

# Life of Prayer

fr. Jean-Pierre, ocd

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## Life of Prayer



- You have surely heard talk of a **time of prayer**;
- Prayer isn't reserved for that specific time only;
- It needs to be a part of **one's whole life.**

# Faith

We enter prayer  
through **Faith**  
Mary  
is above all a  
**Model of Faith**

- The Virgin Mary is the perfect **model** of this life of prayer;
- The **Fiat** (let it be done) of Mary at the Annunciation is like a **program of life** for our whole life;
- We find this in the **Our Father**, that **your will be done**.

The Life of Prayer is  
the Theological Life

A Theological Life  
is based on the  
Virtues  
of  
**Faith, Hope & Charity**  
received at  
**Baptism**

- St. Teresa put herself completely into St. Joseph's hands & through St. Joseph trusted **divine providence**;
- God gives himself to us above all in this life through his **divine providence**.

## PANIC

There is no **compatibility** between **worrying** about things of this **life** and a **life of prayer**.

- St Teresa noticed that those with 'high' prayer would panic at the slightest setback;
- We can discern **progress** in this area to help us realize we have **entered a life of prayer**;

## Hope & Charity

He gives his life for us  
& tells his Father  
to forgive since  
'they don't know  
what  
they are doing.'

- **Hope** is the experience of having no other support but God;
- Christ on the Cross is the model of **Charity**.

The **Theological Life** is a  
**Life in the Holy Spirit**

“Be ready. It’s at the  
hour that  
you don’t think that  
Christ will come”

Luke 12:40.

- The more we practice prayer, the more we learn to be **docile** to the Holy Spirit who prays in us;
- Your whole life is a life of prayer;
- The Lord can come during our prayer time, when we **expect him**, but also when we **don’t expect him** when in the middle of the **pots and pans!**

## The Entire Law

**Freedom  
that the Spirit gives;  
our Spirit is a  
Spirit of Freedom**

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, **serve one another** humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”**

If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other;

So, I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with one other, so that **you are not to do whatever you want.** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law”  
Galatians 5:13-18



## Fruits of the Spirit

Charity,  
Joy, Peace,  
Patience, Kindness,  
Generosity,  
Faithfulness,  
Gentleness,  
Self-Control

Against such there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another. Gal. 5:22-26

Why are we talking  
about this?

Because the  
Practice of Silent Prayer  
that Teresa calls us to  
is an

Excellent Way

to acquire  
Virtues & Experience  
Contemplation

- The acquisition of the **virtues precedes contemplation** because we can't draw near to God if we don't allow ourselves to be **transformed**;
- The Fruit of the Spirit are **signs** in our lives to indicate to us how to remain in a **prayerful state of mind**.

Charity is the  
Love of God, Himself

Unconditional Love  
that is  
Independent of the Response  
of the  
Person we love.

It is about  
Loving Someone the  
Way God loves them

- It means accepting the good & the bad; even when the person seems to turn away and not accept your love. This is what **love your enemies** means;
- **Only the Spirit** within could enable such a love as this in us;
- The Lord wants our entire being especially what isn't from him, our **sin**. He wants to **replace our sin** with joy, the second fruit of the Spirit.

# JOY

The Joy that comes from God  
is not a Joy that  
we are used to experiencing.  
There is nothing external that causes it.  
It is in us, in our heart,  
by the Presence of God himself.  
God is love but he is also joy.  
For a Christian, joy is not an option,  
joy is the basis of the Christian life.  
Be careful not to confuse it with  
joy that comes from  
habitual satisfactions.  
It's joy that comes from an Open Heart.

- Silent prayer is an essential element in a joy-filled life; it is a heart to heart with the Lord. It is a very special place where we learn to open our hearts;
- Often our hearts close because we are afraid. Joy ceases to overflow from our hearts. We are sad;
- Love comes from the heart too and can't flow with a closed heart;
- It might be necessary to maintain distance with a certain person (or people) because when we are too close, our hearts close.

