

Going Deeper in Prayer

Sponsored by Mother of God

Speakers Damian Stayne & Fr. Francis Martin

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The information contained in this document is the result of notes taken during my attending the conference. Some of the quotes are paraphrased and are not meant to be exact but to simply give food for thoughts. At times they may be very choppy.

Day 1. Contemplative Prayer – by Damian Stayne

Colossians 4 verse 2: “Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray”. This simply means that we need to devote ourselves to prayer. In prayer, the first thing we meet is ourselves. The first component of prayer is time. To get into the presence of God is an act of worship. Prayer is the doorway through which God’s greatest gift to the soul is given. That greater gift is the gift of himself, not his power nor his consolation. St Francis of Assisi says that joy arises from purity of heart and perseverance in prayer. ***Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?***

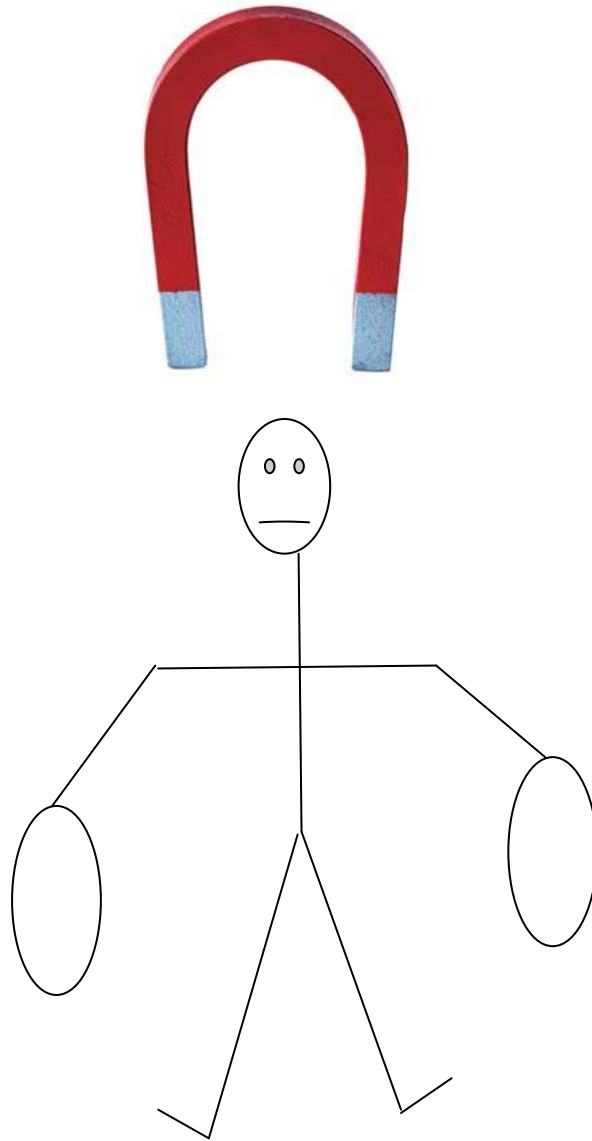
Our Lady said at Medjugorje that the person, who does not pray, does not believe.

The training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all by the art of prayer. That is there things that we can learn and master such as charity and prayer. Prayer must precede.

John Paul II said we ought to be possessed by the divine beloved. We must pray most often than we take breaths. If prayer is not filling our whole life, we are Christians at risk. Jesus Christ gave two commandments about love. Every prayer if not contextualized in the two commandments is not prayer. We should come to prayer to be loved and to love instead of seeking a prayer life because it becomes idolatry.

Saint Theresa of Avila about infused prayer said that the important thing is not to think too much, but to love much.

Prayer is a communion where the grace of the Kingdom is the union of the entire holy trinity with the whole human spirit. We cannot “straitjacket” people into prayer. There exist as many different way to pray as there is prayer. There is freedom in prayer.




God is like a magnet. We need to learn detachment. When we hurt it is because we do not let go of these baggage. We can forget at times that God is there during our prayer time.


