

Class 14 Lecture Notes
Introduction to Prayer

1. Introduction
 - a. Prayer is the simplest and yet the most complex aspect of our life
 - i. Simple because it is nothing more than dialogue with God
 - ii. Complex because there are many ways and methods of prayer
 - b. Why Pray
 - i. Prayer is the way that we develop, sustain, and deepen our relationship with God
 1. The more we spend time with people the more the relationship develops
 - ii. Jesus Himself prayed
 1. Jesus goes off to a deserted place to pray Mk 1:35
 2. Jesus gives praise to His Father Mt 11:25-26
 3. Before calling the apostles Lk 6:12
 4. Jesus prays a prayer of petition as he raises Lazarus from the dead Jn 11:41 - 42
 - iii. Jesus taught us to pray
 1. Taught us to pray the Our Father Mt 6:9-13
2. Dispositions required for prayer
 - a. Humility
 - i. acknowledging our dependence of God
 - ii. This is the most basic attitude we need for prayer
 - b. Confidence
 - i. Prayer requires that we have the confidence that God always hears and answers our prayers
 1. Jesus assures us that he answers our prayers
 - c. Devotion and Recollection
 - i. Prayer demands that we place ourselves in the presence of God
 - ii. Simply recognizing that we are in God's presence and being mindful of who we are speaking to
 - d. Perseverance
 - i. Prayer can often be a struggle
 1. Finding time to fit it in our busy schedule
 2. Fighting off distractions, frustrations and discouragements
 - ii. Prayer can be a battle
 1. Against ourselves when we don't feel like praying or we find prayer dull
 2. Against Satan who does not want us to pray
 3. Against the world which does not foster a life of prayer
 - iii. Our love of God must be the sustaining factor in our life of prayer
 1. Isn't this also the case with our human relations.
 - e. Acceptance
 - i. We are guaranteed to have our prayers answered but not necessarily in the specific way that we would like
 - ii. We must be ready and willing to accept whatever answer He gives

3. 4 Main Types of Prayer
 - a. Adoration
 - i. We praise God for His greatness and perfection and worship Him
 - b. Thanksgiving
 - i. We give thanks to God for His blessings to us
 - c. Contrition
 - i. Express true sorrow for our sins
 - d. Petition
 - i. Request something from God
4. Two main divisions of prayer
 - a. Liturgical
 - i. The official prayer of the Church
 - ii. Examples
 1. The Sacred Liturgy
 - a. The Sacraments
 2. Divine Office
 - b. Personal Prayer
 - i. Any prayer that is outside the official prayer of the Church
 - c. Relationship between the two
 - i. We need both liturgical prayer and personal prayer
 - ii. Liturgical prayer is primary because it unites us to the Body of Christ with Christ as the Head, but our participation liturgical prayer is deepened by our personal prayer.
5. Methods of Prayer
 - a. Vocal Prayer
 - i. Includes all prayer that makes use of speech to express our prayers
 - ii. The most fundamental, basic type of prayer
 - iii. Speaking to God
 - iv. Important because what we do with our bodies affects our souls
 1. our vocal prayer is effective as prayer and formative for us.
 - v. Formal Vocal Prayer
 1. Many different collections of formalized prayer
 2. Formal / structured prayer is often especially good for us a first step in our prayer
 3. Very helpful when we find it difficult to focus or are tired etc. and still need to pray
 - vi. Informal vocal prayer
 1. Unlike formal prayers we come up with the words we speak
 - a. Can be either a period set aside for it or spontaneous
 - b. Meditation
 - i. We engage our thoughts, imagination and will in the raising of our hearts and minds to God
 1. The active consideration of what God has revealed to us and done for us followed by the fostering of good affections, resolutions that help us grow in our Catholic life.
 - ii. Uses both intellect and will

1. intellect to think and consider
 2. will to desire something
 3. Not the eastern idea of trying to get beyond ourselves
 - iii. Ways to meditate
 1. 4 Step Process
 - a. Preparation
 - i. Placing oneself in the presence of God
 - b. Reading a subject for our meditation
 - i. use our intellect to consider and examine deeply what is being said concerning who God is, what he has done, our life with Him etc.
 - ii. The goal is to consider the content in such a way that we become ever more convicted of God's love for us and are filled with a desire to respond with love in return
 - c. Dialogue
 - i. The meditation should lead us to speak to God from the depth of our hearts
 - ii. Should lead us to want to make great acts of love for God with our will
 - iii. Should lead us to want to show our love for Him through our actions.
 - d. Conclusion
 - i. Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving
 - c. Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)
 - i. The ancient practice of meditatively reading a text and allowing it to lead to meditation
 - ii. See Attached Worksheet
 - iii. Important Reminders
 1. our imagination plays a role in the first part of lection because it helps us "see" what the text is saying or the event it is portraying
 2. We cannot get stuck on the imagining part, for imagining is not prayer, but is the step of preparing for prayer
 3. Need to be careful not to create things that are not in the text
 - a. We need to be honest with what the text is saying
 4. Having a good bible
 - a. good translation and good footnotes
6. Summary
 - a. Prayer is essential for every person who wants to remain in union with God
 - b. Prayer is at its core a dialogue with God
 - i. Requires humility and perseverance as well as faith and trust in God
 - c. Personal prayer should be a combination of vocal prayer and meditation
 - d. The best way to come to a greater understanding of prayer is to do it