



LESSON TEN

Christian Prayer: God Invites Us into Relationship

Opening Prayer

*Lord, you spoke to Elijah not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire
but in a still small voice.*

*As we begin this time of learning and prayer,
quiet our hearts, calm our distractions,
and teach us to listen for your voice.*

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

Amen.



Lesson Objectives:

- ❖ Learn how prayer is not merely a helpful practice, but the essential expression of our identity as sons and daughters of God—the lifeblood of our relationship with him.
- ❖ Recognize the purposes of prayer and its various forms (vocal, meditative, contemplative) and how each draws the soul deeper into union with God.
- ❖ Understand that Jesus left us the Our Father as an authentic school of prayer.
- ❖ Begin a daily routine of prayer, meditating on Scripture, and drawing from the numerous prayers of the Church.

BURNING QUESTIONS

- ❖ If God is real, why doesn't he just speak to everyone directly?

This question reveals a desire for personal friendship with God. Is that something you desire? Have you ever sensed God speaking to you in prayer?

- ❖ Catholics pray many prewritten or memorized prayers, but do we have to use these? Can't I just talk to Jesus?

Different people pray in different ways. Some are comfortable with memorized prayers; others prefer spontaneous conversation. What has your own experience with prayer been?

St. Teresa of Ávila

Feast Day: October 15

Lived: March 28, 1515 – October 15, 1582 · Ávila, Spain · Patron of Headaches, Sick people, Spain

Teresa of Ávila was a mystic, reformer, and Doctor of the Church. She became a Carmelite nun at twenty, but for years she struggled with worldly distractions. In her forties, a powerful encounter with the suffering Christ produced a powerful conversion. After that, she still battled with dryness and distraction, but persevered, arriving at a deep abiding union with God. She wrote, “It is not so essential to think much as to love much.” She authored two masterworks of Catholic spirituality that teach the soul to ascend from vocal prayer to the heights of contemplative union: *The Interior Castle* and *The Way of Perfection*.



“Prayer ... is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”

St. Teresa of Ávila

Prayer Is a Relationship

Why Do We Pray?

From our first breath we long to be seen, known, loved, and secure. The *Catechism* teaches that “man is by nature and vocation a religious being” (CCC 44) and that this longing for God can ultimately be satisfied only in relationship with him. “Prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father” (CCC 2565). It is not a technique or a religious duty but communion with the living God who knows us completely and loves us unconditionally.

The Battle for Prayer

The *Catechism* names three constant temptations against prayer: distraction, dryness, and discouragement. Modern life—busy, overscheduled, oriented toward noise—works against the stillness prayer requires. The saints do not promise that prayer will always feel rewarding; they insist it must be persevered in regardless.

“Prayer is nothing else than union with God. When the heart is pure and united with God it is consoled and filled with sweetness.”

St. John Vianney

Movements and Expressions of Prayer

Movements

The Christian tradition recognizes four movements of prayer: Adoration—praising God for who he is, not what he gives; Contrition—honestly acknowledging sin and our need for mercy; Thanksgiving—giving thanks for specific gifts and graces; Petition—bringing our needs and those of others before God. These are not a rigid formula. They are the natural movements of a heart in honest conversation with God.

Expressions

Vocal prayer expresses what is already in the heart through words—the Our Father, the Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours. Meditation uses Scripture, sacred reading, or images to engage the mind and will. Contemplation is wordless prayer, resting in God’s loving presence—not something we achieve but something we receive.

“I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men.”

1 Timothy 2:1

The Perfect Prayer

Given by Jesus

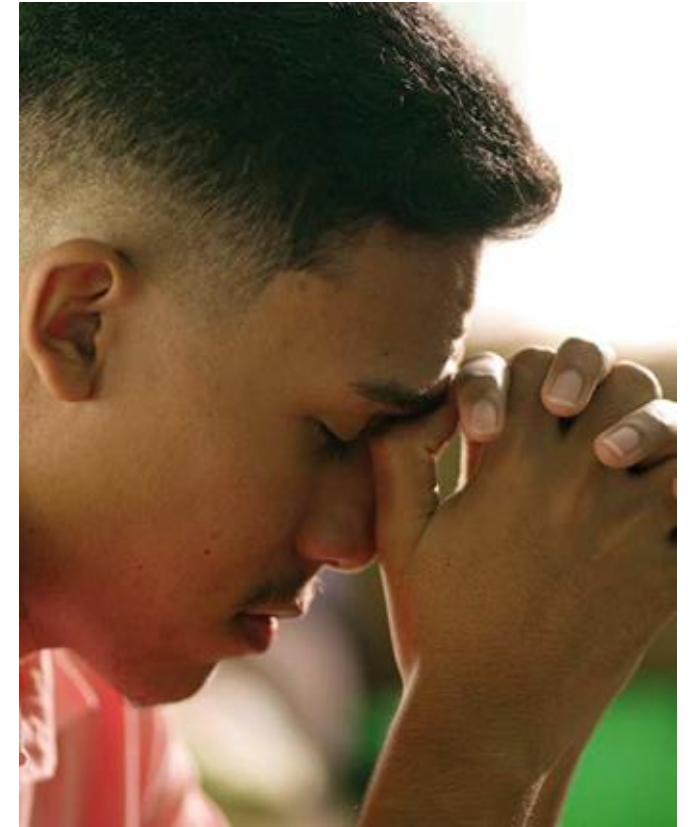
When the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1), he gave them the Our Father, the perfect prayer, which the Church has prayed without ceasing in every century. It contains every petition the human heart could make and orders them rightly toward God.

Committing to Pray

Prayer doesn’t happen by coincidence; it needs to be intentionally pursued if we want to make it part of our lives. Creating a specific space for it, scheduling time for it, and recognizing the fruits it brings throughout the day not only demonstrates that we care but that we need it. At first, it might feel difficult or messy, but over time, it becomes easier.

“Pray constantly.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17





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Prayer:
An Invitation
into Relationship

Discussion Questions

- ❖ If we understand prayer as an intimate relationship rather than a religious duty, how would it change the way we approach daily prayer? What obstacles might prevent this shift?
- ❖ How does asking Mary to intercede for us differ from praying directly to God?
- ❖ How could a structured daily prayer rhythm help your spiritual life? What challenges or benefits would it bring?

Faith and Fun

Which saint gave the Church the prayer devotion called the Chaplet of Divine Mercy?

a. St. Maria Faustina Kowalska

b. St. John Paul II

c. St. Padre Pio

d. St. Teresa of Ávila

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St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun, recorded in her diary *Divine Mercy in My Soul* the visions she received of Jesus, who asked for the painting of the Divine Mercy image and the composition of the Chaplet. Jesus promised that those who pray it, especially at the hour of death, would receive great mercy.



“Glory to You, O Lord”

The Gospel Procession

During the Liturgy of the Word, the final reading always comes from one of the four Gospels. As the priest or deacon lifts the Book of the Gospels and carries it solemnly from the altar to the ambo, the assembly stands and sings “*Alleluia*” or another joyful acclamation. With these gestures, we honor the Gospel as the voice of Christ.

The Gesture Before the Gospel

When the priest or deacon announces the Gospel, the faithful respond, “Glory to you, O Lord,” and trace a small cross on their forehead, lips, and heart—a prayer that the Word of God may be in our minds, on our lips, and dwelling in our hearts. It is a brief but rich act of prayer rooted in the Liturgy.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven ... so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty.”

Isaiah 55:10–11



Living It Out:

Write a short prayer to God—just a few sentences that are easy to memorize.

Closing Prayer

*“May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life.*

Amen.”

Announcements / Reminders — add notes here