# Peace

St. Paul  
talks about  
**Peace**  
that comes from a  
**Clear Conscience**

- What is sure to steal our peace is the awareness of our sin;
- The sacrament of penance is there to re-establish inner peace & joy after having sinned;
- One of the fruits of prayer that often happens to people who start to practice silent prayer is the need to go to confession;
- It is a way to bring ourselves into harmony with what we discover in prayer, the presence & the love of God.

# Patience

The Patience God has with us!

How many years has he waited as we distanced ourselves from him and continued to offend him?

Take the Parable of the Servant who has a significant debt towards his master yet makes his friend pay in full.

Patience towards all!

- A Brazilian family took in prisoners coming out of jail. One person returned to them at least 10 times & every time, he stole something. The family never said a thing ...he was so touched by the **discovery of God's face** that he converted & became a religious;
- God never punishes us because we made a mistake, but he does correct us. This correction helps us to change;
- How many times do we feel obliged to correct someone else? St. Teresa suggests that we try instead to **cultivate the opposite virtue**;
- What if the family had stolen from him? What if he had seen someone in the family stealing? What a negative testimony that would have been. So, the family was not only **honest but cultivated patience**.

## Generosity

: How often do we expect recognition for all that we have done?

It can go on for a long time and then one day we **present the bill.**

**After all I have done for you!**

- The fruit of the Spirit is to allow ourselves to be taken over by God's Spirit which causes us to **give freely**;
- To **serve** is often a way to be appreciated and loved; when it doesn't work out, we hold it against the person who often didn't ask for anything in the first place.

## Kindness

It's a Universal Phenomenon we notice in people.

It's an Internal Attitude.

They are Kind before they even know who is talking to them.

They don't make any distinction.

- A person under the influence of the Holy Spirit gives willingly to a good person or a bad one;
- They are always kind whether things are going well or not;
- Somehow suffering seems to give us rights. Kindness isn't dependent on one's state in life. It isn't about being condescending either.



## Faithfulness

If someone steals from you each time they come to your home, you can't be sure something will be there when they leave.

There is a risk.

But we can't be sure that the day won't come when that person will end up

Deserving Trust.

- If God had to trust what we have done to date, he wouldn't place much faith in us;
- It seems the **more untrustworthy** we are, the more he places his trust in us. It's his undeserved trust that **changes the world**;
- We need to believe in those who don't deserve it. They need this trust to be able to exist.

Gentleness

We can put  
Gentleness  
in contrast with  
Violence &  
Hardness of Heart  
which is already  
Violence

- Jesus said that we should learn from him who was gentle and humble of heart;
- Followers of Ignatius talk about good and bad spirits;
- The good spirit is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God. It can come through an angel;
- The bad spirit is the devil. We can recognize the bad spirit as it causes us to go from suffering to violence;
- Why are we violent? Because something caused us to suffer. Violence has a typical characteristic that is when we receive it, we have a desire to give it back. It's like a chain reaction.

Let's be Christians in a  
Life of Prayer who absorb  
violence & do not pass it on

If the Bad Spirit causes  
us to go from  
Suffering to Violence,  
the Good Spirit  
suggests we go from  
Violence to Suffering  
& Patience.

- We must accept suffering with patience and suffer to **not give into violence**;
- The life in the Spirit or a life of prayer, is to receive all in our hearts;
- When in prayer, its easier to receive in the heart because we are in front of God;
- There are also things that come out of our heart. if the Lords show them to us, it's to **set us free**.

## The Story of the Little Kitten

The neighbor found a little kitten who would sit on his lap nightly & purr. One day the kitten walked on the kitchen sink with its dirty feet.

The neighbor became irritated & tossed it out the kitchen window.

That evening when the kitten came to sit on the neighbor's lap instead of purring, it began to bite his hand. He let it do so. There was suffering. After fifteen minutes of aggression, the kitten began to purr.

- If the neighbor had punished the kitten, it would have increased the amount of **unexpressed violence** in the kitten;
- **Violence must express itself** somehow;
- Sometimes violence spills out. Anger comes out all on its own. It's a passion. We don't decide to be angry;
- We say things that we wanted to say that hurt feelings. **Anger is our excuse**;
- The minimum would be to ask for forgiveness.

