



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 3: Prayer

Chapter 6. Contemplative Prayer

As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Rule 8

In all places and at all times, it is possible for true worshippers of the Father to give him adoration and to pray to him. Nevertheless, the brothers and sisters should try to find times of silence and recollection dedicated exclusively to prayer.

Constitutions art 14.5

Contemplation = meditative, thoughtful;
opposite of ACTIVE



Both St Francis and St Clare were contemplatives. Francis sought solitude at La Verna; Clare in the solitude of an enclosed life.



Francis' journey took him to distant places in the world. He walked hundreds of miles around the peninsula now called Italy...In contrast Clare journeyed the short distance from her father's home to the little church of St Mary of the Angels...She was to spend the remainder of her life in the convent of San Damiano, the little chapel where the Lord had spoken to Francis...Clare was to have a permanent home...Francis...had no permanent mailing address...Clare spread God's love through prayer which attracted followers to her Franciscan way of life...We won't have our hair shorn as a sign of humility in imitation of Clare...But we can devote our lives to following Jesus in the way of...Clare in ways adapted to the time in which we live...The challenge of Francis and Clare to us is to discover that way and to persevere on its path in our own times in our own ways.

Foley, Weigel, Normile *To Live as Francis Lived* Reflection 30 (p 111-113)

The Church tells us:

Prayer presupposes an effort, a fight against ourselves and the wiles of the Tempter. The battle of prayer is inseparable from the necessary 'spiritual battle' to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ: we pray as we live, because we live as we pray.

The principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are distraction and dryness. The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart.

Two frequent temptations threaten prayer: lack of faith, and acedia—a form of depression stemming from lax ascetical practice that leads to discouragement.

'Pray constantly' [I Thess 5.17]. It is always possible to pray. It is even a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2752, 2754-2755, 2757



Scripture—

Lk 10. 38-42

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord 's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

I John 2. 15

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live for ever.