

# ***LITURGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL PRAYER: THE GASOLINE FOR OUR SPIRITUAL ENGINES***

**Outline by James F. Gontis**

## **Opening Questions:**

**What is Prayer?**

**Who makes it possible for us to pray?**

- I. Practical Tips Regarding Prayer
  - A. Places for prayer
    1. We can and should pray everywhere
    2. There are places particularly favorable for prayer, especially in front of the Blessed Sacrament
  - B. Rhythm of Prayer
    1. St. Paul tells us to *Pray without ceasing* (1 Thes. 5:17)
    2. According to Year and the Day
  - C. Pray according to our state in life - Reading from St. Francis de Sales
    1. All Catholics need to make sure they get to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
    2. All Catholics should frequently go to Confession
    3. All Catholics should have devotion to the Mary, Mother of God
    4. Everyone should pray minimally every morning, before all meals, and before you go to sleep.
    5. However, beyond that, how one prays and the amount of time one prays will vary a great deal according to one's vocation, e.g. married, priest, consecrated religious sister or brother)
  - D. Some basic tips regarding prayer
    1. Use memorized and un-memorized prayer
    2. Use the senses, including art and song
    3. Pray according to your state in life
    4. Realize that you will experience dryness in prayer – persevere! Do not kid yourselves....the

Christian life is a battle! But there a great victory awaits those who persevere in God's grace!

5. Have the heart and mind of a true disciple of Christ!

II. Expressions of Prayer

- A. Adoration – Worshiping God for His own sake, because He is the one, all-good, all-holy God to whom we owe our worship
- B. Contrition – Sorrow for our sins
- C. Thanksgiving – Thanking God for His gifts – both spiritual and temporal
- D. Supplication – Asking God for good things (spiritual and temporal) for ourselves and others

III. Hierarchy of Prayer

- A. Liturgical Prayer
- B. Devotional Prayer

IV. Liturgical Prayer – Public Prayer of the Church

- A. Liturgy comes from a Greek word which means “work or service done on behalf of the people.”
- B. Liturgical prayer is public prayer of the Church
- C. Types of liturgical prayer
  - 1. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass – Objectively it is the greatest reality that any person can be part of this side of heaven.
    - a. Source and Summit of the Christian life
    - b. All graces that come into the world flow from it
    - c. All other sacraments oriented toward the Eucharist
    - d. Principal Parts of the Mass
      - Introductory Rite
      - Liturgy of the Word
      - Liturgy of the Eucharist
      - Concluding Rite
    - e. Mass attendance minimally on Sundays (or Saturday evening) and Holy Days of Obligation

- f. Mass is celebrated every day, thousands of times each day throughout the world.
  - g. There is a universality to the Mass.
2. Liturgy of the Hours
    - a. Official Public Prayer of the Church
    - b. Required for clergy and religious and recommended for lay people according to their state in life
    - c. The Psalms: Treasures of prayer encapsulating every emotion
    - d. The Hours – 7 hours (but they don't take an hour to pray) they take 10-15 minutes
  3. The seven sacraments – All are liturgical prayer
    - a. All were instituted by Jesus Christ
    - b. Their Scriptural foundations can all be found in the Bible
    - c. There are seven of them
    - d. They are signs, instituted by Christ, entrusted to His Church, that give grace
    - e. The signs are composed of **matter** (the sensory stuff, i.e. what you see, hear, touch, taste, smell) and **form** (the principal words of the sacrament)
    - f. In some cases we know specifically when sacraments were instituted, e.g. the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders were instituted at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, Confession was instituted on Easter Sunday night in the upper room in Jerusalem where the Apostles were hiding, cf. John 20:19-23.
  4. Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction (Blessing of the people with the Blessed Sacrament)
    - a. Includes adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which is in a sacred vessel called a monstrance
    - b. Certain hymns pertaining the worship of the Eucharist are sung, e.g. the Tantum Ergo,
    - c. Certain prayers are prayed, e.g. the Divine Praises

d. Blessing of the people with the Eucharist by the Priest or Deacon.

V. Devotional Prayer

A. Eucharistic Adoration without Benediction – St. Alphonsus Liguori said that Eucharistic adoration is the greatest of devotions.

Note: Eucharistic adoration with benediction is a form of liturgical prayer.

B. Lectio divina

C. The Rosary

D. Divine Mercy Devotions

E. Other Important Devotions

1. The Stations of the Cross – Focuses on the suffering and death of Christ. Most Catholic parishes have Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent, but one can pray them privately any time of year. Blessed John Paul II prayed them every Friday for his entire adult life.
2. Litanies – List of praises or invocations of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Saints
3. Novenas – 9-day Prayer asking God's help or the intercession of Mary or one of the other saints for a particular favor
4. Prayer Books can be very helpful

VI. Prayer – More Practical Tips

A. The details matter

B. Be balanced in your approach to prayer. We are to strive to be perfect in our prayer, but must be realistic enough to know that we are usually not.

C. Don't pit memorized / rote prayer against extemporaneous prayer

VII. Questions, Comments, Complaints

