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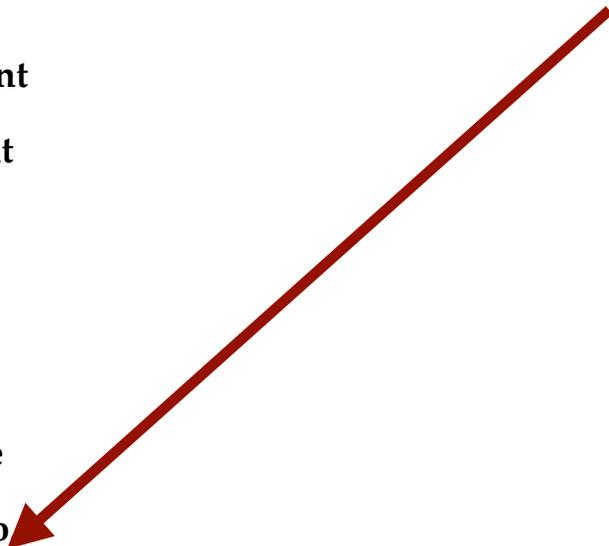
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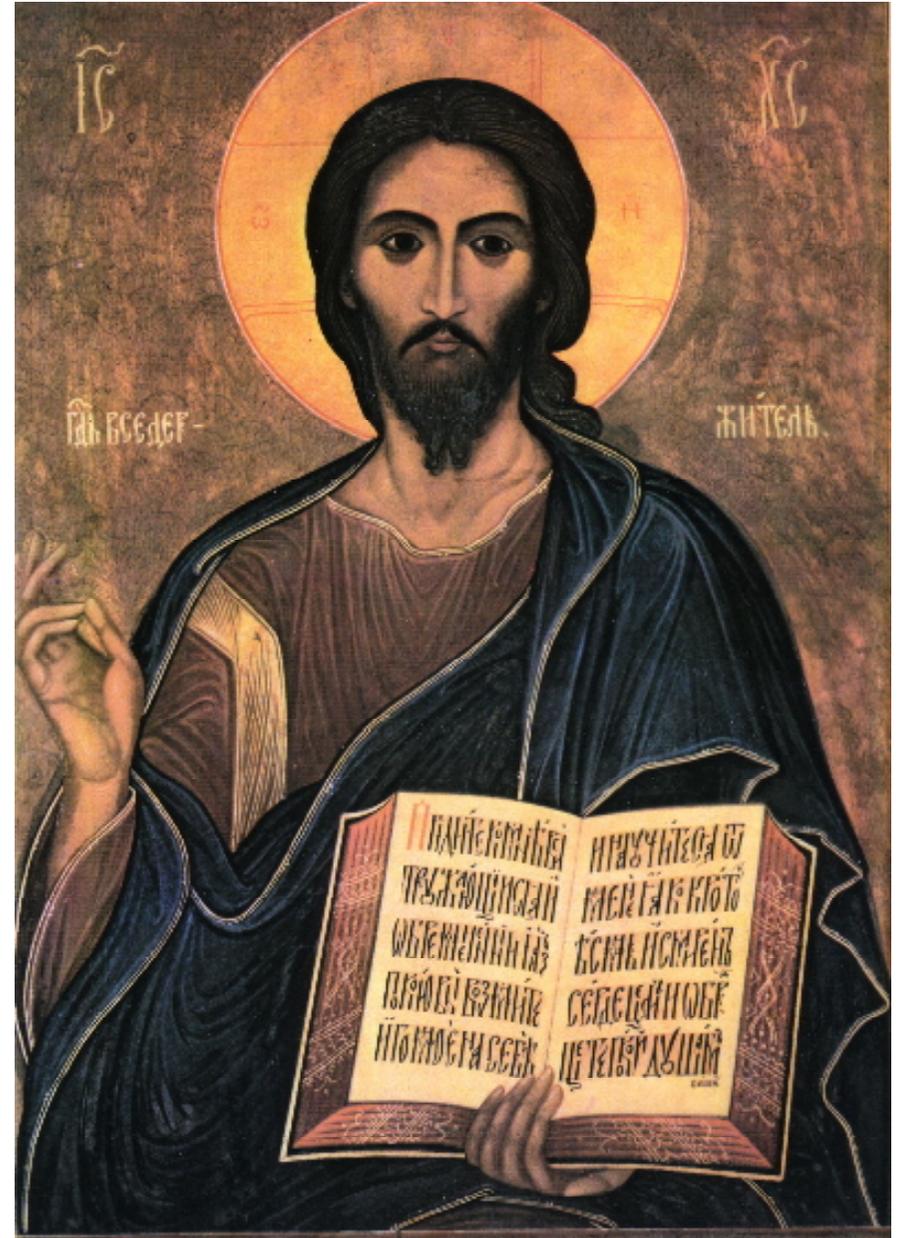
n. 3. Prayer



“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke fits easily, and my burden is light.”



Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus Christ

o (The) ω_N (Being)



I will betroth
you
to myself
in
tenderness

Saint John

- Therese of Lisieux: ‘For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned towards heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.’
- Teresa of Avila speaks of prayer as: ‘intimate sharing between friends ... taking time frequently to be alone with the One who we know loves us’ (Life 8.5). ‘Look at Him’, she writes, ‘He never takes his eyes off you’ (Way of Perfection 26.3).
- John of the Cross reminds us that ‘the language which God hears best is silent love’ (Maxims on Love 53).

- ‘The living and true God tirelessly calls each person to the mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer God’s initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response’ (Catechism n. 2576).

(Catechism n. 2599).

‘The Son of God who became Son of the Virgin learned to pray in his human heart. He learned to pray from his mother, who kept all the great things the Almighty had done and treasured them in her heart. He learned to pray in the words and rhythms of the prayer of his people, in the synagogue at Nazareth and the Temple at Jerusalem.

But his prayer springs from an otherwise secret source, as he intimates at the age of twelve: “I must be in my Father’s house” (Luke 2:49). Here the newness of prayer in the fullness of time begins to be revealed: his filial prayer, which the Father awaits from his children, is finally going to be lived out by the only Son in his humanity, with and for us’ (Catechism n. 2599).

A Praying Heart (see “Yielding to Love”)

- An Obedient Heart
- A Loving Heart
- A Free Heart
- A Humble Heart
- The Heart of Jesus
- A Heart open to Holiness
- A Silent Heart
- A Believing Heart

Beginning to pray

‘Each of us has a soul, but, since we do not prize souls as is deserved by creatures made in the image of God, we do not understand the deep secrets that lie in them’ (Teresa, Interior Castle VII.I.I).

‘The soul is a paradise where the Lord says he finds his delight.’ (Interior Castle I.I.I)

‘In its centre very secret exchanges between God and the soul take place.’ (Interior Castle I.I.3)

- 1. The best prayer is the prayer which God is offering.
- 2. God is offering us the intimacy of this communion.
- 3. The value or quality of our prayer is measured by the fruit which it produces in our lives: our obedience, our humility and especially our love. ‘It is in the effects and deeds following afterwards that one discerns the true value of prayer’ (Teresa, Interior Castle IV.2.8).
- 4. Whatever happens, Teresa tells us: ‘we must not abandon prayer’ (Life 8.5). If we do, she offers the only remedy: we must ‘begin again’ (Interior Castle II.1.10).

- 5. ‘There is no stage of prayer so sublime that it is not necessary often to return to the beginning’ (Teresa, Life 13.15).
- 6. We must ‘set our eyes on Christ’ (Teresa, Interior Castle I.2.11).
- 7. We must be resolute in turning away from sin
- 8. ‘As much as I desire to speak clearly about these matters of prayer they will be really obscure for one who has not had experience’ (Teresa, Life 10.9).

Prayer Reflecting on one's Life

- Place myself in God's presence. What do I feel grateful for today?
- Ask Jesus to let me see my day through his eyes.
- Ask Jesus to show me now what he was trying to show me during the day: the good and the bad.
- Delay on anything that stands out, expressing gratitude or sorrow.
- Pray to be more attentive and sensitive to God's inspiration.
- Conclude with an act of longing and love.

Gospel Meditation

A simple form of imaginative exercise in three steps.

- Focus on Gospel scene: look at Jesus and allow your heart to go out to him in wonder and loving adoration.
- Place yourself in the scene and unite yourself to him in communion.
- Listen to him as he asks you to love others as he loves you, and ask him to guide you to do to others as you have experienced him doing to you.

‘Progress does not lie in thinking much but in loving much.’ (Teresa, Foundations 5.2)

‘Care only about moving quickly so as to see the Lord.’

(Teresa, Interior Castle III.2.8)

Prayer of Presence

‘I am not asking you to do anything more than look at him. Who can keep you from turning the eyes of your soul towards the Lord? ... He never takes his eyes off you’ (Teresa, *Way of Perfection* 26.3).

‘It is good to reflect for a time ... but we should not always weary ourselves in seeking these reflections, but just remain there in his presence with the intellect quiet. If we can, we should occupy ourselves in looking upon him who is looking at us. Keep him company. Talk with him. Pray to him. Humble ourselves before him. Delight in him’ (Teresa, *Life* 13.22).

