



Lent

Week 2 – Prayer

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
We ask your blessing upon our Emmaus Group and upon the time we will spend together.
Draw us closer to You through each other. Give us the ability to search our own
hearts and know ourselves ever more, so we might better know You.*

Prayer as God's Gift: "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; *humility* is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God." "If you knew the gift of God!" The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. (CCC 2559-2560)

Read Matthew 6:5-14 out loud first, and then to yourself silently

Discuss: What word, phrase, or idea most jumped out to you?

Discuss: How does Jesus Himself teach us to pray? What are the main components of the Our Father?

"The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers. . . . In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them."

St. Thomas Aquinas



“We must speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend, servant to his master; now asking some favor, now acknowledging our faults, and communicating to Him all that concerns us, our thoughts, our fears, our projects, our desires, and in all things seeking His counsel.”

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Discuss: Prayer is often described as a relationship. Does this description resonate with you? What is your image of God? How do you speak to God? As a friend, parent, figure of authority, someone else?

Discuss: How would you describe your own prayer life at this time?

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

St. Therese, *Story of a Soul*

Read Romans 8:24-27 out loud

Discuss: How does one pray with hope? How can we rely on the Holy Spirit, saints, and Mary to perfect our prayers?

“To open oneself to God and to others: we live in an increasingly artificial world, in a culture of ‘doing’, [a culture] of the ‘useful’, in which we exclude God from our horizon without even realizing it. Lent calls us to “give ourselves a ‘shake-up’”, to remember that we are creatures, that we are not God.”

Pope Francis, *Ash Wednesday Homily, 2014*

Discuss: Do you ever feel as if prayer is not useful, as if you aren’t getting anything done? Do you worry about how you pray, and wonder whether it is good enough?

“We do not have to talk very much in order to pray well. We know that God is there in His holy tabernacle; let us open our hearts to Him; let us rejoice in His Presence: This is the best prayer.”

St. John Vianney

Discuss: How can we keep up prayer routines in the quiet moments *and* the chaotic times of our lives? How do you quiet your heart for prayer?

