



# Archdiocesan Program

## WHY CATHOLIC?

STRENGTHENING FAITH ... MAKING DISCIPLES



## CHRISTIAN PRAYER

### *THE BATTLE OF PRAYER*



#### **Biblical Reflection: Mt 6:19-34**

Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against

the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The “spiritual battle” of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer. (CCC 2725)

In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us erroneous notions of prayer. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they “don’t have the time.” Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone. (CCC 2726)

The principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are distraction and dryness. The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart. (CCC 2754)

*“Do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask him; for he desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to him in prayer.”* Evagrius Ponticus (CCC 2737)

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- **What are, in general, the difficulties that challenge our prayer life more? What are your own difficulties?**
- **In the letter of James 4:7-8, we read: “So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds.” Do you find in these words any ideas that can help you in your battle of prayer? What?**
- **In paragraph number 2725 we read: “We pray as we live, because we live as we pray”. Is this a reality in your prayer life? Please explain.**
- **How do you feel when you pray for something and think that you have not been listened to?**
- **When we ask God for something, are we always 100 percent sure it is what is best for us? Is not true that God loves us and he knows what is best for us? Do you believe that?**

**Further reading:** Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 2725-2758