



NEWMAN INSTITUTE

KNOWING, LOVING AND SHARING THE FAITH

VI. Christian Prayer

(2 sessions)

*“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.” (Mt 6:6)*

“A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer.
When no one listens to me any more, God still listens to me.
When I can no longer talk to anyone or call upon anyone,
I can always talk to God.
When there is no longer anyone to help me deal with a need or expectation that goes
beyond the human capacity for hope, he can help me.
When I have been plunged into complete solitude...;
if I pray I am never totally alone.”
(Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 32)

Course Description: Prayer is the loving communication between the human person and the living and true God. "Prayer is *Christian* insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body," explains the Catechism: "Its dimensions are those of Christ's love" (CCC, n. 2565). This course will explore the universal call to prayer, which is written in our hearts by our Creator, as well as the various expressions of prayer, and the greatest of all prayers—the Our Father. The course will also model various approaches to Catholic prayer.

Reading and Reference Materials: *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults* (US/CCA, ch. 35-36); the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC, part 4); *The Compendium of the CCC* (Comp., part 4); and *YOUCAT*, part 4.

Course Sequence:

Session One: Prayer in the Christian Life*

When we hear God knocking on the door of our heart, how can we say "thy will be done"?

1. The Revelation of Prayer
2. The Tradition of Prayer
3. The Life of Prayer

Session Two: The Lord's Prayer--The "Our Father"*

When we ask, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Lk 11:1), how does Jesus respond?

1. The Summary of the Whole Gospel
2. Our Father who art in Heaven
3. The Seven Petitions

*Each Session is 2 Hours long, plus recommended follow-up activity.

Resources:

Teach us to Pray

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2494

Prayer, conversion & communion

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2108

Praying the Rosary http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2719

Mysteries of Light http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2739

Liturgy of the Hours

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2106

Habits of Prayer http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=1339

Session One: Prayer in the Christian Life (2 Hours)
(CCC, n. 2558-2758; Comp., n. 534-577)

When we hear God knocking on the door of our heart, how can we say "thy will be done"?

1. The Revelation of Prayer
2. The Tradition of Prayer
3. The Life of Prayer

Learning Objectives:

*Discuss prayer as God's gift and St. Teresa's definition of contemplative prayer as "nothing else than a close sharing between friends"; discuss the Psalms as a paradigm for proper prayer--involving the conversion of heart and praying with Christ to the Father.

*Define adoration, petition, intercession, and prayer of praise; describe vocal, meditative and contemplative prayer; distinguish between personal prayer, devotional prayer, and liturgical prayer—with special attention to the diversity of devotional practices in different cultures.

*Discuss relationship of individual prayer to family prayer and to the communal prayer of the Church (particularly in Eucharistic liturgy); link personal prayer with communal prayer, the Eucharist, the Divine Office, the Sacraments, and the Liturgical Year: recognize the Hail Mary as *praying with* the Mother of God, and identify the steps involved in praying the Rosary.

*Identify the challenges in the "battle of prayer"—such as distractions, dryness, etc.

Recommended Follow-Up: Read US/CCA, Ch. 35; watch Fr. Robert Barron's *Catholicism* series, episode IX.

Session 2: The Lord's Prayer: "Our Father" (2 hours)
(CCC, 2759-2865; Comp., n. 578-98)

When we ask, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Lk 11:1), how does Jesus respond?

1. The Summary of the Whole Gospel
2. Our Father who art in Heaven
3. The Seven Petitions

Begin the class with the appropriate prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours (e.g., Morning Prayer or Vespers)

Learning Objectives:

*Analyze how the Lord's Prayer summarizes the whole Gospel; discuss the importance of Jesus' revelation of God as Father; assess the importance of a prayer life based on a personal love relationship with the living God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Discuss the fundamental call to forgiveness in the Our Father; assess how prayer in general, and the Lord's Prayer in particular, orders one's life—including one's moral decision-making process.

*Discuss the ecumenical importance of the Lord's Prayer—its commonality with other Christian communities; emphasize the importance of the presentation of the Lord's Prayer during the catechumenate.

*Identify the seven petitions of the Our Father; link the petitions of the Our Father with the Beatitudes (and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit), following St Augustine's formulation.

Recommended Follow-Up: Read US/CCA, Ch. 36; complete a course evaluation.