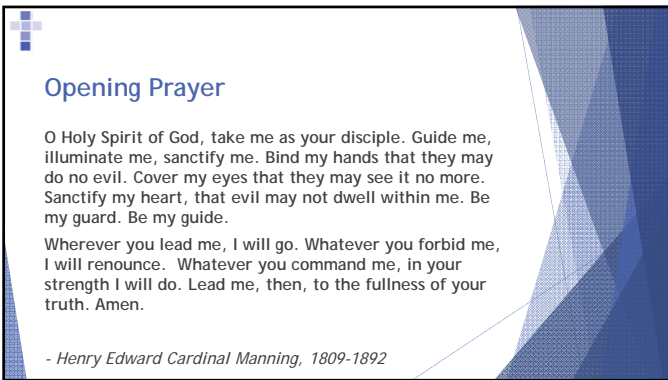


Catholic Discipleship
Unit 8: Prayer

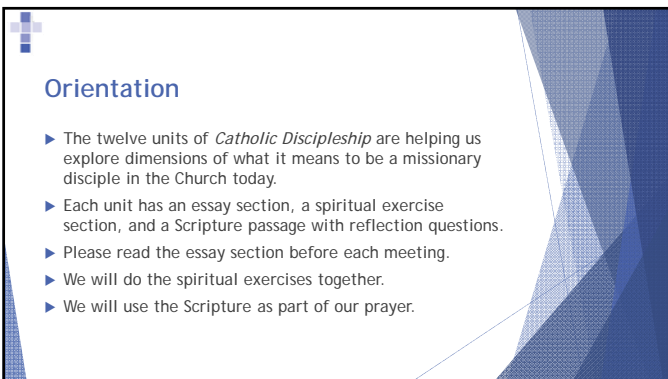


Opening Prayer

O Holy Spirit of God, take me as your disciple. Guide me, illuminate me, sanctify me. Bind my hands that they may do no evil. Cover my eyes that they may see it no more. Sanctify my heart, that evil may not dwell within me. Be my guard. Be my guide.

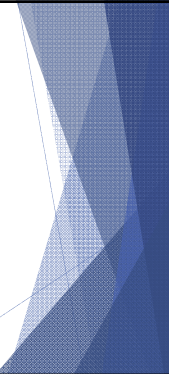
Wherever you lead me, I will go. Whatever you forbid me, I will renounce. Whatever you command me, in your strength I will do. Lead me, then, to the fullness of your truth. Amen.

- Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, 1809-1892



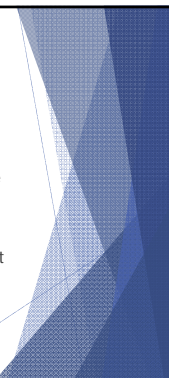
Orientation

- ▶ The twelve units of *Catholic Discipleship* are helping us explore dimensions of what it means to be a missionary disciple in the Church today.
- ▶ Each unit has an essay section, a spiritual exercise section, and a Scripture passage with reflection questions.
- ▶ Please read the essay section before each meeting.
- ▶ We will do the spiritual exercises together.
- ▶ We will use the Scripture as part of our prayer.



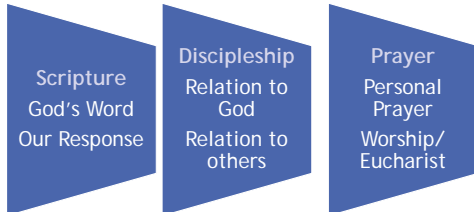

Objectives

- ▶ To reflect on the experience of prayer
- ▶ To see prayer in terms of relationship and discipleship
- ▶ To grasp prayer as an expression of relationship in terms of the images and teachings of the Bible
- ▶ To explore basic kinds of prayer
- ▶ To become clearer about the place of personal prayer in our own lives



Prayer and Discipleship

So, prayer has to be more than a formula, and it means something more than a vague talking to God. In fact, prayer flows from the heart of our experience of discipleship. Once we, as disciples, have a sense of relationship with God, and once we let the Scriptures deepen that relationship, then prayer becomes a way for us to enter into intimate communion with God. We find ourselves open to the deepest levels of God's presence; likewise, we sense God's ever-ready openness to us (p. 54).



Scripture
God's Word
Our Response

Discipleship
Relation to God
Relation to others

Prayer
Personal Prayer
Worship/
Eucharist

What Does Prayer Do?

- ▶ Our ordinary experiences
- ▶ Some extraordinary experiences in our lives
- ▶ Moments when other dimensions were opened to us
- ▶ Moments when dimensions of God and eternity seemed to be open to us
- ▶ Moments that seem to transcend the limitations of everyday experience

Prayer

- ▶ Prayer is that deliberate action we take to address, and listen to, the divine mystery—as God becomes known in the holy Scriptures and in our centuries-old reflection on the Scriptures (p. 55).
- ▶ Signs and wonders appear in what looked like an empty field. We ‘hear’ God speaking not in language, but in relationships that change and transform us: God ‘speaks’ peace, grace, hope, faith, generosity, and deeper life. We find these, miraculously(!), as realities in our hearts (p. 56).

Expressions of Prayer

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graph LR; Prayer[Prayer] --> Petition[Petition]; Prayer --> Adoration[Adoration];
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Personal Prayer

- ▶ All prayer is to bring me into relationship with God and allow me to express that relationship.
- ▶ Structured prayer: provides the skeleton on which personal sentiments, needs, thoughts, and desires can build
 - ▶ Structured prayer: reciting psalms, the Rosary, using a prayer book, the Divine Mercy chaplet, etc.
- ▶ Unstructured prayer: provides the space for more versatile expression of my heart before God
 - ▶ Unstructured prayer: meditation, contemplation, accompanied by music, done through some of the arts

Spiritual Exercise (p. 59)

- ▶ List the various kinds of prayer you do.
- ▶ What does the list tell you about how you like to pray?
- ▶ How does the list suggest ways in which you can grow in prayer?

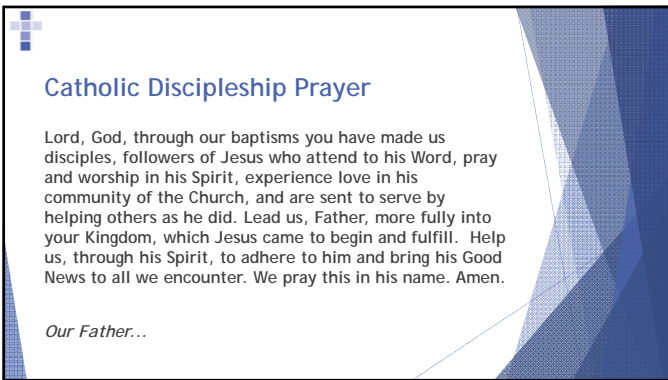
Scripture—Matthew 6:6-8

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”



Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you for coming and participating.
- ▶ Please think of bringing a friend along next week.
- ▶ You may bring your Bible next week, although we will be focusing on other themes of discipleship, such as the Mass.
- ▶ We invite you to spend some time in hospitality after our session.
- ▶ Please stand and recite together the Catholic Discipleship prayer and the Lord's Prayer.



Catholic Discipleship Prayer

Lord, God, through our baptisms you have made us disciples, followers of Jesus who attend to his Word, pray and worship in his Spirit, experience love in his community of the Church, and are sent to serve by helping others as he did. Lead us, Father, more fully into your Kingdom, which Jesus came to begin and fulfill. Help us, through his Spirit, to adhere to him and bring his Good News to all we encounter. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Our Father...
