

No.18.

28th January 2021

Dear Friends,

Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God. If you are like me you may be a little set in your ways and have a pattern of prayer which hasn't changed much for many years - often the same format, the same words, the same problems. But it shouldn't be that way. It is not as if there isn't help out there. In this week's newsletter I have included a selection of thoughts from an Irish Cistercian monk - the late Fr Eugene Boylan. The title of his classic book speaks volumes : Difficulties in Mental Prayer. I hope you find it of help - and perhaps encourages you to read more - including other writers. Possibly you may like to make suggestions which I could publish in future newsletters?

We are also including each week a favourite prayer or two of members of the RCIA team. This week it is the Chalice Prayer - selected by Jackie White - I hope you like it.

There is the weekly Sunday Sermon from Bishop Robert Barron, based on the Book of Jonah. Also, a longer - perhaps a slightly more challenging talk - called "Do not fear". Given that we are living through rather worrying times it's worth listening to.

Take care and God bless,

John de Waal.

Difficulties in Mental Prayer by Fr M.Eugene Boylan.

“Spiritual reading and mental prayer are as necessary for the life of the soul as daily food is for that of the body.

Meditation is “thinking about God”, while prayer is “talking to God”, a conversation which may develop into contemplation : “looking at God and loving Him.”

Our Lord does not look for fine speeches or good grammar...

...for those to whom it is natural, the finer forms of expression of human love are excellent models for our conversation with God.

As long as we **will** to love God, by that very fact, with the help of grace, we **do** love Him.

There is one weapon - one way - that is essential for dealing with all difficulties in prayer and for making progress. That is a firm resolution never to cease trying, never to give up praying, no matter what.

Distractions which are not deliberate are a trial, not a fault. Let us accept them cheerfully and confidently. In His own good time God will come and save us.

Prayer is a work of partnership between Jesus and each one of us.

The great difficulty in prayer is that we want to meet God on our own terms. No matter how often or how far we fall, Jesus is always ready to renew our union, as soon as we are again determined to give up our own way.

We must give God a blank cheque on ourselves and all that we have.”

The Prayer of the Chalice by Frances Nuttal

Father to thee I raise my whole being,
a vessel emptied of self. Accept Lord,
this my emptiness, and so fill me with
Thyself – Thy Light, Thy Love, Thy
Life – that these, Thy precious Gifts
may radiate through me and overflow
the chalice of my heart into
the hearts of all with whom I
come in contact this day
revealing unto them
the beauty of
Thy Joy
and
Wholeness
and
the
serenity
of Thy Peace
which nothing can destroy

Bishop Robert Barron's Sunday Sermon. This is about the readings from the 3rd Sunday - on the Book of Jonah.

<https://youtu.be/PqGXDnG2Wus>

A further talk by Bishop Barron : Do not fear (a longer talk than usual - about half an hour).

<https://youtu.be/GX32w5Uxkwk>

Final Prayer - taken from Compline (the Night Prayer of the Church).

Antiphon. Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

Nunc Dimittis.

At last, all-powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant
to go in peace, according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared for all nations, the light to enlighten the Gentiles and give glory to Israel, your people.

Antiphon. Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

A short time for silent prayer.

Concluding prayer.

Lord our God,
restore us again by the repose of sleep after the fatigue of our daily work; so that, continually renewed by your help, we may serve you in body and soul. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Blessing. Lord, grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen.

A final thought.

“There is no crime, no perversion, no cruelty ever practised of which we are not capable, but there is also no heroism, selflessness or love which is beyond our potential.”

Gerard W. Hughes SJ : The God of Surprises p.28