

What is Silent Prayer?

The First Steps...

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The Kingdom of God is Like...

The Kingdom of God is like a
treasure hidden in a field
Which a man found
And covered up
Then in his joy he goes and
Sells all he has
And buys that field

Matt. 13:44



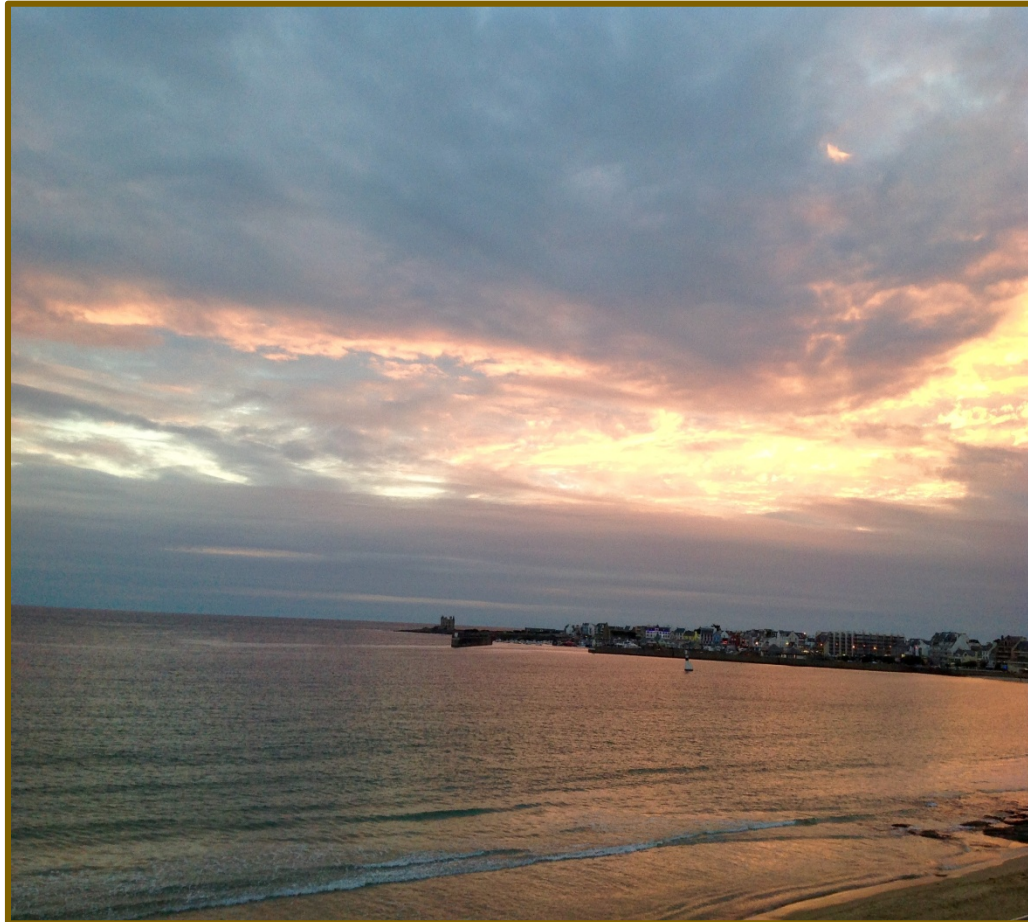
The Kingdom of Heaven is like...



45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of **fine pearls,**

46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Matt. 13:45-46

An Important Aspect



These Verses illustrate an
important aspect of
Silent Prayer

A bit of suspense.....

The Plan

- ❖ What is **Silent Prayer**?
- ❖ What is the **Goal of Silent Prayer**?
- ❖ How do you **Practice Silent Prayer**?

What is Silent Prayer?

