



THE PRAXIS

OF PRAYER

HOW POPE

FRANCIS

PRAYS

PRAYTOR

WHAT IS PRAYER

- Many people think of it as only Saying Prayers (from a prayer book eg)
- Some pray spontaneously, tell God what is on their minds or in their hearts
- All good ways of praying
- But pray is more than that
- A Parishioner asked what I did at my Retreat Centre
- I help people talk to God
- She was shocked & thought me mad!

Prayer as InterChange:

- @Pontifex: How can we celebrate the Year of Faith better in our daily lives?
- @Pontifex: By speaking with Jesus in prayer, listening to what he
- tells you in the Gospel and looking for him in those in need
- @Pontifex_es: **Dialoga** con Jesús en la oración....
- **Dialogue with Jesus!**
 - *not just monologue*

Hearing God's Voice

- How could anyone actually talk w God?
- Not just TO God, but actually with God?
- When I was young my Sunday School teachers spoke about God "telling them to do" things, like be a missionary
- I thought that if I were really good and really, really believed, some day God might talk to me!
- I thought the heard God like Moses & Samuel etc.

How does God talk in Prayer?

- Until now, God has never talked to me
- At least in that way
- I thought one would always hear God audibly, (recordable with a machine)
- Of course when God chooses God does communicate in this way
- But in the ordinary course of life, God does not talk to us
- In that way

God IS-DOES talk to each of us!

- But that does not mean God does not talk to us
- God is talking to us
- Just in a different way
- God is always talking to us
- God by His own title tells us this
- God is Logos – Word – communication
- God is ever communicating Himself to us

How do I get God to talk to me?

- The problem is not getting God to talk to me
- The problem is I have to learn to hear the Voice of God
- The problem is that I don't know how to Listen to God
- The problem is that sometimes I don't want to hear God in the way God wants to communicate Himself to me

God uses my own Feelings & Mind

- God can talk to me using my own feelings & mind.
- (Myself, I would rather hear a big voice from the sky, but unfortunately I do not get to decide how God speaks to me)
- Then the key is learning how to discern God's voice in my feelings and mind (my deepest heart, my "affectus")

The Bible: Elijah & God's Voice

- God said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." A great & strong wind tore into the mountains & broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; & after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; & after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; & after the fire a still small voice. God spoke to him saying *[1 Kings 19:]*

Church Fathers: St. Macarius:

- The Christian, even in this life, can taste the Grace of God, which is the active power of the Spirit manifested in the heart...
- Children of Light, ministers of the New Covenant, they have nothing to learn from men.
- They learn by meeting God intimately.

Ss. John Chrys., Basil Gt, Isaac Syrian

- St Jn Chrys: Find the *Door of your Heart* and you will Discover Paradise
- St. Basil: Be *attentive to yourself*, so that you may be attentive to God
- St. Isaac: Try to enter the treasure chamber...that is **within you**, then you will discover the treasure chamber of heaven. For they are one and the same. If you succeed in entering one, you will see both. The ladder to this Kingdom is hidden inside you...

Katastasis

- Prayer is a question of “Interiority” (“katastasis”);
- “the mind entering the ‘heart’”
- Prayer requires a real “interface” between the real me and the real God
- Prayer as Awareness of being w God:
 - Awareness of BEING with God:
 - “Be Still and Know that I am God” (Ps 46:10)

Prayer as Awareness:

- Beware doing a mental “Bible Study” or making it about ideas
- Focus on the spiritual “Affectus”, those **deep profound feelings in my heart**
- **Discern** those feelings (affectus)
 - Which just mine
 - Which are from the demons seeking my destruction
 - Which are from God

Praying with Scripture:

- God speaks to us First (premise)
- Listening to God (goal)
- Experiencing God's Communication
- Deeper than just God's message
 - Don't just try & get a message from God
 - Don't try to "get something out of it"
- Experiencing Quality time with God

eg Mass readings

- ***The 5 P's:***
 - Passage
 - place
 - posture
 - Presence
 - Passage

And 1 R: the prayer "Review"

- After Prayer:
 - not during; do not spoil/break the moment
- make notes of what happened in prayer in Prayer Review Notebook
 - not conclusion; but what you experienced
 - What happened: felt, thought, struggled
 - Blow by blow; "show your work"
 - Not journaling
- 2d filter of Discerning God's True Voice (the 1st is one's spiritual "sense")

Stay with the Spirit in the Affectus

- Pause
 - where: you find any significant “feeling”
- remain with the “feeling”
 - as long as you feel the “feeling”
- Follow the Affectus
 - Follow the feeling
 - Follow the image

