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PERSONAL PRAYER, PATHWAY TO JOY

Handout from the talk by: [Marcellino D'Ambrosio, PhD](#)



- I. **Joy comes from intimate communion**
 - A. Vatican II's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) 24: "Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself."
 - B. Human marriage a sign of a higher love. Eph 5: 31-32
 - C. Ps. 34:9 "Taste and see that the Lord is good."
 - D. Ps. 34: 6 "Look to him that you may be radiant with joy"

- II. **Prayer expresses & nurtures a Relationship: Model of marital friendship**
 - A. **Prayer as Dialogue:** "The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." Ex 33:11, CCC 2576. Intimacy CCC 2576.
 - B. **Attentiveness:** listen to God 2x as much as you talk
 1. *Lk 10: 38-42* Martha & Mary "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion and she shall not be deprived of it." NAB
 2. Lives of Saints:
 - a. Lappin, Peter. *Give Me Souls*. New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1977. About St. John Bosco.
 - b. Brother Raymond: [Three Religious Rebels](#) and [The Family that Overtook Christ](#). St. Paul Books, 800-876-4463. About the founders of the Cistercian monks and St. Bernard of Clairvaux and family.
 - c. Timmermans, Felix. *The Perfect Joy of St. Francis*. Trans. Raphael Brown. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image, 1955. Out of print?
 - C. **Continual Remembrance of God and his works**
 1. Mary: treasured all the things God did in her heart. Lk 1:49; 2:19; 2:51
 2. Dt.8:11 "Be careful not to forget the Lord, your God." cf. 6:12, 4:9
 3. Dt 6:4-9 "Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates." [NAB]

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4. *Ps 77:11-12* "I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD; yea, I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate on all thy work, and muse on thy mighty deeds." RSV
5. *Sir 6:37* "Reflect on the precepts of the Lord, let his commandments be your constant meditation."

III. **Patterns, models of prayer: liturgy & our Father**

- A. **Liturgy and Devotional prayer:** can't really separate. Liturgical Seasons.
- B. **Repentance:** examination of conscience before going to bed
- C. **Gratitude & Praise:** Eucharist as model
 1. 2 out of 3 of Jesus' prayers in NT start with thanks *Jn 11:41* & *Mt 11:25*
 2. "Hallowed be Thy Name", 1st petition of Our Father is praise
 3. *1 Thes 5:18* "Give thanks in all circumstances."
- D. **Petition: I need help! Expression of humility & confidence in God.**
 1. *Mat 6:33* "But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides." (NAB)
 2. *Lk 22:42* Garden of Gethsemani "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (NAB)
 3. *Jn 15:7* "If you live in me, and my words stay part of you, you may ask what you will—it will be done for you." (NAB) Conditional.
- E. **Intercession**
 1. Moses "stands in the breach" *Ps 106:23; Ex 32:1-34:9*
 2. Abraham & Sodom. *Gen 18:16-32*
 3. *Hebrews 7:25*: Christ forever lives to make intercession for us.
- F. **Communion:** rest in the presence of the Lord with few words.
 1. *Ps. 46: 10* ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God." (RSV).
 2. Brother Lawrence. *Practice of the Presence of God*. Doubleday. 0-385-48240-X. Can order through Univ. Dallas Book store or Barnes & Noble
- G. **Constancy, perseverance.** Commitment
 1. *Gen 32:24-30*; Peniel, "triumph of perseverance" CCC 2573

IV. **Practical Hints & Resources**

- A. **Some Biblical Prayers**
 1. The 150 Psalms
 2. Other biblical prayers
 - a. Benedictus (Canticle of Zacariah) *Lk 1:64* Morning
 - b. Magnificat (Canticle of Mary) *Lk 1:46* Evening
 - c. Nunc Dimittis (Canticle of Simeon) *Lk 2: 29-32* Before Bed
 - d. Centurions prayer: Lord, I am not worthy. *Lk 7:6f*
 - e. Publican: "have mercy on me, a sinner." *Lk 18:13*
 - f. Bartimaeus "Son of David, have pity on me!" *Mk 10:47*
 - g. Our Father (*Mat 6:9-15*) & Hail Mary (*Lk 1:28,42*)
 3. Scripture Memorization very Catholic! Focolare: memorize one short Scripture per week, trying to apply it to every aspect of your life. Chiara Lubich, the *Word of Life*. New City Press. ISBN 0-942-8721-1. 58 pages!

- B. **Eucharist & liturgy of the hours**
 - 1. Daily or weekly missal
 - 2. The Liturgy of the Hours: 1 volume Christian Prayer
 - 3. *Magnificat* <http://www.magnificat.net> 1.800.317.6689

- C. **Rosary:**
 - 1. **My favorite book** on the meaning of the rosary & the 15 mysteries:
Hans Urs von Balthasar, The Threefold Garland, Igatius Press, 800-651-1531
 - 2. **Scriptural rosary**

- D. **Aspirations–Ejaculatory Prayer** in the midst of work
 - 1. St. Francis prayed all night: “My God & my all”
 - 2. Jesus prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.” Read The Way of the Pilgrim (anonymous), translated by Helen Bacovcin

- E. *Handbook of Indulgences* Devotional treasury
- F. *Shorter Book of Blessings* Grace before meals
- G. **Retreat:** prayer is like breathing; sometimes one needs to take a deep breath!
 - 1. Monserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas 940-321-6020
 - 2. Catherine Doherty, *Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1975

Personal Prayer: Pathway to Joy CD

Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

Everyone knows that personal prayer is important. You can't expect to deepen a relationship with God talking with Him only once a week! But how, in the midst of the busy, noisy life we all lead, can we develop a pattern of daily prayer that really works? And if we are successful in carving out some moments for prayer, what do we do? How should we spend that time in way that would be most fruitful?

Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio has taught spiritual theology academically, but, more importantly, he's had plenty of practice applying that tradition to everyday life. With a family of seven, a business, and a non-profit corporation to run, he knows the challenges that a busy, active life can pose to the Christian who wants to pray. In this talk, he lays down principles and gives practical suggestions on how busy laypeople can develop a prayer life that leads to joy and personal transformation.



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