

Prayer in the Catechumenate

PRIOR READING

If you have time before the session take time to read the following extracts from Church documents as an introduction to the session. There is space to make you own notes in the right hand column.

Let my prayer arise before you like incense,
the raising of my hands like an evening oblation. Psalm 140 (141)



In virtue of its own internal dynamic, the faith demands to be known, celebrated, lived and translated into prayer. Catechesis must cultivate each of these dimensions. The faith, however, is lived out by the Christian community and proclaimed in mission: it is a shared and proclaimed faith. These dimensions must also be encouraged by Catechesis. GDC 84



Teaching to pray — Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for his glory. All of these sentiments are reflected in the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model of all Christian prayer. The “handing on of the Our Father” (262) is a summary of the entire Gospel (263) and is therefore a true act of catechesis. When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. This climate is especially necessary when the catechumen and those to be catechized are confronted with the more demanding aspects of the Gospel and when they feel weak or when they discover the mysterious action of God in their lives. GDC 85



The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. CCC 2644

The catechesis of children, young people, and adults aims at teaching them to meditate on The Word of God in personal prayer, practicing it in liturgical prayer, and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life. Catechesis is also a time for the discernment and education of popular piety.⁴⁶ The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer, but it is important to help learners savour their meaning. CCC 2688



One who sings well prays twice Ancient Proverb cf. GIRM 39



The presentations take place after the celebrations of the scrutinizes, unless, for pastoral reason, they have been anticipated during the period of the Catechumenate (see nos. 79, 103-104). Thus, with the catechumenal formation of the elect completed, the Church lovingly entrusts to them the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, the ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer. These texts are presented in order to enlighten the elect. The Creed, as it recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race, suffuses the

vision of the elect with the sure light of faith. The Lord's Prayer fills them with a deeper realization of the new spirit of adoption by which they will God their Father, especially in the midst of the Eucharistic assembly. RCIA 134



Celebrations of the Word of God Another means of formation is the liturgy that is provided for the catechumens during this period. This consists of services of the word, exorcisms, blessings and (optional) anointings.

Their content and purpose is set out in no. 81-89... Since these services are intended to reinforce and assist in the assimilation of the content of the instructions it is obvious that the biblical readings and the homily should be shaped around the subject-matter of the instructions. If these have been teaching sessions, as may well be necessary, the services are meant to turn them into worship and prayer. They will help the catechumens to see the relevance of the teaching to their formation and daily life.

RCIA- J.D. Crichton

Commentary on



The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to him, and each believer responds according to his heart's resolve and the personal expressions of his prayer. However, Christian Tradition has retained three major expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative. They have one basic trait in common: composure of heart. This vigilance in keeping the Word and dwelling in the presence of God makes these three expressions intense times in the life of prayer.

CCC 2699



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 of Lisieux