

St. Teresa of Avila's 9-Levels of Prayer

Ascetical Prayer - we initiate this form of prayer, but always cooperating with God's grace.

Purgative Way - purification of sin, attachments, selfishness, etc.

1. Vocal Prayer
2. Mental Prayer
3. Affective Prayer
4. Prayer of Simplicity

Bridge: Dark Night of the Senses

Mystical Prayer - God is initiator of this prayer; we are receptive.

Illuminative Way - the path of infused contemplation—experiential, intuitive knowledge of God is infused in our souls. The beginning mystical prayer.

5. Infused Contemplation
6. Prayer of Quiet

Bridge: Dark Night of the Soul

Unitive Way - union of the contemplative soul with God. The way of perfection.

7. Simple Union
8. Conforming Union
9. Transforming Union

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

—St. Therese

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”

—St. John Damascene

Prayer -A soul arms itself by prayer for all kinds of combat. In whatever state the soul may be, it ought to pray. A soul which is pure and beautiful must pray, or else it will lose its beauty; a soul which is striving after this purity must pray, or else it will never attain it; a soul which is newly converted must pray, or else it will fall again; a sinful soul, plunged in sins, must pray so that it might rise again. There is no soul which is not bound to pray, for every single grace comes to the soul through prayer.

—St. Faustina

My little children, your hearts, are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God. Through prayer we receive a foretaste of heaven and something of paradise comes down upon us. Prayer never leaves us without sweetness. It is honey that flows into the souls and makes all things sweet. When we pray properly, sorrows disappear like snow before the sun.

—Saint John Vianney

My daughter...why do you not tell me about everything that concerns you, even the smallest details? Tell Me about everything, and know that this will give Me great joy. I answered, But You know about everything, Lord." And Jesus replied to me, "Yes I do know; but you should not excuse yourself with the fact that I know, but with childlike simplicity talk to Me about everything, for my ears and heart are inclined towards you, and your words are dear to Me.(2; 921)

—St. Faustina, Divine Mercy in my Soul

“Much more is accomplished by a single word of the Our Father said, now and then, from our heart, than by the whole prayer repeated many times in haste and without attention.”

—Saint Teresa