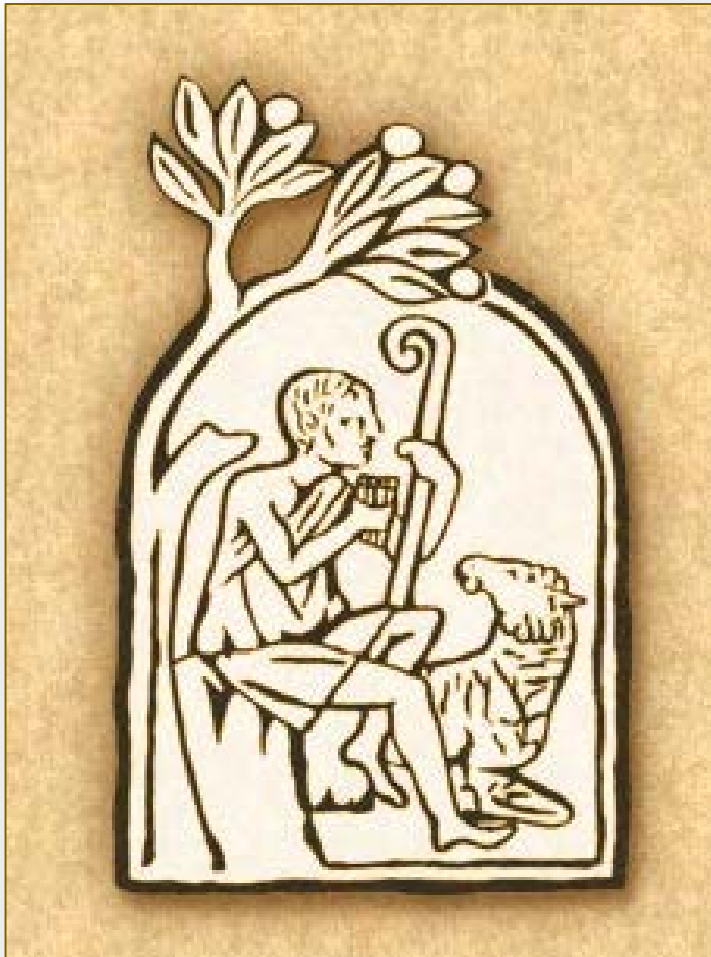
- ❖ **Silent Prayer** is talked about a lot in Carmel; it is an important part of **Carmel's Charism**;
- ❖ What gives the Carmel the **authority** to discuss Silent Prayer?
- ❖ Why is the Carmel **referenced** when it comes to **Silent Prayer** more so than the other orders such as the Dominicans, Franciscans or Jesuits for example?
- ❖ Does the Carmel have something special bring to this discussion?
- ❖ To **answer that question** we will turn to the **Catechism** of the Catholic Church for the answer.



The Catechism is arranged in 4 principal parts or the 4 Pillars of Christianity

- The Profession of Faith
(the Apostle's Creed)
- The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
(the Sacred Liturgy, the Sacraments)
- Life in Christ
(Ten Commandments, Beatitudes)
- Christian Prayer
(Lord's Prayer)

Life of Prayer



2697 Prayer ... ought to animate us at every moment. ... "We must **remember God** more often than we draw breath."

2698 The Tradition of the Church proposes to the faithful certain **rhythms of praying** intended to nourish **continual prayer**... the cycle of the liturgical year, its great feasts.

2699 The Lord leads all persons...in ways pleasing to him and each believer responds according to his ...personal expressions of prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained **three major expressions** of prayer: **vocal, meditative, & contemplative**. They have one basic trait in common: **composure of heart**.



Vocal Prayer

2700 ...it is most important that the **heart** should be present ... "Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the **number of words**, but on the **fervor of our souls**."

2701 Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. To his disciples, drawn by their Master's silent prayer, **Jesus teaches** a vocal prayer, the **Our Father**...

2704 ... Prayer is **internalized** to the extent that we become aware of Him "to whom we speak"; Thus vocal prayer becomes an **initial form of contemplative prayer**.



Meditation

2705 Meditation is above all a **quest**... The required attentiveness is **difficult** to sustain. We are usually **helped** by books, particularly the Gospels, holy icons ...

2708 Meditation ... is of great **value**, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to **union with him**.



Contemplative Prayer

2709 What is contemplative prayer?

St. Teresa of Avila answers:

"Contemplative prayer [oracion mental] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us." (L 8,5)

Contemplative(Silent) Prayer

Saint Teresa of Avila's Definition of Contemplative Prayer

Let's break down Teresa's definition word by word...

