

Reminders and Resources for the summer 2025 Homily Series

Marks of Discipleship

Week Two — Prayer

A disciple is someone who has **made a choice** to follow Jesus Christ, to embrace his teachings and to live a life that reflects his example.

Disciples are students of Jesus, learning in an ongoing fashion how to **better love** and help others.

To be a healthy and effective disciple, we need to practice being present, open and receptive to experiencing God. We also need to **stay in communication** with the Teacher, that is to pray.

Prayer is a way to **open ourselves** to the love of God for our growth, conversion, and renewal.

There are numerous ways to pray, such as: reflecting on Scripture, journaling, saying the Rosary, singing or playing music, contemplative prayer through adoration or meditation, prayer walks through nature, dancing with joy, etc. Really **all of life can be a prayer** if we stay mindful of God's presence and keep orienting ourselves on Love.

The purpose of prayer is not transactional but transformational, **to transform us** to be more like-minded with God.

Prayer is not just communication, but **communion with God**.

Gospel Connection (Luke 11: 1-13): Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, giving us the Lord's Prayer. He also encourages persistence in praying, indicating that God will "give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Many consider the Our Father to be the perfect prayer, and understandably so, as it was given to us by Jesus. These 55 words are the most repeated in all of Christianity. Jesus gave us this response when he was asked "Lord, teach us how to pray."

Reflect on the Lord's Prayer line by Line:

- **Our Father** — We are God's *children*.
- **Who art in heaven** — God is ultimately in control, not us.
- **Hallowed be thy name** — God is holy; we are called to holiness too.

- **Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven** — Seek God's kingdom above our own desires. *Jesus taught more about the kingdom of God than anything else* — a kingdom that turns everything upside down, a better way to live.
- **Give us this day our daily bread** — All is gift. Jesus emphasizes that we are to ask for what we need for today. Not tomorrow, not next week, but one day at a time. Keep perspective of the difference between needs and wants.
- **And forgive us our trespasses** — Forgiveness is at the heart of Christianity as a whole. It's something we all need. We are asking for God to show us mercy. This request is tied, however, to our own ability to forgive with the following phrase...
- **As we forgive those who trespass against us** — We ask God to forgive our wrongdoings in the same way we forgive others for their wrongdoings. Jesus holds us accountable to the golden rule. He knows too that "forgiven people forgive people."
- **And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil** — To be a disciple is counter-cultural. We ask God to guide us away from the temptation to give up and, if we do end up going down the wrong path toward evil, we ask God to bring us out of it.

Challenge: Try sitting with one phrase of the Lord's Prayer and meditate just on that. Let it sink in. Ask God to speak to you through that phrase and see what happens.

"God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer."
— Mother Teresa

"It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart."
— Mahatma Gandhi

"The value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us, but that we will finally hear God." — William McGill

"The whole reason why we pray is to be united into the vision and contemplation of God to whom we pray." — Julian of Norwich

"Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God." — Teresa of Avila

"If the only prayer you ever say in your whole life is 'thank you' that would suffice." — Meister Eckhart

For further reading:

- *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening* by Cynthia Bourgeault
- *Prayer — Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard Foster
- *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone* by James Martin, SJ
- *Prayer* by Joyce Rupp
- *Yes, And... A Year of Daily Meditations* by Richard Rohr