Honest prayers attract the favor of God because they are humble. See Psalm 63

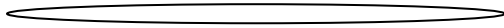
¹[Psalm Of David When he was in the desert of Judah] God, you are my God, I pine for you; my heart thirsts for you, my body longs for you, as a land parched, dreary and waterless. ² Thus I have gazed on you in the sanctuary, seeing your power and your glory. ³ Better your faithful love than life itself; my lips will praise you. ⁴ Thus I will bless you all my life, in your name lift up my hands. ⁵ All my longings fulfilled as with fat and rich foods, a song of joy on my lips and praise in my mouth. ⁶ On my bed when I think of

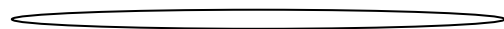
you, I muse on you in the watches of the night, ⁷ for you have always been my help; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice; ⁸ my heart clings to you, your right hand supports me. ⁹ May those who are hounding me to death go down to the depths of the earth, ¹⁰ given over to the blade of the sword, and left as food for jackals. ¹¹ Then the king shall rejoice in God, all who swear by him shall gain recognition, for the mouths of liars shall be silenced.

The desire that moves us is not our own. Humility shows me my need. Humility feeds our desires.

Think you need 

You will desire 

Think you need 

You will desire 

Without desire we will never receive the great gift of God. Do not hold back your desires. Broken humility/poverty is the key. The key to growing in deep prayer is heroic vulnerability. Set your heart on God not on spirituality.

“Have great confidence for it is necessary not to hold back one’s desires but to believe in God and if we trust in God we shall little by little reach the state of sanctity”. St Theresa of Avila.

The different stages of prayer

- Vocal Prayer – everyday. Need the gift of baptism
- Active Meditation – Need the gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Needs scriptures because I need to get the mind of Christ .The idea is to be in a relationship. It’s a dialog. The scriptures must teach me about who the Lord is and call me. It has power to change us. Do what the Lord tells you and don’t just listen to it or deceive yourself. You cannot keep the law of Christ and the beatitudes on your own. You are rewarded by the work God does in you. St Francis de Sale said that we should always end prayer by taking the resolution to change through the grace of God. Meditation engages your thoughts and imagination. Allow yourself to move to repentance. Psalm 119 – When I think of your ways I turn my feet to your decrees. Do not meditate if God is not leading you to it. Otherwise, you will miss the graces God has for you. You cannot do mystical prayers only God can do it in you. (See attached article on Discerning Contemplative Prayer). As you grow deeper in prayer it tends to simplify itself. You may read just two words and they speak to you. You don’t need much.
- Acquired Contemplation / 3rd Mansion. - Learn the art of recollection. Here you need to learn how to recollect yourself that is gathering yourself so that you can be more present into what God is doing. There can be stages of infused recollection which will overcome you. Here there is more gazing, listening and resting. That can go on for many years.
- Point at which God destroys your prayer – All of a sudden you cannot meditate of if it happens, it is very inconsistent. God is trying to break you down to make you grow. Most people go wrong

here. Stick with it and find somebody (spiritual director) who really knows what this stage is about. God will not deny himself to anyone who perseveres.

- 4th Mansion – Mystical prayer is infused with super natural delight. If we learn to do acquired contemplation a lot, we will get here much faster. Infused contemplation is the light of God. People become afraid of God (holy fear of the Lord). God is rewarding them for their fidelity. God is calling us to a different level of love. In the 4th mansion onward, you long for God. God is giving a great grace of a new time. You get to know God the way you will experience Him in heaven. You know God is a complete other way than before. God is stretching my love, my capacity and my longing for love. As you grow in it, God begins to give spiritual delight. Everything else is ashes. You get a new understanding and knowledge of things. This stage happens only in your prayer life not in life like ministry or going to have a meal or going for a walk.

Day 2. Deeper Contemplative Payer by Damian Stayne

Faith is the mystical grace it is the key to supernatural intervention. God is inviting you to allow him to take over. Contemplative and charismatic go hand in hand. God wants us to minister and pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Catholic Church has a profound mystical tradition. Smith Wigglesworth (a protestant) was a profound mystic. It's not all about style but rather about a relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is a journey into freedom.