Contemplative prayer in my opinion
is nothing else than a
close sharing between friends;
it means taking time frequently
to be alone with him
who we know loves us.



In My Opinion

Saint Teresa of Avila

was declared

**Doctor of the Church
in 1970 by Pope Paul VI**

**The first woman
to be so honored**



An Exchange of Intimate Friendship

- ❖ Friendship supposes sharing, **an equality**.
- ❖ In interior prayer, the Lord, present in the deepest part of ourselves, behaves towards us as with a **friend**...this is a *mystery*.
- ❖ The Mystery involves the raising up of the person to establish an equality which allows two friends to **converse** with one another, to **share their love** for one another.
- ❖ Our Spiritual life is based on this *Act of Faith*.



One on One

- ❖ **Silent prayer is the experience of intimacy with the Lord; it is the Lord who draws us into solitude.**
- ❖ **One enters into a *'heart to heart'* with the Lord; into a personal relationship with Him.**



OFTEN

- ❖ **This love relationship supposes regular encounters as with all friendships.**
- ❖ **We are all called by the Lord to this *daily meeting* with Him in prayer.**



With the One who we know loves us

❖ **We know that the Lord loves us:**

God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8)

❖ **Jesus waits for us in interior prayer:**

Here I am I wait at the door and I knock.

**If someone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will enter and dine with him, me near him and
him near me. (Rev. 3:20)**

❖ **This relationship is not based on feelings:**

‘who we know loves us’ NOT ‘who we feel loves us’

**It's Faith that enables this
friendly relationship with God!**

Saint Teresa of Avila's Definition of Contemplative Prayer

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is nothing else than a
close sharing between friends;
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to be alone with him
who we know loves us. (V 8,5), (CCC 2709)

What is the Goal of Silent Prayer

A Temple of the Trinity



From the moment of Baptism the Holy Trinity resides in our soul;

God wants to purify us, to sanctify us from the effects of sin in order to **unite** us with Him;

United with Him, the presence of the Trinity radiates through your whole being.

Aim of any Person beginning Prayer ...and don't forget this!

The whole aim of any person who is **beginning prayer**—and don't forget this because it's very important—should be that he work and prepare himself with **determination** and every possible **effort** to bring **his will** into **conformity** with **God's will**.

Be certain that, as I shall say later, the **greatest perfection attainable** along the spiritual path lies in this **conformity**.

It is the person who lives in more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road.

Don't think that in what concerns perfection there is some **mystery** or **things unknown** or still **to be understood**, for in perfect **conformity to God's will** lies **all our good**. (C 2,8)

Goal of Silent Prayer

- ❖ The **goal** of Silent Prayer is **Union with God**, especially in the **will** because it is with my will that I make **choices** for my life;
- ❖ The more I am **united to His will**, the more I will accomplish His will, the happier I will be, the more I will bring the kingdom of God to earth allowing the life of God to radiate in the world;
- ❖ The **challenge** of Silent Prayer is to be ever more **united to God**, to Christ in his Pascal Mystery- His Passion, Death & Resurrection-- so that the life of God **irrigates** my whole life and **radiates** to those around me in my workplace and in my family.

How to Practice Silent Prayer?

