

# Prayer of Recollection

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- ❖ Recollecting myself has to become a **habit**;
- ❖ **Practice** allows me to develop the capacity to turn the **bodily senses & soul's faculties** within and give them **something to do**;
- ❖ In other words, turn my **attention** to the **Presence** within.
- ❖ It's a **mental operation**.



## What does this mean?

- ❖ There are **two aspects** of the process of Recollection;
- ❖ One is **positive**;
- ❖ The other can be seen as **negative**;
- ❖ It requires an **effort** of the will;
- ❖ The **two go together**, one can't exist without the other.



# Positive

- ❖ Why are we practicing this prayer?
- ❖ What is the goal?

Well....?



## Positive

- ❖ We are **turning our attention** to someone who is present within our hearts;
- ❖ We fix the eyes of our souls progressively on Him;
- ❖ We **find company** & we seek to please Jesus by **keeping Him company**;
- ❖ It isn't easy we have to **persevere** and **want** it.



‘Represent the Lord Himself as  
close to you...  
remain with so good a friend  
as long as you can.  
If you grow accustomed to  
having Him present  
at your side...  
you will not be able—  
as they say—  
to get away from Him...  
(W 26,1-3)



- ❖ It seems **easy** at first glance;
- ❖ Once we have tried to recollect ourselves we realize how much **trouble** we run into;
- ❖ We still need to **persevere**;
- ❖ We need to seek to please Jesus by **keeping Him company**;



I'm not asking you to do  
anything more than

**look at Him...**

turn the

**eyes of your soul**

toward this Lord...

just for a moment

if you can't do more?"

(W 26 ,1-3)





## Negative

- ❖ There is an **effort** to be **fully in His presence** and not distracted by outside activities;
- ❖ To succeed in this prayer, we have to **withdraw** from outside distractions, this requires an **effort**;
- ❖ At the same time, we have to learn to be **attentive to internal realities**;
- ❖ It isn't **easy**, you have to **want it**.



- ❖ It is therefore important to put yourself in the **right situation---**silence, no distractions, solitude;
- ❖ This effort is an ascetical (personal effort) one...a **spiritual training ground**;
- ❖ As we **practice** going within and becoming attentive to our internal reality;
- ❖ This effort becomes **easier and easier** just like in sports.



- ❖ Jesus becomes a **good friend**.  
He shows up for us;
- ❖ As we **practice** we become  
more **responsive** to His grace.
- ❖ We reap what we sow!



## What Presence are we talking about?

- ❖ God enters the human heart at **Baptism**;
- ❖ His presence represented in recollection is a presence by **faith**;
- ❖ I have to make an **act of faith**. I believe by faith;
- ❖ I don't **feel** anything with my **bodily senses**.



## What Presence are we talking about?

- ❖ By continually making these **acts of faith**, my **faith increases**;
- ❖ I realize I am changing... calmer, strength not my own. ‘

Lord, I believe please help my disbelief!



‘I was like one who is **blind** or in darkness;  
he speaks with a person  
and sees that that person is with him  
because he knows with **certainty**  
that he is there...;  
such was the case with me when  
I thought of Our Lord

(V 9, 6)

We feel by ‘**faith**’ that someone is in the  
room with us, not with our bodily senses.

Teresa learned this in a book...

**The Third Spiritual Alphabet**

by Francisco de Osuna



## To succeed in interior prayer

- ❖ It is important to find a **comfortable place** that suits you, either in nature or in adoration;
- ❖ Whatever or wherever that **promotes recollection**;
- ❖ Develop the **Habit** of Being in God's Presence within;
- ❖ I have to allow God to **establish the habit** in me until it **becomes natural** (not supernatural);
- ❖ In other words until I have overcome ...with God's help... all **objections** to the practice.



**Beginners...** are those who draw water (grace) from the well...

it's a lot of **work**...

they **tire** themselves trying to recollect their senses ...

and get accustomed to being distracted ...

it requires **much effort**...

and **hours of practice** ...

thinking on their past life...

considering the life of Christ...

the **intellect grows weary**...

these are the things we can do of ourselves...

with God's help because without this help...we cannot even have a good thought (v11, 9)





- ❖ I repeatedly makes **acts of faith** and in time things fall into place;
- ❖ We are so used to being scattered, to **living at the surface** of ourselves;
- ❖ The Prayer of Recollection helps us to live at a **more interior level**;



- ❖ St. Teresa tells us that if we are diligent we will see **results** within 2-3 months; maximum a year;
- ❖ Overtime we gain **mastery** over ourselves which gives us a new liberty;
- ❖ Once we have **tasted** recollection, we come back to it;
- ❖ But it comes with a **cost!**



...At the beginning since the recollection is not so **deep**—for there are greater and lesser degrees of recollection...

If we make the **effort, practice** this recollection for some days, and get used to it, the **gain** will be clearly seen; we will understand when beginning to pray that the **bees** are approaching and entering the beehive to make **honey**.

And this recollection will be effected **without our effort**...the

Lord has desired that ... the faculties are drawn inward...

(W 28 7)



## How to Proceed Practically ...

- ❖ Light a candle,
- ❖ Focus on an icon,
- ❖ Look at a picture,
- ❖ Open a book or the Bible-to use as a **life preserver** to **focus our thoughts**



## Once recollected then what?

- ❖ Recollection of St. Peter- **SLEEP!**
- ❖ We find this **Presence** gradually—
- ❖ We don't want this to be a **MUST** but something I look forward to;
- ❖ God changes us, **tames** our 'wild scattered selves' living on the surface;
- ❖ We get used to **God's presence** in our souls;

St. Teresa used a book for 18 years as a **shield** from her many thoughts.

...a **good book** written in the vernacular to recollect one's thoughts...  
little by little accustom the soul with coaxing and skill not to grow discouraged (W26 10).

For **eighteen years**, after Communion, I never dared to begin prayer without a book.

For my soul was as fearful of being without it during prayer as it would have been should I have had to do **battle** with a lot of people.

With this recourse, which was like a partner or a **shield** by which to sustain the blows of my many thoughts, I went about consoled (V4 9).





## Dialogue & Silence go together

- ❖ Dialogue with our Lord has to be **nourished**;
- ❖ We have to learn not only to **talk** but to **listen** as well;
- ❖ One of the **first fruits** of prayer is to learn to **listen**-- to God, to others and to Oneself, to our real self—to my **real need**...



## Dialogue & Silence go together

- ❖ I discover that I am **lost** and need a **Savior**;
- ❖ This is a joyous discovery that I don't have to do it **alone...**
- ❖ I can seek **God's help**.





## First Fruits of Prayer

- ❖ **Self-knowledge:** I am a poor sinner in need of a Savior;
- ❖ Listening to **Others**;
- ❖ Listening to **God**.



**More Interior less Superficial**