is happening in our hearts. At any given moment we all have various thoughts, feelings, and desires swirling around. Some of these are good and holy, others are sinful and ugly. We begin prayer by slowing down and noticing what is happening inside of us. We don't need to analyze or fix, just become aware.
- **Relate**-Once we become aware of what is stirring in our hearts, we need to honestly relate these things to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We need to honestly and faithfully entrust our thoughts, feelings, and desires to God. This can be difficult because makes real all that is moving inside of us, and it can be like going into a dark room telling all our deepest movements without knowing if anyone is there or not.
- **Receive**-We are all dependent beings who receive all we have and are as a free gift of God's grace and love. After we have related our thoughts, feelings, and desires, we remain in a position of receptivity, to wait on God to give us what we have asked for or need. It could be a word of affirmation, an experience of His presence, or a call to conversion. Receptivity is the hallmark of relationship with God. We all have a desire to "do" for God, but in truth He is the "doer" and we are to receive Him and His love as beloved sons and daughters.
- **Respond**-Every experience of love from God calls for a response from us. We are to love God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves. God gives us Himself in love that we might love him with all our hearts, and give His love to our neighbors. This response of love is made in concrete ways. Maybe we are called to share our faith in a specific way, or open up at a deeper level of intimacy with our spouse or a friend. There are many ways that God may prompt us to respond to His love, and it is our duty to do so.

