

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS  
- Initial Formation for Enquirers -

Chapter 5: Prayer

Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in Liturgical activity. [Rule 5]

Let all the world in every corner sing  
'My God and King!'  
The heavens are not too high;  
His praise may thither fly:  
The earth is not too low;  
His praises there may grow.  
Let all the world in every corner sing  
'My God and King!'

Let all the world in every corner sing  
'My God and King!'  
The Church with psalms must shout,  
No door can keep them out:  
But, above all, the heart  
Must bear the longest part.  
Let all the world in every corner sing  
'My God and King!'

*George Herbert, 1593-1633*



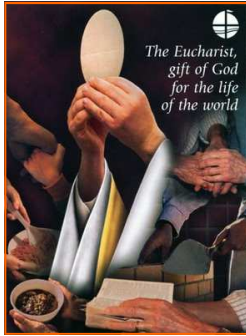
'Activity' I understand. But what exactly is 'liturgical activity'?

Okay. Well, 'liturgy' is just the Greek word for worship [but it usually meant worship involving sacrifice.] For Christians it tends to refer to the Mass—the *sacrifice* of the Mass. So 'non-liturgical worship' usually means any public worship where there's no Mass. For example, Morning Prayer, or a Christmas Carol Service.

Worship, praise, prayer are so inter-related that it's really possible to speak of them as pretty much meaning the same thing. 'Prayer' is a good description of all of these as **prayer is speaking with God**. This can be both public and private. We can do it together [where it is often formal, following an Order of Service—a wedding or funeral perhaps; or saying what we call The Office or the Breviary; or joining together in the celebration of the Mass.] We can pray alone, or informally with others—where there is no need to stick to any specific form. As we'll see, there is a difference between 'prayer' or 'praying' and "saying prayers". We can pray to God without saying anything—silent prayer/meditation. We can even speak of a great saint like St Francis as being a 'living prayer' because we see him as in constant communion with God. We can say: **it's natural for a Christian to pray!**

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death:  
He enters heaven with prayer. \*1



EUCCHARIST [or Mass]

'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.'  
[Acts 2.42]

NON LITURGICAL PRAYER



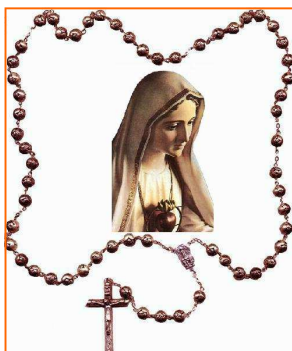
'...and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'  
[Col 3.16-17]

'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.'  
[Ps 19.14]

MEDITATION \*2

'And carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.'  
[John 19.17]

STATIONS OF THE CROSS



ROSARY



OFS HANDBOOK

\*1 *James Montgomery*, 1771-1854  
\*2 see folder 'Additional Resources', *Christian Meditation*

## Private and Public Prayer Considered

Jesus was God, right? He was always in communion with the Father, right? So, why did he pray?



Isn't it rather natural that Jesus would want to speak with his Father just as we speak to ours? Of course, you are right. He was in the form of God—as Phil 2.6 reminds us. Father and Son share the same nature—they were divine. For this reason he says, 'The Father and I are one.' [John 10.30]. But we know that Jesus prayed often, taking time away from the disciples to spend time alone—and pray. 'Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.' [Lk 6.12]

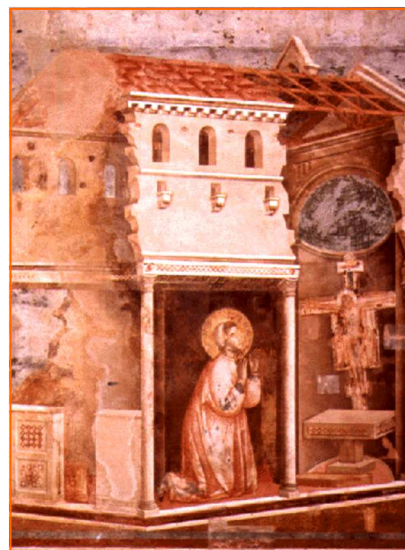
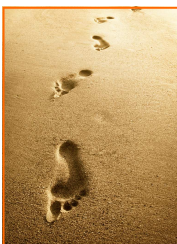
The disciples clearly saw that the secret of Jesus' ministry was prayer, and for this reason the only thing they are recorded as asking him to teach them is how **to pray!**

'He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray." [Lk 11.1]

And so he taught them the Our Father! [Lk 11.2-4]

And at the most critical, decision-making, moment of his earthly life, he was at prayer. On this occasion the disciples slept—when they should have been praying—with disastrous consequences! [Mk 14.50—'All of them deserted him and fled.'] Jesus, in contrast, prayed. And the harder it was to pray the harder he prayed: 'In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground.' [Lk 22.44] His prayer gave him the strength to do the greatest thing ever done in the history of mankind—he died for us! For 'the law made nothing perfect; there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.' [Heb 7.19]

Prayer is the stuff of which the penitent is made. We, OFS, once called the Order of Penitents, are to be, above all, a people of prayer. St Francis was a man of prayer; a 'walking prayer' - and we, as members of his Family, are treading in his footprints.





1. Pray hardest when it's hardest to pray



2. The Christians on their knees are the Christians on their toes

Thou private prayer be a bold design,  
Yet public hath more promises, more love:  
And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.  
We all are but cold suitors, but let us move  
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;  
Pray with the most; for where most pray, is heaven.

*George Herbert, 1593-1633*

Herbert thought public prayer was better because it was socially stronger and warmer, even cosier. In 1638 the clergy of Norfolk were told that 'prayer was the end to which God's house is erected'. Jesus had cited the prophet Isaiah [56.7] saying that 'my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.' Though there may be other religious duties to be exercised in God's house, yet Jesus mentioned none other than 'prayer'. Earlier, in 1613, a certain Francis Morton had said of the church building: 'we repent and pray; we thank God and pray; we confess our sins and pray; we preach and pray; we receive the sacraments and pray.'



3. The Church marches on its knees



4. Christians that pray together stay together