

Difficulties in Prayer

Three Types of Difficulties

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Two Categories of People

Those who
Practice
Silent Prayer

Fighting the
Distractions
OR
Despite the
Distractions

- We want to belong to the **latter** group;
- Difficulties should **never** be an obstacle to prayer;
- It is always possible to pray once we have understood the **true nature** of prayer.

Three Types of Difficulties

Idea of Prayer

Preparation

Distractions &
Dryness

- The **first** type of difficulty results from the **comprehension or idea** we have of silent prayer;
- The **second** difficulty results from the **preparation** for prayer;
- The **third** is related to the **practice** prayer involving the **distractions & dryness.**

Idea of Prayer

Prayer
is about a
Relationship

- We tend to develop false ideas of the essence of prayer;
- Silent Prayer is a **relationship** of **pure faith** with **God**;
- Silent Prayer isn't **intellectual**; it is about **interior silence**.

**Process of
Transformation**

**Prayer
is about**

making acts of

**Faith, Hope &
Charity.**

- Silent prayer is an **ever-increasing practice of faith, hope & charity;**
- **These acts** produce a **purification, a healing & a sanctification** of our soul & its **faculties;**
- The **comprehension** we have of prayer brings about **3 difficulties:** a lack of **poverty, preparation & gratitude.**

Spiritual Tanning Booth

We place ourselves
in the
Divine Sun
to
'Tan' our Souls

- We come to God to **conform** our wills, feelings & projects to his **loving design**;
- The **idea** we have of prayer can make it impossible to **pray without ceasing** because we tell ourselves it isn't possible;
- It all depends on the **idea** we have of prayer whether it is possible to **pray without ceasing**.

The Essence of Prayer
is the Presence of God.

What do you say
to God?

Nothing,
He looks at Me
and I look at Him

- It's about **living in the presence of God;**
- Prayer is the **language of the heart;**
- It's about **being available** to be in God's presence;
- It's about learning to **look at him** and **allowing yourself to be looked at** by him;
- It's about **loving him & allowing yourself to be loved** by him.

We place ourselves before God

I absolutely want you to know that to progress on this path in order to reach the house you would like to reach, it's **not** about **thinking** a lot but about **loving a lot**. So, anything that would lead you to love more, do that!

- **Meditation**, an intellectual & imaginative effort, must be filled with the desire to meet God & make his will ours;
- It is the living God that we are looking for;
- We go to prayer to tell God we love him & know he loves us; to **conform ourselves** to God.

Christian Prayer

What matters
isn't
what is Felt,
but the
Gift of Self.

- There is a risk to believe prayer only has value if it is **felt**;
- In Christian prayer we pray to **give ourselves** to God & enter into the **divine design of salvation**;
- What counts in silent prayer is the **One** who is the object of this experience;
- We practice prayer not to receive but to **give of ourselves**, to lose ourselves.

What do we give God
in prayer?

**Friendship
is the
most important
Aspect of Prayer.**

- We give him **the chance to give himself to us**; we make ourselves available;
- We need to pray **moved by love**, or else when it's not great, **we give up**;
- Until we **love for no reason**, we don't really love;
- In silent prayer, it is important to acquire the attitude of '**no reason**'.

John of the Cross &
Teresa of Avila

**Mission
to Teach
the Church**

- Silent prayer doesn't consist of extraordinary events;
- Teresa & John had a mission & needed the experience to explain it;
- Silent prayer remains the **path of humility & faith;**
- **Faith** is the most **perfect way** to attain **union with God.**

Difficulties linked to Preparation

We have tendency to behave towards God with an **Indecent Familiarity**

- Silent prayer is to do for God what we would do in our interactions with creatures;
- God is seeking our **attention**; we are attentive to God; he is inviting us into **communion** with him in prayer;
- Christian prudence demands that we offer a preparation **worthy of his Majesty**;
- When we enter a church, we make a rapid genuflection & sign of the cross. There is an **indecent** to the relationship.

First Pebble

Draws our Lives
towards the
World
instead of
Lifting it Up
towards
God.

- The problem is **dissipation & distraction** of the **soul internally**, of the **senses externally**;
- If we don't work to **reign in our passions**, we will have problems in prayer;
- It's important to control the passions, calm down & work to **unify & simplify** ourselves;
- Passions render our lives **complex**.

Second Pebble

Overwhelming
Amount
of
Work-Related &
Pleasurable Activities
can contribute to
**Preventing
Progress in Prayer**

- The ideal is **moderation**; we are a generation involved in **abundant activity**;
- We experience **guilty excesses**; work & business don't have the right to **torment** our lives;
- The **greatest task** has to do with **God** in the **sanctuary of the soul** and in **our conscience**;
- The **first & second pebbles** have to do with the **exaggerated place** we allow our activities to occupy in our lives.

Third Pebble

Lack Of Spiritual Nourishment

- We lack knowledge of **God's word** & the **doctrine of faith**;
- We can't progress in our prayer lives if we remain at an **entry level** knowledge of God's word and Catholic doctrine;
- The goal is to find a **balance** between **laziness** & **intellectual gluttony**;
- Reading & meditating on God's word only has value if it leads us into an **exchange with God**.

Third Pebble

Motives to Pray

- Instead of seeking God first, do we run to God as a **last resort only** after we have tried everything else? If so, we will have trouble progressing in prayer;
- Unless these difficulties are resolved we will continue to focus on the **distractions & dryness**;
- We are at the **starting gate!** **Dryness** happens to people who **live in God**. We don't want to focus on the dryness;
- The **immediate need** is the **preparation for & comprehension** of silent prayer which merits **careful & adequate attention**.