

SCHOOL of PRAYER

The Royal Road to Heaven

Beginners



‘More people than you would think would be capable of practicing silent prayer, but no one taught them. And, without an interior life, the baptized run out of breath, their actions become noisy gongs and even their religious practice, when it exists, dries up.’ **Pope John Paul II 1982**

Schools of prayer have emerged to meet an ever-increasing unconscious need amongst the lay faithful to develop one’s faith and personal friendship with Christ. We learn to read, to count, to swim and to ride a bike, so why wouldn’t we have to learn to pray in a *silent heart to heart* with the Lord?

Silent prayer is a simple look turned towards Jesus. It is an intimate contact with the Living God. This prayer from the heart enables us to meet the person of Christ, to truly know ourselves and to give ourselves ever more fully to him. The spiritual exercise is not a very complicated one but does require knowledge of a few basics to be initiated into this heart to heart with God who loved us first.

The **mission** of the school of prayer is precisely to help Christians develop through the practice of silent prayer a taste for a more concrete spiritual life that overflows into their relationships with others.

The School of prayer has **six meetings**, seven if a testimony is included, each one having **three parts**:

1/ **A Doctrinal Teaching**: these teachings are short (30 minutes approximately) and give an overview of the bigger questions related to the prayer of the heart: **what is silent prayer; the structure of man; the anatomy of the soul, the prayer of recollection; the difficulties in prayer; the fruits of prayer.**

2/ **Small Group Discussion**: encourage participants to identify **obstacles** to prayer; the **difficulties** encountered in prayer; and, the **graces** received. Ideally, these groups are led by an experienced lay person who can suggest ways of overcoming the challenges.

3/ **Silent Prayer together as a Group**: this time of communal prayer allows participants to realize that this prayer is not about individual piety but is an act of the Church allowing each Christian to meet the heart of God in our world on fire that has all too often lost the notion of the sacred.

Participants are called to experience a progression in their journey. Initially, a daily period of ten minutes of silent prayer is encouraged. This time is gradually increased each week to arrive at 20-25 minutes daily by the end of the six-week class.