



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

God's Universal Call to Prayer

"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."—CCC 2558, citing St Therese of Lisieux

Descriptions of prayer are abundant throughout Christian history. "True prayer," wrote St Augustine, "is nothing but love." Prayer should arise from the heart. "Prayer," said St John Vianney, "is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself." "Every one

of us needs half an hour of prayer each day," remarked St Francis de Sales, "except when we are busy—then we need an hour." Definitions of prayer are important, but insufficient. There is a huge difference between knowing about prayer and praying. On this issue, the Rule of St Benedict is clear: "If a man wants to pray, let him go and pray."

St John Damascene gave a classic definition of prayer:

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (CCC, no 2559).

The *Catechism* clearly defines prayer as a "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (CCC 2558). Prayer is Christian "insofar as it is communion with Christ" (CCC 2565), and a "covenant relationship between God and man in Christ" (CCC 2564)...

From US Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, 2006, pg 463

Issue 12 — Prayer

February 17, 2008

Things to talk about:

- Who taught you how to pray?
- Why do you pray? When do you pray? How do you pray?
- During the season of Lent, what are you doing to deepen your prayer life?

What Should I Feel When I Pray?

Do you feel more peace?

If so, you're on the right track. If not, that's okay. Just identify whatever is giving you anxiety as simply that and keep trying.

Do you feel more joy?

Whatever is giving you that quiet feeling of happiness—the kind that makes you smile and just like life—is a sign of prayer.

Do you feel more hope?

If your prayer helps you believe that, it's a good sign.

Do you feel love?

Do you notice more strongly the love others feel for you and the love you feel for them? What about your love of God and His love for you?

Do you feel forgiveness?

Do you recognize your own state of brokenness and the way you have hurt and been hurt by others? Do you feel as though, no matter what, you are still loved and understood?

http://www.bustedhalo.com/faith_guides/pilot.htm

A Thought From Mother Teresa

"I Shall Keep the Silence of My Heart"

I don't think there is anyone who needs God's help and grace as much as I do. Sometimes I feel so helpless and so weak. I think this is why God uses me. Because I cannot depend on my own strength, I rely on him twenty-four hours a day. All of us must cling to God through prayer. My secret is simple: I pray. Through prayer I become one in love with Christ. I realize that praying to him is loving him.

We cannot find God in noise or agitation. Nature:

trees, flowers and grass grow in silence. The stars, the moon, and the sun move in silence. What is essential is not what we say but what God tells others through us. In silence He listens to us; in silence He speaks to our souls. In silence we are granted the privilege of listening to his voice.

Silence of our eyes.
Silence of our ears.
Silence of our minds.
...In the silence of the heart God will speak.

—Mother Teresa, cited in *The Power of Prayer* (New York: MJF Books, 1996)



Saint in the Spotlight — Saint Peter Damian (1007-1072)

February 21 is the memorial of St. Peter Damian.

Maybe because he was orphaned and had been treated shabbily by one of his brothers, Peter Damian was very good to the poor. It was the ordinary thing for him to have a poor person or two with him at table and he liked to minister personally to their needs.

Peter escaped poverty and the neglect of his own brother when his other brother, who was archpriest of Ravenna, took him under his wing. His brother sent him to good schools and Peter became a professor.

Already in those days Peter was very strict with himself. He wore a hair shirt under his clothes, fasted rigorously and spent many hours in prayer. Soon, he decided to leave his teaching and give himself completely to prayer with the Benedictines of the reform of St. Romuald at Fonte Avellana. They lived two monks to a hermitage. Peter was so eager to pray and slept so little that he soon suffered from severe insomnia. He found he had to use some prudence in taking care of himself. When he was not praying, he studied the Bible.

The abbot commanded that when he died Peter should succeed him. Abbot Peter founded five other hermitages. He encouraged his brothers in a life of prayer and solitude and wanted nothing more for himself. The Holy See periodically called on him, however, to be a peacemaker or troubleshooter, between two abbeys in dispute or a cleric or government official in some disagreement with Rome.

Finally, Pope Stephen IX made Peter the cardinal-bishop of Ostia. He worked hard to wipe out simony, and encouraged his priests to observe celibacy and urged even the diocesan clergy to live together and maintain scheduled prayer and religious observance. He wished to restore primitive discipline among religious and priests, warning against needless travel, violations of poverty and too comfortable living. He even wrote to the bishop of Besancon, complaining that the canons there sat down when they were singing the psalms in the Divine Office.

He wrote many letters. Some 170 are extant. We also have 53 of his sermons and seven lives, or biographies, that he

wrote. He preferred examples and stories rather than theory in his writings. The liturgical offices he wrote are evidence of his talent as a stylist in Latin.

He asked often to be allowed to retire as cardinal-bishop of Ostia, and finally Alexander II consented. Peter was happy to become once again just a monk, but he was still called to serve as a papal legate. When returning from such an assignment in Ravenna, he was overcome by a fever. With the monks gathered around him saying the Divine Office, he died on February 22, 1072.

In 1828 he was declared a Doctor of the Church.

www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay



Connections to Doctrine & Tradition

- Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God (CCC 2561).
- Prayer requires humility, trust, and perseverance in order to battle temptations that cast doubt on the usefulness or even the possibility of prayer (CCC 2726-2753).
- Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; GS: *Gaudium et Spes*; NDC: *National Directory for Catechesis*; DeV: *Deei Verbum*; LG: *Lumen Gentium*; SC: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. These documents can be found online at www.vatican.va or www.usccb.org.

Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about prayer? Check out the following books or websites for more information:

- [United States Catholic Catechism for Adults](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006
- http://www.bustedhalo.com/faith_guides/pilot.htm
- A wonderful online prayer site: <http://www.sacredspace.ie>

These are just suggestions. In providing these we assume no responsibility for, nor do we necessarily endorse these books or websites, their content, or their sponsoring organizations.

“What’s What” is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement [Draft]:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.