

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

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What is Prayer?

1. If we look at modern man, we see that he works, hurries, and is busy. He has no time for God..... no time to listen to Him.....no time to converse with Him, to talk to Him..... no time to pray. How little time we dedicate to prayer!

2. We cannot separate our prayer from our Christian life; they always go together. St. Agustin expresses this interior relationship between the life of prayer and the Christian life in the following manner: "Whoever prays well, lives well." The contrary can also be said: whoever prays badly, lives badly.

St. Teresa also explains: "For me it is always the same: to pray and to find the way to God." Therefore, whoever does not pray, will never find the way to God. We understand it this way because many of our contemporaries do not live as Christians, they do not have a personal relationship with God: they do not make the effort to pray.

St. Alphonse speaks harshly to these people: "Whoever does not pray, whoever ceases to pray, will not be condemned.....because they are already condemned." Even though we do not lose the hope of salvation for these people, nevertheless, we feel prayer is absolutely necessary to be a vital Christian, to be a new man, a new person.

3. What then is prayer? Simply said, prayer is to dialog personally with God, it is speaking person to person with Him.

Our prayer is impersonal when it is only repetition without reflection.....when it is only lip-moving.....when there is no interior interest in what we say exteriorly. It is what God says to the Jews through the prophet Isaiah: "These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless, and their hearts are somewhere else." (IS 29,13)

On the contrary, prayer is dialog with God, a vital intercommunication between God and I. I speak to Him as a very dear human person.....I talk about my personal and family interests.....and also about God's interests. All which I personally experience, feel, desire, suffer.....I tell it all to Him.

In this way, I am united to God in prayer with my whole being, with my entire life, with all my joy, with all my problems.

Thus our prayer wants to be natural, or as St. Therese teaches us – a "spontaneous chat" with the personal God.

4. Prayer, in this sense, takes the whole person, especially the heart because true prayer is also understood as a dialog of the heart between God and the person. There is a proverb which says: It is better to pray with a lot of heart and few words than to pray with many words and little heart.

Prayer with the heart is a sign of mature love and of deep attachment to God. According to the measure in which love becomes deeper, it needs fewer gestures and less words to express itself. More and more it needs tranquility in order to look simply and to love in silence.

5. Many Christians think they do not have time to pray. Time is not lacking. Lacking is valuing God because we have time for all that which seems important to us and interests us:.....the newspaper.....sports.....a vacation.....a party..... We do not have time for God because He is not important.....He is not very valuable to us, or rather, it is a matter of hierarchy, of values.

As in each friendship, our friendship with God also requires a little bit of time, some attention, some care. If we love, we must find time to love. Prayer is stopping and making time to cultivate our friendship with God. A true friendship comes forth slowly: one must have patience to love, one has to know how to stop.

Questions for reflection

1. How is my dialog with God?
2. How many words and how much heart are in my prayers?

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Translation: Carlos Cantú Schoenstatt Family Federation La Feria, Texas USA 090509