

The Fruits of Silent Prayer
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(Translated from French)

Do not talk much when you pray lest your mind become distracted looking for words. The single word of the publican appeased God ...

St. Jean Climaque

Introduction

Many words in prayer often scatter and fill the mind with images while a single word will usually recollect you. If a word of your prayer fills you with delight, focus on it ...

We are in a world that seems to be suffocating, not for lack of air, but because it no longer breathes the breath of the soul which is silent prayer.

According to Saint Phillip of Neri, there is nothing the demon fears more than prayer and those who seek to live a life of silent prayer or the '**I look at Him and He looks at me,**' as the Pastor of Ars said. (France).

To practice silent prayer is to allow Christ to abide in me. St. John says, '**He who remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit**' 15:8. Silent prayer allows God to gradually take full possession of me, to inhabit my whole being and to live in my heart.

The Fruit of Prayer

The **fruit of prayer** will simply be the **fruit of the Holy Spirit** as St. Paul says in Galatians 5:22-25. The fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control - against such things there is no law.

One of Saint Teresa's nuns asked her how to know if she had had a good prayer time. Teresa told her to look at how her life unfolded throughout the day. It is important to underscore how much **prayer and a life of prayer are intertwined, support one another and walk as one.**

The practice of silent prayer produces much fruit and many effects in us. The mere fact that we **voluntarily cease all activity** for a time is important. We freely offer time to God, time that no longer belongs to us. This teaches me a lot about being **faithful**. My prayer time is a **meeting of two lovers**, the Lord and myself. The **Lord waits for me.**

Doing the Will of God

One of the great fruits of prayer that St. Paul spoke of in the Letter to the Galatians is the fruit of **availability and freedom**. "**Do not say Lord, Lord to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but do the will of my Father who is in Heaven**" Matt. 7:21-22. It is about submitting our life to God as did Saint Paul on the day of his conversion; "**Lord, what would you have me to do?**" Act 22, 10.

God waits until we are ready to receive from Him what He wants to give us; to do His **will** ... to live the freedom of Christ, the freedom of God's children. "**Where there is the Spirit of the Lord,**" said St. Paul, "**there is freedom**" 2 Cor 17.

All the **work of pray** is precisely about freeing ourselves from **addictions** and **compulsions**, in other words, from all of our **attachments**. To be **free** is when the unexpected happens from the hand of the Lord and we adapt to it. To be **free**, or **detachment**, is when I let go of an enjoyable activity for one less satisfying without complaining.

To do **God's will** in each moment is the **path of holiness** for all. Silent prayer leads us towards **freedom**. It removes obstacles, attachments and defects. It **purifies** us and leads us from death to life. It is a **moment of truth** before God.

Silent Prayer helps us to overcome worry and gives a **deep peace** within. It allows us to no longer live at the **surface** of ourselves, tossed about by circumstances, happy when all is going our way, and undone when not it is not.

God allows those who rest in Him to know peace no matter the external circumstances. Silent prayer is resting in God. Let's strive to live the prayer of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity: "**O my God, Trinity whom I adore, every minute takes me further into the depths of your mystery.**"

Prayer gradually **transforms our will** until it becomes one with the Christ's will for us. This is **sainthood**. We are all called to be saints.

Teresa of Avila compared our soul to a castle where the King, God, is seated at its center or the 7th mansion. The **entire**

spiritual journey consists in travelling from mansion to mansion to become a saint and thus one with the Lord.

There are Seven Mansions. The first three depend on our effort to strive to live with Christ, to be completely converted, to love, to pray and to live the Gospel.

We are able to reach the third mansion on our own with God's grace, but from then on, it is about supernatural prayer or the work of God in us. He takes matters into his own hands. He purifies our soul so that our soul adapts to His, to become one with Him. Teresa describes this journey in the Interior Castle.

The Lord may very well take you from the fourth to the fifth mansion allowing you to experience spiritual phenomena that you do not understand, hence the importance of telling someone about it. He is working in your soul, purifying it so that it can progress to become one with Him or sainthood. Again, this state, spiritual marriage, is the final or seventh mansion.

