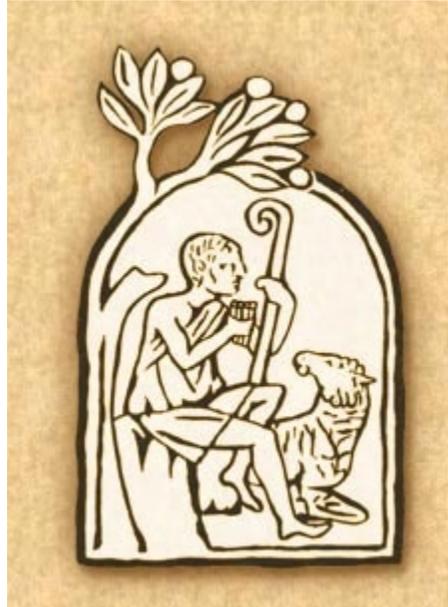


Compendium
OF THE
CATECHISM
OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH



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PART FOUR: CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Section One: Prayer in the Christian Life

Chapter Three: The Life of Prayer

Expressions of Prayer

The Battle of Prayer

570. What is meditation?

Meditation is a prayerful reflection that begins above all in the Word of God in the Bible. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire in order to deepen our faith, convert our heart and fortify our will to follow Christ. It is a first step toward the union of love with our Lord.

571. What is contemplative prayer?

Contemplative prayer is a simple gaze upon God in silence and love. It is a gift of God, a moment of pure faith during which the one praying seeks Christ, surrenders himself to the loving will of the Father, and places his being under the action of the Holy Spirit. Saint Teresa of Avila defines contemplative prayer as the intimate sharing of friendship, “in which time is frequently taken to be alone with God who we know loves us.”

572. Why is prayer a “battle”?

Prayer is a gift of grace but it always presupposes a determined response on our part because those who pray “battle” against themselves, their surroundings, and especially the Tempter who does all he can to turn them away from prayer. The battle of prayer is inseparable from progress in the spiritual life. We pray as we live because we live as we pray.

573. Are there objections to prayer?

Along with erroneous notions of prayer, many think they do not have the time to pray or that praying is useless. Those who pray can be discouraged in the face of difficulties and apparent lack of success. Humility, trust and perseverance are necessary to overcome these obstacles.

574. What are the difficulties in prayer?

Distraction is a habitual difficulty in our prayer. It takes our attention away from God and can also reveal what we are attached to. Our heart therefore must humbly turn to the Lord. Prayer is often affected by *dryness*. Overcoming this difficulty allows us to cling to the Lord in faith, even without any feeling of consolation. *Acedia* is a form of spiritual laziness due to relaxed vigilance and a lack of custody of the heart.

575. How may we strengthen our filial trust?

Filial trust is tested when we think we are not heard. We must therefore ask ourselves if we think God is truly a Father whose will we seek to fulfill, or simply a means to obtain what we want. If our prayer is united to that of Jesus, we know that he gives us much more than this or that gift. We receive the Holy Spirit who transforms our heart.