



Praying Better

Barbara Harrington, PhD

Praying to **God as the One**

The Search for Unifying Purpose

For those who run to God as the Rock, the one safe, lasting, consistent Reality.

Their salvation means freedom from the whirlwind of confusion and change.

They seek in God the integration of their body, mind, and soul.



Read the work of St. Catherine of Genoa and Jesuit Spirituality: Discernment and then Obedience (ie. “the Soldier for Christ”)

Find a ministry of service that engages with those who are suffering from dysfunction and a lack of integration (the mentally ill, addicted, or prisoners).

Praying to **God as The Truth**



Read the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas and Benedict XVI. Read great Christian literary works like *The Bros Karamazov*, *Paradise Lost*. Delve into Dominican spirituality.

Find a ministry that involves teaching or writing.

- For those who love more by learning more.
- Their salvation lies in finding reasons that make human life and the cosmos make sense.
- They trust in books, teachers, and study.
- God represents the Answer to every Question.

Praying to God as the Good

- For those for whom God is first and foremost Love.
- They find meaning and salvation in pouring themselves into loving and serving other people.
- For them, the life of faith means vulnerability, kindness, service, and hospitality.



- Read the writings of St. Francis De Sales, and St. Teresa of Calcutta.
- Meditate on the Gospel of St. John.
- For ministry, find something that allows you to put your hands on the needy: (feeding the hungry, holding babies, nursing the sick.)

Praying to *God as the Beautiful*

- These are those who are drawn to God as the Creator. They find the Divine Presence most clearly in the majesty of nature, in music, in the sensory signs of the invisible God.
- For them, salvation is in bringing forth new epiphanies of beauty, in creating harmony and praising whatever is lovely.



- Read *The Confessions of St. Augustine* and the writings of St. Bernard.
- Delve into Carmelite spirituality and Marian devotion.
- Use poetry, visual art, and music as part of your devotional life.

Preparing for **Public** Prayer

Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Any Rites

- Location in the sanctuary (Can I see? Can I hear? Do people distract me?)
- Do I have what I need to participate? (Hymnal, missal, prayer book)
- Transition time (early enough to be able to be calm and pray before?)
- Private regimen of preparation (Invocation of the Holy Spirit. Intention for this time of prayer? Am I spiritually able to receive the Eucharist?)

Preparing for **Private** Prayer



Eucharistic Adoration, morning and evening devotions, rosary, etc.

- How can I quiet myself better remotely before praying?
- Where is my best prayer place?
- What is my best prayer position?
- What prayers should I say on a regular basis? (Morning offering, angelus, act of contrition, ?)

St. Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer

- The bow – humility / praise
- Laying face down – prayer for mercy
- Disciplinary Posture – repentance
- Genuflection – Eucharistic worship
- Standing Hands open - thanksgiving
- Orans – self offering
- Hands raised high to heaven - supplication
- With a book – conversation with a friend



Reining in the Body

Custody of the Eyes

- Direct your vision to what supports your recollection. (the art in the sanctuary, the words of the readings, the actions of the sacred ministers)
- Suppress curiosity (The Communion line is not supposed to be people watching.)

Custody of the Body

- Find a good position and then maintain it. (Avoid scratching, shifting, rocking)
- Learn the reasons the Church dictates certain body postures and physical actions and do them consciously. (bows, genuflection, kneeling, standing)
- Adopt certain standard postures to teach your body that it is prayer time. (folding hands, head bowed)

Meaning of Liturgical Postures

- **Standing** – Signifies our dignity as members of the Church and Children of the Kingdom; A Secondary sign of respect.
- **Sitting** – The posture of learning and listening; the comfort of the body is necessary so that the mind can be at work.
- **Kneeling** - primarily for Eucharistic worship; a high expression of reverence
- **Genuflection** - the highest form of exterior recognition of the Presence of the Divine. (When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, a Double Genuflection and Profound Bow is mandated.)
- **Profound Bow** – from the waist; a recognition of Divine Mystery or a sign of respect
- **Simple Bow** – from the neck; sign of submission; to help the body focus
- **Sign of the Cross** – a reminder of our baptism

The Orans Posture

“*Orans*” is Latin for “one who is praying.” It was the posture of prayer for pagans in the ancient world.