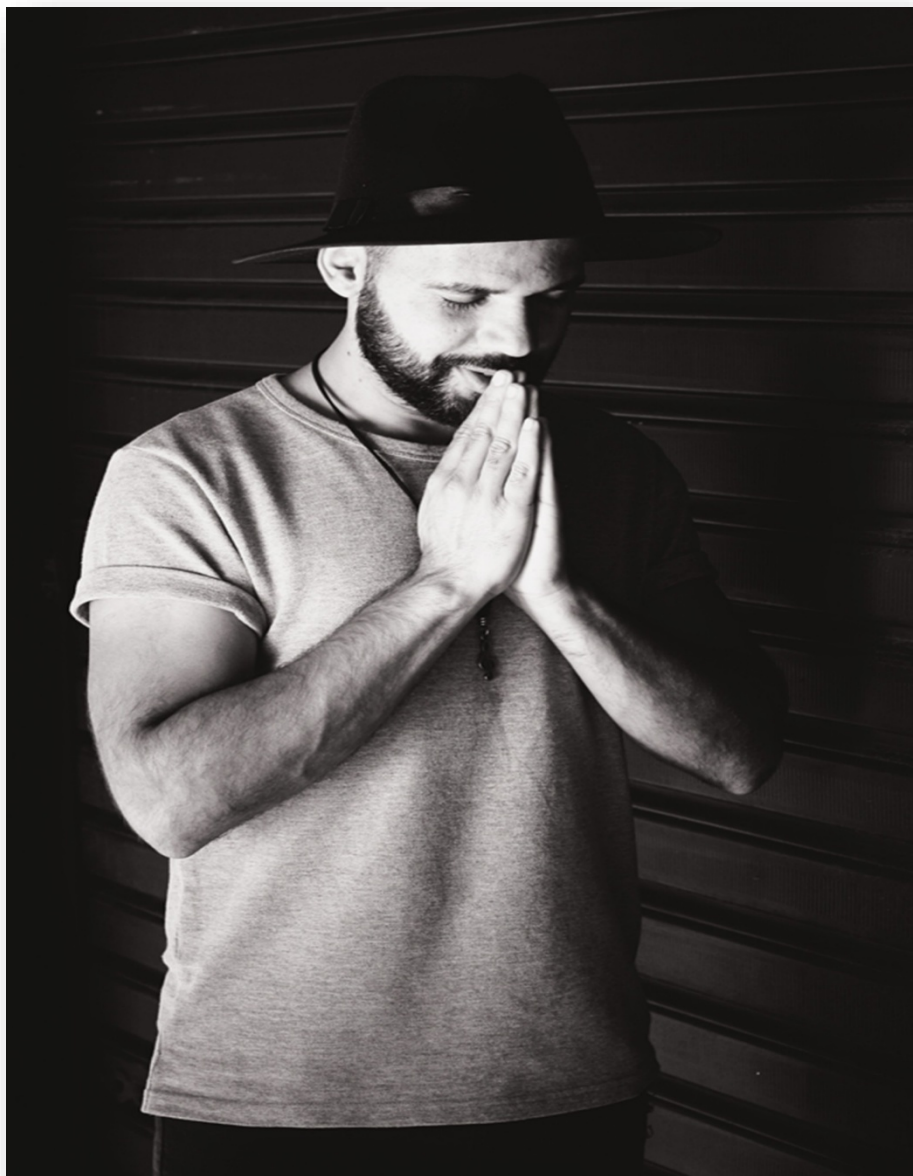


Determined Determination;

Same time daily, this time belongs to
God alone;

Decide on a time, a place, a length of
time, aids such as a book, picture,
or vocal prayer;

Spiritual Director, a school of prayer, an
OCDS community.



Difficulties

It is hard to develop a life of prayer,
It's a struggle to develop this *habit*

Spiritual Combat

There is one who doesn't want us to
experience union with God because we will
bring others with us

Distractions

Dryness

Important to have a fixed length of time

Conclusion



Union with God

The daily practice of prayer allows me to become more and more united to him to include my **whole being**;



Relationships

- ❖ A life of silent prayer is about a **friendship** with the Trinity or a specific member of the Trinity. Teresa had a friendship with the Christ in his humanity;
- ❖ My relationship with God in prayer allows me to **understand** the depth, vitality and beauty of human relationships with my spouse, friends;
- ❖ We **take better care** of our relationships, become more respectful of others, treating them with dignity and respect as they too are Temples of the Holy Spirit.



Interior Life:

Living my life in God's presence as his child
gives me liberty and
allows me to maintain an appropriate
distance from the world around me;

I can be in the world but not of it;

I can keep the world in perspective.



The Treasure? Remember?

Do not be frightened, daughters,
by the many things you need to
consider in order to begin this Divine
Journey which is the Royal Road to
Heaven. A great **treasure** is gained
by travelling this road...

Teresa of Avila (W21,1)



...The Holy Fathers on Mount Carmel
who in such great solitude and
contempt for the world
sought this **Treasure**,
this **precious pearl of contemplation...**
Yet few of us dispose ourselves that
the Lord may communicate it to us... (C 5:1)