There are three signs that show you that you are growing in prayer. Theresa of Avila says you don't judge but by detachment, humility and love of others.

a) Detachment

No one will inherit the Kingdom if he does not give up all his possessions. I have to be as free of my possession as a capuchin monk or a Franciscan sister. There are always opportunities for detachment. How are you when someone inconveniences you? Detachment is something we can practice and it comes with practice. God wants us free. You cannot be detached from spiritual things before you are detached from physical things. You have to practice detachment. Take a moment and write down ideas for detachment. Pray for love of this virtue. Detachment is not dematerialization of things but transfiguration of things.

b) Humility

If you don't love humiliation pray to love humiliation. Pray for love of these virtues. If I become addicted to the Lord's candies, I become a spoiled child. If He gives them to you thank him. Don't allow yourself to become addicted to the consolation. GK Chesterton: "No man knows how bad they are unless they know how badly they can fall". St. Theresa of Avila: "Humility is knowing myself". If you have someone who tells you your sins, you are blessed. It is a grace to know that there is no way you could have attained something. Pray to love the cross. God wants to lead us into a deeper prayer community. Pray for the gift of praise (honest praise) as it feeds humility.

c) Love of others

Am I loving other people concretely? Doing the will of others is the key in spiritual life. Find out how you would like to be loved. When we are humbled we have a choice.

Have a strategy for detachment, humility and love.

Continuous prayer

1 Thessalonians 5 v 17: “¹⁷ pray constantly”. There is a call to continuous prayer. One cannot say that a type of prayer such as the rosary is mystical because it depends on the level of grace that you have.

The Jesus prayer is like an unfair cheat in prayer life “**Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner**”. The name of Jesus [Yahweh saves] contains all God and all humanity. It is the only name that contains the presence it signifies. (Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2666). The name has power. It utterly destroys all that is evil. (Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2667). Try it for a couple of months. I am calling down mercy on me and others. I have the privilege to call the name of Jesus into the holies of holies in my heart without being killed. Flood your enemies with the name of Jesus. Allow the brightness of the transfiguration to penetrate your life.

There are different levels in the Jesus prayer.:

Lord – In the spirit only can I say that Jesus is Lord. This uses both praise and contrition which are humility. It opens favors over us.

Jesus – Oral focus on the name makes you focus on the glory.

Son of the living God – Trinitarian adoration and contrition.

After years of praying this prayer, it prays itself in you. That is infused prayer. This prayer can be used on the run or when trying to recollect. It is a tool than can stay with you no matter your spiritual level. You become a point of reconciliation between heaven and earth for yourself and for others. When you pray it at depths, something in you opens like a memory that disposes you to be more opened in the future. Pray for the revelation of the power of your humble prayer and the power of the name.

Have a strategy for breaking your day. Create triggers in your day. The devil has a strategy for your life. What's yours? Become a person in the spirit. The temptation in the west is to be overactive in prayer. Pray with faith not despair.

Day3. The Causality of the Word of God – Praying the scriptures by Fr. Francis Martin

It is a plan of the Holy Spirit to prepare us to witness.

2 Timothy 3 v 16 -17: ¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and useful for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be upright. ¹⁷ This is how someone who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work." At that time Saint Paul is talking about the old testament.

St Jerome: "Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ"

The following scripture is the Word that changed Saint Augustine's life. Roman 13 verses 12-14: ¹² The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light. ¹³ Let us live decently, as in the light of day; with no orgies or drunkenness, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. ¹⁴ Let your armor be the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop worrying about how your disordered natural inclinations may be fulfilled."

God is the one who takes the initiative in our lives. To consent is to be saved. Listen as you pray so He can talk to you.

Example of the power of the Word of God: in the gospel of Saint Luke chapter 24 when Jesus was talking to the disciples on the road to Emmaus they recalled: "We not our hearts burning?" Jesus is the fire of Sinai. He opened their minds through the grace of the resurrection. The understanding of scriptures is the proof of the resurrection because it is the Holy Spirit who gives that understanding. Let it empower you so you can change. All the Word of God is one Bible. What in the Old Testament is shadow becomes light in the new. The ultimate goal of scriptures is to provide an experiential encounter between the soul and God. To desire the Lord is a great grace of the Holy Spirit. It is a grace because he impresses that reality onto the hearts. I invite you to read the Word of God and tell him that you are not moving forward until he reveals you something. (That is an act of faith). God love to teach you through His Word. It's not just a book.

Then father walked us through John chapter 6.