



2021 Lenten Prayer Study: Youth

Based on the book

I Thirst: 40 Days with Mother Teresa



Personal Prayer

- is where we encounter God's unique and specific love for us
- is how we communicate with Him in a more conversational way
- is learned, requiring repetition and growth
- is essential to your life as a follower of Jesus
- requires solitude (being quiet and by yourself)



How to speak in prayer...

- Always ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer.
- Remember that there is no “right way” to pray. If you feel awkward or uncertain, just as Jesus to help you be honest, open, and trusting.
- Focus on bring everything to Jesus (the good things in life and the difficult).
- If something seems like an obstacle to prayer, talk to Him about it.
 - *Jesus, I feel like I’m talking to myself. Am I talking to myself?*
 - *Jesus, I am having a hard time getting settled. There’s a lot on my mind.*
 - *Jesus, I’m afraid that You won’t answer me or I won’t know how to hear You.*
- Talk to Him about your life like you would your friends. He wants you to be comfortable and honest.
- Consider speaking out loud or writing your thoughts. Both options make your interior life more concrete and real.



How to listen in prayer...

- One of the hardest aspects of prayer is knowing how to “listen”
- God speaks to us in many ways. Here a few more common methods.
 - A “small movement of the heart” (a sense of calm or peace, feeling of being loved, feeling of being safe/protected, feeling like a weight has been lifted off your shoulders)
 - Sensing His presence
 - The strengthening of a deep, interior conviction or truth
 - Sensing words in your heart that are a response to your thoughts or feelings
 - Images coming to mind and developing as you pray
 - Words and phrases that stand out as your pray with Sacred Scripture
 - Messages that come from other people (sometimes friends will say something that connects to what you were praying about; God loves to use our friends and family to share in His message of love)



The Voice...

Of God

- Stills you
- Leads you
- Reassures you
- Enlightens you
- Encourages you
- Comforts you
- Calms you
- Convicts you
- God is never early and He is never late. He is always right on time and His plans for you are good. God is a God of love and order.

Of the Devil

- Rushes you
- Pushes you
- Frightens you
- Confuses you
- Discourages you
- Worries you
- Obsesses you
- Condemns you
- If the voice you are hearing doesn't sound like goodness, love, and order, then it is not from God.



Personal Prayer can include mediating with:

- visuals (something beautiful that helps you think about God)
 - looking at or being in nature
 - pictures
 - people you love
 - religious images
 - inspiring places
- audio (something true and beautiful that speaks about God)
 - instrumental music
 - music with uplifting lyrics
 - speaker/speech
- God's Word (Scripture)

*These serve to bring you into prayer, into meditation. Personal prayer must include silence.



Personal Prayer: Basic Method

“Making time for God” is not possible; only God can “make time.” You, however, can make a choice to spend time with Him. Consider that spending time with God is only giving back to Him, what He has already given you: time.

- Make a choice to spend time with Him.
- Find a place that is relaxing and allows you to be alone and open with Him.
- Bring any materials you would like to use (Bible, notebook, image, etc.).
- Spend a few moments calming your body and mind.
- Invite the Holy Spirit into your heart; give Him permission to lead you in prayer.
- Ask Jesus, “What would you like to tell me about our relationship today?”
- Speak to Jesus about what is on your mind or heart. (You might spend most of your time on this step, especially if there is a lot going on in life.)
- Once you are settled, begin a meditation.
- Go slow. Pause when something stands out. Spend time thinking about it or soaking up its truth and beauty.
- When you finish, allow for some silence.
- End your prayer with gratitude, thanking God for His attentiveness, presence, and love.



If you are doing this individually...

- Begin with an opening prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to move your heart.
- Take a few moments, calling to mind God's presence and peace.
- Play the video.
- Pause the video if something strikes you or stands out.
- Sit with the idea or thought in silence for a few moments, giving Jesus a chance to speak with you directly or instill more peace in your heart.
- Continue playing the video.
- When finished, lift your heart in gratitude for Christ's love and constancy..
- Write down a phrase or sentence that meant something to you. (Optional: Place the quote it in a prominent or high-traffic place so you see it often and are reminded of its truth throughout the week.)
- Refer back to this phrase for the rest of the week.
- Use the 'resource guide' for additional opportunities for prayer.



If you are doing this as a group...

- Begin with an opening prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to move in your hearts.
- Spend a few moments in silence, calling to mind God's presence and peace.
- Play the video.
- While watching, record any phrases or ideas that strike you or stand out.
- When finished, sit in silence, reviewing the ideas or thoughts you wrote down.
- Speak honestly with Christ about what is on your heart and mind.
- As a group, answer the questions that follow the video and discuss anything else pertaining to your prayer.
- Pick a phrase to place in a high-traffic or prominent place that you will see often throughout the rest of the week.
- See the 'resource guide' for additional opportunities for prayer.



I. The Dynamics of Thirst

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/nL9ddMGhcVY>

Fr. Cole Kennett (former parishioner of St. Joseph Parish, stationed in Colon, NE) reflects on how we try to satisfy our thirst for God and asks us to name the places we wish to keep hidden.

