

# PRAYER

(a lifting up of the mind and the heart to God)



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**LITURGICAL PRAYER**  
(the official prayer of the Church)

**PERSONAL PRAYER**  
(all other forms of prayer)

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**THE MASS**

**DIVINE OFFICE**

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**VOCAL PRAYER**  
(a set formula)

**MENTAL PRAYER**  
(spontaneous)

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**MEDITATION CONTEMPLATION**

**MENTAL PRAYER:** "Mental prayer, in my view, is nothing but friendly intercourse, and frequent solitary converse, with Him whom we know loves us." (St. Teresa of Avila)

**MEDITATION:** Meditation is a form of mental prayer which is made by our own efforts, given the ordinary help of grace. The mind begins the prayer by either imagining or reasoning about spiritual topic. From there the heart (the will) goes on to make acts of love, including specific resolutions about what is to be done in one's life. As St. Teresa says, "Prayer consists not in thinking much, but in loving much."

**CONTEMPLATION:** Contemplation is a form of mental prayer which is infused by God; that is, it is not made by our own efforts but by a special grace of the Holy Spirit. St. Thomas says that contemplation is "a simple gaze upon Truth." It is a gaze upon God which is beyond all ordinary reasonings of our minds. Our intellects are limited in understanding God, who is far beyond all human concepts of Him. This prayer is not like vision which we will have of God in heaven, where we will see Him. This prayer is not like the vision which we will have of God in heaven, where we will see Him face to face; it is a gaze which is carried out in faith. Upon being granted this "simple gaze," the will becomes greatly inflamed with love for God and one is able to make much progress in love of neighbor.