

Friendship with God

Deep Calls to Deep · Praying the Scriptures with St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila

What We Found

The boldest biblical image of what prayer can become is friendship: "Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11). It was habitual, an appointment kept. Jesus lived the same pattern: even as the crowds grew, he kept withdrawing: "But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:16), and it was watching him pray that made the disciples ask, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

St. Teresa's definition, adopted by the Catechism: "Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us" (CCC 2709). She struggled in prayer for years; the definition was forged by perseverance, not ease. One makes time; one does not find it (CCC 2710).

A simple daily method for the week: settle the body; read a short Scripture slowly; speak to Christ honestly, friend to friend; listen without hurry; end with one resolution and one thanks. Fifteen minutes, same time, same place.

Voices of the Church

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

"Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us." Every word is load-bearing: sharing (it is mutual), friends (it is personal), frequently (it is habitual), alone (it makes space for him), and the ground of it all: we know he loves us. Teresa also testifies in the same book that she struggled in prayer for years; the definition was forged in perseverance, not in ease.

The Life, ch. 8, as quoted in CCC 2709.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Among his collected maxims, St. John teaches that the Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this Word he speaks always in eternal silence, and in silence it must be heard by the soul. Prayer, for John, therefore leans toward listening: a simple, loving attentiveness to the God who has already said everything in Christ. Words in prayer are good servants; their work is to bring us to the Word.

Sayings of Light and Love (the numbering of the maxims varies by edition).

VENERABLE JAN TYRANOWSKI

The Krakow tailor our study keeps hinting at built his hidden life exactly here. After his conversion in 1935 he adopted a demanding daily rule: morning meditation and Mass, the Rosary at a fixed time, spiritual reading, and regular examination of conscience, hours of interior prayer fitted around a workbench. He was no priest and no scholar; he was a layman who kept the appointment. Everything God later did through him grew out of that fidelity. Late in this study, his story continues.

From St. John Paul II's memoir *Gift and Mystery* and the documentation of his cause for canonization (opened 1997; declared Venerable, 2017).

Live It This Week

· Keep a daily fifteen-minute appointment of mental prayer using the method: settle, read a short passage slowly, speak honestly as friend to friend, listen without hurry, end with one resolution and one thanks.

- Use Luke 5:1-11 as your reading early in the week and Psalm 62:5-8 later; let the memory verse be your settling line each day.
- When you miss a day (someone will), do not negotiate or catch up; just keep the next appointment. Friendship survives missed coffee.

MEMORY VERSE · EXODUS 33:11

"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend."

Before next session: Read Deuteronomy 8:1-5 and Matthew 4:1-4. Notice who leads Israel into the wilderness, and who leads Jesus there.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 2709, 2710, 2711, 2712, 2699.