Put Gentleness  
where Violence  
Created a Wound

All of this is  
Violence  
We can bring  
Gentleness  
into this situation  
as soon as  
we realize it

- Gentleness brings about **miracles** !
- Someone is more **touched** when the person who wounded them asks for forgiveness then by someone who is naturally able to control themselves;
- All of this is part of a **life of prayer**;
- In prayer, we re-experience our past wounds. It shakes us up but it is happening under Christ's watchful eye. He is so gentle that we are able to **relive the wounds** of our lives.

## Self-Control

Self-control  
is about not  
being affected in our  
Deepest Self  
by Superficial Upsets

- Self-control isn't about **denying** what is within us which can emerge spontaneously;
- Suffering doesn't excuse everything. We don't have the right to **act as we wish** because we've been **hurt**;
- Self-control is about being at peace with what we don't control;
- Self-control is a state of mind; a real conversion. Self-control is the determining element that indicates if we have moved to **gentleness and humility**.

Humility

Bars  
are filled with  
People  
who can  
Rule the World

It is about  
not believing oneself better  
or smarter than others  
or that our opinion is  
always right;

## Rebel Spirit

St. Paul  
tells us that  
A Rebel Spirit  
will not  
Inherit the Kingdom

- At a certain point, we can't have several attitudes; it's about an **interior attitude**;
- If we are like this in **daily life**, we will be like this in **prayer**;
- Don't sadden the Holy Spirit who is not a **Spirit of Disorder**;
- It's often the **principle area of difficulty**. it challenges our way of being with those around us.



## Develop a Life of Prayer

Start by Changing

**ALL**

Others can't see

**ALL**

in the

**Depths of our Hearts**

- Start living as if under the watchful eye of angels;
- Cultivate relationship between violence and gentleness;
- We often allow ourselves to be influenced;
- St. Teresa was an exception as she didn't say anything bad about someone who wasn't there.

## The Log & the Straw

Who can know  
what is in  
the Heart  
of our Neighbor?

- To remove the **straw** from someone else's eye, I must start with my own eye;
- What makes us **suffer the most** on earth? **Being judged.**
- **Don't judge** and you won't be judged is not so much by others but by **yourself.**

God is bigger  
than our Heart

God loves us  
more than  
we love ourselves  
He has more esteem  
for us than  
we have for ourselves

- As we grow in love for ourselves, we will come to love others and God;
- Our heart only has one-way in. Let's keep our heart open;
- When it closes we are sad- a definitive criterion to know if our heart is closed.

## When You Are SAD

The Lord did,  
it wasn't sin she saw,  
only **suffering**  
This is how God sees  
our sin.

He doesn't want us to sin,  
Sin is a Source &  
Sign of Suffering

- Teresa of the Little Flower at Jesus when she felt **sad**;
- Teresa of Avila talked about **comforting** Christ who was at the pillar or on the cross;
- Julian of Norwich, a 14th Century English mystic who had many visions, asked Jesus to **show her sin**.

## Sin & Suffering

The Sinner  
is someone who is  
**Suffering**  
& who will cause  
**Suffering**

- God tells us to **avoid sin, to avoid suffering;**
- It's like poison. To **avoid suffering,** a bottle of poison is labeled as such.

## State of Mind

Make no mistake:  
God is not mocked,  
for a person will reap only  
what he sows,  
because the one who sows  
for his flesh will reap  
corruption from the flesh,  
but the one who sows for the  
spirit will reap eternal life  
from the spirit.

Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a **gentle spirit**, looking to yourself, so that you also may not be tempted.

Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deluding himself. Each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast about himself alone, and not about someone else; for each will bear his own load.

One who is being instructed in the word should share all good things with his instructor.

Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith. **Galatian 6: 1-10**

## Carmelite Prayer



- Carmelite or Silent prayer is the prayer of the Church, in church;
- The more we practice it the more we will realize we belong to the Church;
- A life of silent prayer must be fed so we are continually sent back to fraternal communion to meet Christ in the Sacraments in the community of the faithful!