Questions:

1. What parts of you do you try to keep hidden? What in your heart is hard to bring to Jesus because you think He would be disappointed, irritated, angry, or misunderstand you?
2. What do you think will satisfy the “God-shaped hole” in your heart? How do you try to satisfy your thirst for God?
3. Can you name what you have “espoused yourself to?”
4. What role does personal prayer play in revealing your false thirsts?
5. What role do receiving the sacraments play in revealing your false thirsts?



Additional Scripture Passages

Referenced by Fr. Kennett:

- John 4:4-42 (The Woman at the Well)

For further meditation:

- Matthew 4:1-11 (The Temptation of Jesus)
- John 8:1-11 (A Woman Caught in Adultery)
- Luke 11:38-42 (Martha and Mary)
- Mark 10:17-22 (The Rich Man)
- Mark 12:28-34 (The Greatest Commandment)



II. Prayer as Thirst

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/c8ZIU7K9Xvo>

Fr. Jay Buhman (stationed in David City, NE) reflects on how we should approach personal prayer and our relationship with God.

Questions:

1. What does prayer look like in your life?
2. What makes it hard to pray?
3. What is a practical way you can be more intentional about spending time in prayer?
4. When you pray on your own, what does it look like? What is easy? Difficult?
5. How can you receive God's love during your prayer time?



Additional Scripture Passages

For further meditation:

- Luke 3:21-22 (The Baptism of Jesus)
- Matthew 6:5-8 (Teaching about Prayer)
- Matthew 14:23
- John 17:26



III. Our Lady's Example

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/qyLQTR3UZf8>

Fr. Alec Sasse (stationed in Lincoln, NE, at the Newman Center) reflects on Mary as a mediator of God's thirst for us and our need for Him.

Questions:

1. What circumstances or sins make it difficult to “go to God” like Mary does?
2. What role does Mary play in your prayer life?
3. What Marian apparition has spoken clearly to you a “renewed thirst for God?”
4. Who do you bring the presence of Christ to?



Additional Scripture Passages

Referenced by Fr. Sasse:

- Luke 1:26-38 (The Annunciation)
- Luke 1:39-45 (The Visitation)
- Luke 2:22-38 (The Presentation)
- John 19:25-27 (The Crucifixion of Christ)

For further meditation:

- Luke 1:46-55 (The Magnificat)
- John 2:1-5 (The Wedding Feast at Cana)



IV. Thirst in the Service of God

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/e8U3f25fFkM>

Fr. Ryan Kaup (stationed in Nebraska City, NE) reflects on how our thirst for God and an encounter with His thirst for us should be the foundation of our service.

Questions for reflection:

1. What areas of life do you see as total gifts from God?
2. What areas of life are difficult to view as gifts?
3. What is the difference between a gift from God and the experience of evil (death, illness, etc.) being transformed into a gift by God?
4. How has God said “Hey, I’m here!” or “Remember Me?” this week?
5. What pain and temptations can you bring to your personal prayer time, asking God to help you see with eyes of faith? To see them as gifts? As invitations to closeness?



Additional Scripture Passages

- For further meditation:
 - Luke 19: 1-10 (Zacchaeus the Tax Collector)
 - Luke 17:11-19 (The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers)
 - 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - 1 Peter 1:3-9 (Blessing)



V. Sharing in the Thirst of Christ

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/5Htl-5AEOBo>

Fr. Steve Mills (stationed in Atchison, KS, studying at Benedictine College) reflects on the important of “leaning on the cross” in our suffering, uniting our thirst for God with Jesus’ thirst for the Father.

Questions:

1. What weaknesses and limitations really bother you? How is that an opportunity to go to God?
2. What is your response to suffering and difficulty?
3. What blessings have you experienced while suffering or through suffering?
4. When we pray during difficulties, we either pretend like everything is fine or we are so angry, we can’t listen to God’s response. What does it mean to “lean on the cross” when you are praying by yourself?



Additional Scripture Passages

Referenced by Fr. Mills:

- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (Paul's Boast: His Weakness)

For further meditation:

- Isaiah 55:6-9 (An Invitation to Grace)
- Matthew 6:25-34 (Dependence on God)
- Mark 8:34-38 (The Conditions of Discipleship)
- Luke 22:39-46 (The Agony in the Garden)



VI. Jesus, the Incarnation of God's Thirst

Link to the video: <https://youtu.be/WXNYx1vG0go>

Fr. Jim Morin (stationed and studying in Rome, Italy) reflects on Christ's Passion and the role of the Holy Spirit in our prayer life.

Questions:

1. How does Jesus express God's thirst for us during Holy Week?
2. What moments of Holy Week express Jesus' perfect desire for the Father?
3. What are practical ways to allow the Holy Spirit to move in you during prayer?
4. How has personal prayer affected your life?
5. What have you learned about personal prayer?
6. How has Christ loved you in your prayer time? How has He spoken to you?



Additional Scripture Passages

- Referenced by Fr. Morin:
 - 1 John 3:16
 - Romans 5:7
 - Luke 22:19
 - Romans 8:26
- For further meditation:
 - John 16
 - John 19:28-30 (The Crucifixion of Jesus)
 - John 20:19-23 (Appearance to the Disciples)



In conclusion...

1. How has your understanding of personal prayer changed?
2. How has your prayer life changed?
3. What can you do moving forward to continue receiving the love of God through prayer?
4. What aspects of prayer are still confusing?