In Christianity, the *orans* position becomes connected to the crucifixion – an offering of self in union with Christ.

In the liturgy, the *orans* posture is reserved to the priest.



I. The Prayer of Blessing: “Oh, it’s you!”

“Blessing expresses the basic movement of Christian prayer: it is an encounter between God and man. In blessing, God's gift and man's acceptance of it are united in dialogue with each other.” (CCC 2626)

A prayer in which a person is not aware of Whom he is speaking to, what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of Whom, I don't call prayer—however much the lips may move.

—St. Teresa of Avila



“Blessing” means
we take a minute
to switch gears
and place ourself
in God’s Presence.



Before prayer, endeavor to realize whose Presence you are approaching, and to whom you are about to speak. We can never fully understand how we ought to behave towards God, before whom the angels tremble.

Teresa of Ávila

II. Prayer of Petition

“...ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even "struggle in prayer...."we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming.” (CCC 2629, 2632)

'We set forth our petitions before God, not in order to make known to Him our needs and desires, but rather so that we ourselves may realize that in these things it is necessary to turn to God for help.'
St. Thomas Aquinas

“Petition” is the moment of prayer when we lay out our intentions - the burdens we are carrying in our hearts and minds.





“The first movement
of the prayer of
petition is asking
forgiveness.”
CCC 2631

III. The Prayer of Intercession

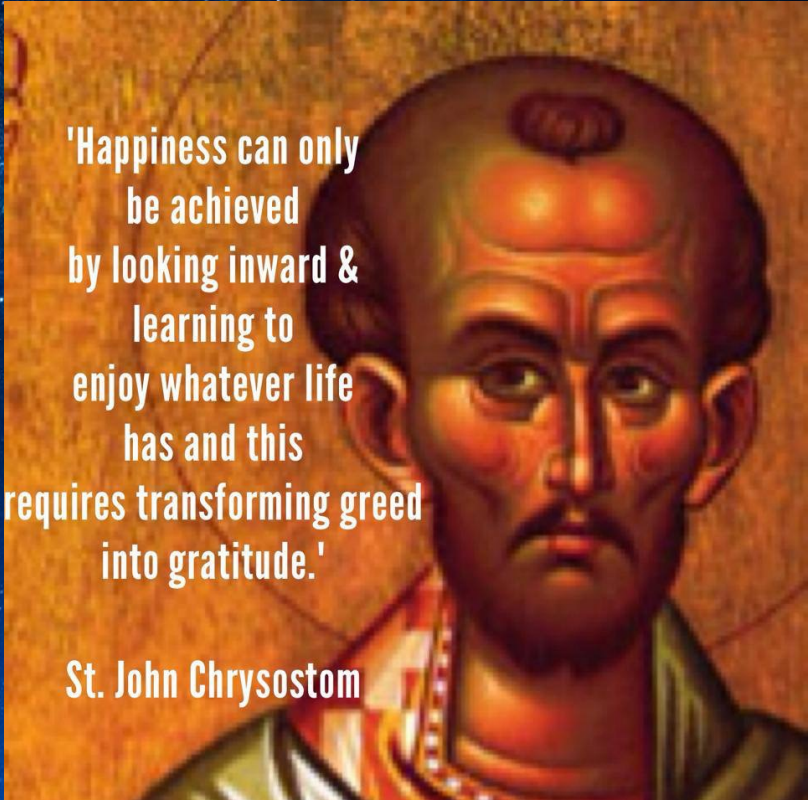
“In intercession, he who prays looks to the interests of others, even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.” CCC 2635

"The prayer most pleasing to God is that made for others and particularly for the poor souls. Pray for them, if you want your prayers to bring high interest."

–Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich

IV. The Prayer of Thanksgiving

“...every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving.” CCC 2638



'Happiness can only be achieved by looking inward & learning to enjoy whatever life has and this requires transforming greed into gratitude.'

St. John Chrysostom

**10 THINGS TO THANK & PRAISE GOD
FOR**

His Love

His Grace

His Mercy

His Gospel

His Comfort

His Strength

His Salvation

His Compassion

His Forgiveness

His Gift of Eternal Life

V. The Prayer of Praise

Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS.

CCC 2629