Passive ('Contemplative') Prayer

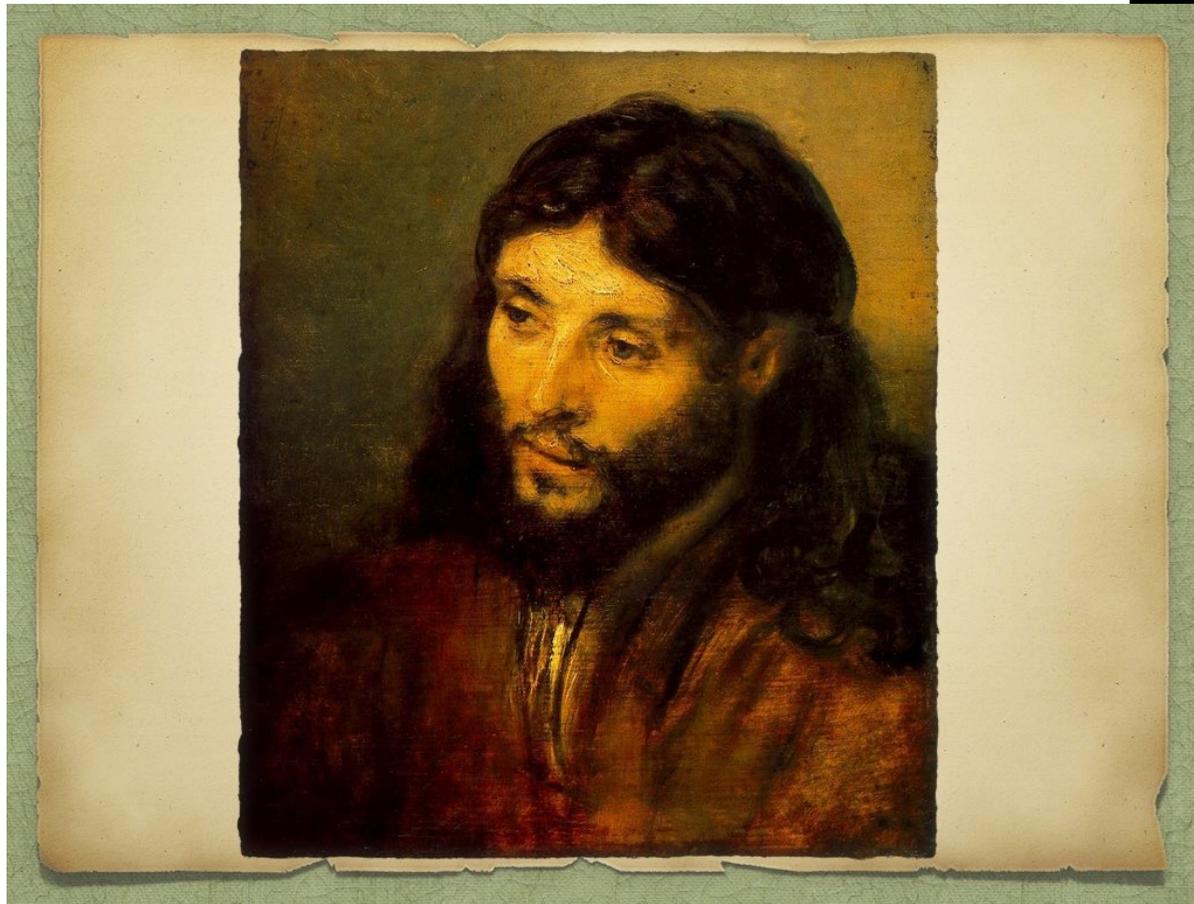
John of the Cross likens prayer to the playing of a musical instrument (see *Spiritual Canticle* 38.4).

Inspired by God and enabled by God's grace, in active prayer we are, as it were, practising the art of playing the strings of our heart and mind, learning to ponder the mystery of God and enjoy the harmony of experienced communion. In passive (received) prayer we leave it to God to guide our fingers over the strings.

Passive ('Contemplative') Prayer

- When our Active Prayer has become more simple, we learn to gaze on Jesus, seeing God and ourselves there. As we yield to God's love we begin to experience the Prayer of Contemplation.

The direction of our prayer has altered. Earlier we were trimming our sails to tack with the gentle breeze. Now we experience ourselves being drawn to let go and yield to an attraction that draws us and over which we exercise no control.



You are my breath

Ashana

La ilaha illa 'Llah