Prayer helps me want what God wants for my life. '**If someone does not give up all he has, he can't be my disciple**' Luke 14: 33. It's about dying to self on a daily basis -- to be born again in God.

Focus on Christ

A second great fruit of prayer is that silent prayer brings our **focus** ever more on **Christ** and allows us to **detach** from **sin and habits**. Prayer helps us to choose God and

as St. Teresa says: "**He who has God has everything.**"

Through the hidden work of the Holy Spirit, prayer teaches us to **want what God wants**. Because of our regular daily practice be it 10, 15, 20 minutes or an hour or 2, as do the friars and nuns ... the Holy Spirit can bring about a work of **sanctification** in us because we give Him the opportunity to act.

Silent prayer is just that, unencumbered by self, we allow God to do with us what He would. He **acts in the deep heart** without us always being aware of the wealth He brings. By His presence within, from the moment of our Baptism, He sanctifies us by bringing us many graces.

Silent prayer is an hour of truth where the Holy Spirit teaches us to know ourselves. He sanctifies, purifies and helps us to **overcome the temptations of this world**. Silent prayer, through the Scriptures, allows us to come to know Christ, the Master, better. To ignore the Scriptures, says St. John Chrisostome, is to ignore Christ. How can we know Christ if we do not read the Word of God, especially the Gospel?

The Other Fruits of Prayer

The **other fruits of prayer** bring **focus**, preventing us from being scattered. We accept more and more to stop trying to **direct everything**. We learn to let go, surrender and trust the one who knows better than we do what is best for us. A feeling of **deep peace** invades us, helping us to consider **others** in a different way, **to live**

with worries and suffering that life does not spare any of us. All is lived in God and with God.

We **live in the present** where God is. St Therese of the Child Jesus spoke of, '**Only for today.**' We acquire the stability of God. God does not change. We learn to live day to day without worrying about what tomorrow will bring. God is here. He is our support. We acquire a **serenity** that surprises those around us. It is a **gift** of the Holy Spirit based on faith in the presence of God within.

In silent prayer, St. Bernard tells us that **Christ is our place of rest and our consolation**. Our life deepens more and more. What may be important to my contemporaries, for me, pales next to the things of God.

Prayer allows us to **judge** everything in the **light of God**. It helps us do things that were previously impossible for us to do. We become bolder because as St. Paul says, "**It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.**"

Prayer makes me more **charitable**, more loving towards my fellows. My behavior towards others changes because I look at them differently. I come to realize that Christ is also **in** my brother, the stranger I pass in the street. I strive to love those in my life. I come to see them in a new way. I become more attentive to others, more human towards them, a humanity that characterized Christ. It seems that prayer teaches me to be more human.

Our world, in fact, is dying from lack of humanity. We are more and more indifferent towards each other. **Christ** is our **model of humanity**. Look at how He spoke to the Samaritan woman. It is really a model of evangelization for us, a way to proclaim the Gospel. **Let us strive to be as human as Christ was human and to witness this humanity in today's world.**

From **listening to God**, we become better at listening to others. Our quality of listening improves. We tend not to judge others. We understand better what Jesus meant when He said: "**Why do you want to remove the straw in your neighbor's eye when there is a beam in yours.**"

Conclusion

Through the practice of silent prayer the Lord allows us to **love better**, to love more in line with the love that God has for us. We learn to love those who leave us indifferent and even our enemies. If we have no enemies then those who attract us the least.

With God as our rock, prayer makes us **solid**. It also makes us more faithful both to our vocation and to any word given us. All of this happens through the presence of the Holy Trinity within us. God acts directly on the soul of the one praying. He brings about all of these changes quietly without our awareness of them. The person concerned, however, rarely notices the effects of prayer in himself.

Remember that you never waste time praying even if you do not feel anything.

When you pray, have faith that God is acting powerfully within you. It is always time well spent both for the day and for your entire life. Amen