Introduction to Retreat:

- pray 1 of the choices offered: eg:
 - Psalm 139:1-18
 - Is. 42:1-7
 - What do I “bring” to this retreat? Where am I “at”? How do I feel? if helpful: Eph 3:14-21 or Matt 11:28-30 (What is my “burden”)
- Each prayer period = 60 minutes
- Plus Review of Prayer (writing down your experience): 15 minutes

Structure of a Prayer Period:

- Opening Prayer: Our Father
- Passage, Place, & Posture: 5 min. max
- "Presence": 5 - 10 minutes
 - put self before God's Presence
 - Eg: Awareness, Breathing, Feeling, Silence exercises.
- "Meditate" on the Scripture: 40 min.
- Closing Prayer: Lesser Doxology
- Prayer Review: 15 minutes: Record Prayer in your Review Notebook

Sample Meditation on Psalm 23

- "Lord"
- --feel close to God
- --feel God present to me in a new and strong way
- --feel a holy fear in His Presence
- --*I pause, I feel my feeling (affectus)*
- --if I can sustain that for 1 hour, then GREAT!
- --no hurry to move on, don't have to "complete the assignment", not a race

An Example of Ignatian Meditation:

- Is my Shepherd
- --makes me feel safe
- --invokes image of a pastoral bucolic setting, I feel peaceful
- --*I pause, I feel my feeling (affectus)*
- "green pastures" & "still waters"
- My mind begins to wander
- When I realize it, I return to the peace

Difficult Moments in Meditation

- Shadow of Death
- --I feel distant from God,
- --I long to see God's face, but cannot feel anything
- --I can only feel God's absence and my longing for God
- --*I pause, I feel my feeling (affectus)*
 - Feeling my need for God....
 - Hoping for a return to feeling God near by

Summary of Instructions:

- Look over the Mass Readings & select one of the Readings, whichever seems to catch your attention
- Read it through a few times to familiarize yourself with it.
- quiet yourself interiorly.

Joyful Moments

- When something strikes you, e.g.,
- -you feel a new way of being with Jesus or he comes to you in a new way (e.g., as healing or accepting you in a way different than other times)
- -you experience God's love
- -you are happy and content just to be in God's presence

Difficult Moments

- -you are struggling with or disturbed by what the words are saying
- -you experience new meaning
- -you are moved to do something loving.

- ***This is the time to ...pause.***
- ***This is God speaking directly to you in the words of Scripture.***

Mine – Milk – Absorb the Grace

- Wait until you are no longer moved by the experience. **Don't get discouraged if nothing seems to be happening.** Relax.
- **God will speak to you in God's own way**
- Search your Feelings
- Spend time in your prayer just being conscious of God's presence in and around you.

Last 5 minutes:

- If you want to, speak about the things you are interested in
- or wish to thank God for, your joys, sorrows, aspirations, and so forth.
- Take the last few minutes of the pray and express your feelings to God
- Always Search your Affectus for any Response and/or sense of Presence from /God



139 上主，你鑒察了我，也認清了我：
2我或坐或立，你全然認清了我，
你由遠處已明徹我的思考。

3我或行走或躺臥，你已先知，我的一切行動，
你完全熟悉。

4的確，我的舌頭尚未發言，上主，
看，你已經知悉周全。

5你將我的前後包圍，用你的手將我蔭庇。

6這是超越我理智的奇事，也是我不能明白的妙理。

• 7 我往何處，才能脫離你的神能？
我去那裏，才能逃避你的面容？

8 我若上升於高天，你已在那裏，
我若下降於陰府，你也在那裏。

9 我若飛往日出的東方，我若
住在海洋的西方，

10 你的雙手仍在那裏引導著我，
你的右手還在那裏扶持著我。

11 我若說：願黑暗把我籠罩，
光明變成黑暗將我圍包；

12 但黑暗製作並不暗昧， 因有

- 1 3 你造成了我的五臟六腑，你在我母胎中締結了我。

1 4 我讚美你，因我被造，驚奇神奧，你的工作，千奇萬妙！我的生命，你全知曉。

1 5 我何時在暗中構形，我何時在母胎造成，我的骨骸你全知情，

1 6 我尚在母胎，你已親眼看見，世人的歲月尚未來到以前，都已全部記錄於冊表，都已全由你預先定好。

1 7 天主，你的策略，對我何其深奧！你策略的總數又是何其繁浩！

1 8 我若去計數，而它們多於沙粒；