

# Prayer 101 – Session 3. Prayer and the Human Heart

## Prayer Prompts based on Session 3

### Day 1

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

Jesus says the greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37).

- Spend some time in prayer reflecting on what it means to love the Lord your God:
  - with all your heart.
  - with all your soul.
  - with all your mind.

### Day 2

Pray with the following quotes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Scripture:

“According to Scripture, it is the *heart* that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.” (CCC 2562)

“The Lord then said: “This people say they are loyal to me; they honour me with lip-service, while their hearts stay afar. The worship they offer me is useless, these are no more than traditions and human rules.” (Isaiah 29:13)

- Looking back on your life, ask the Holy Spirit to help you recognise times when you may have been going through the motions in your prayer or in the practice of your faith; times when you might have been just offering lip service to God.
- What was going on in your life at the time? Was your heart being drawn away from God by distractions, work, family issues or other worries etc.? Had you fallen into sin in some way?
- How did God draw you back to Himself?

### Day 3

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

“<sup>5</sup> And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5-6)

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- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what it means to ‘go into your room’ to pray. Is it possible to achieve this even when you’re busy and surrounded by people?
- How do you ‘shut the door’ in prayer? How do you deal with distractions and worries? Perhaps the distractions are the prayer sometimes and the Lord desires you to bring your worries and cares to Him.
- Which Person of the Holy Trinity do you pray to more - God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit? Sometimes we just go to Jesus, but our Father and the Holy Spirit desire that relationship with us too. Speak to your Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. Reveal to them the things you haven’t told anyone else and accept their unconditional love for you.

### Day 4

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

“<sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.” (John 15:4-11)

- Spend some time thanking God for His abiding Presence within you.
- Look back on the last week, can you recognise the fruit that you bore by abiding in God? Can you also see any opportunities to bear fruit which you might have missed? This is an opportunity to thank God and also to express repentance and ask the Lord to make you ever more like Him.
- Spend some time reflecting on the ways in which God’s ‘words abide in you’? What is your favourite Scripture passage? Why does that passage resonate with you? What do you think the Lord is saying to you through it?

### Day 5

Pray with paragraph 2563 from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

The heart is “our hidden centre, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully.”

- Do you ever find yourself judging another’s heart or motives? Perhaps you could make a resolution to pray for that person/those people as soon as you recognise this in your heart.
- Do you ever find yourself judging your own heart too harshly? Entrust yourself to the love and mercy of God.

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- Ask the Holy Spirit to pray through you so that you may be pure in heart in all things.

### Day 6

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

“<sup>24</sup> Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day is breaking.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go, unless you bless me.’ <sup>27</sup> So he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ <sup>28</sup> Then the man said, ‘You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.’ <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, ‘Please tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’ <sup>31</sup> The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.’ (Genesis 32:24-31)

- Pope Francis encourages each of us “to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, paragraph 3). The word encounter means to meet as an adversary. So, in what sense do you meet God as an adversary?
- Have you ever wrestled with God over something? What was the outcome?
- Jacob became Israel and was left limping because of his encounter with God. Looking back on your life, can you see ways in which your prayer, your encounter with God, has changed you?

### Day 7

Look back on the quotations you have been praying with this week.

- What quotation spoke most strongly to you?
- What is the abiding thought or over-arching theme to your prayer this week?
- What do you sense the Lord is teaching you through this?

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Community Bible – Catholic Pastoral Edition.  
The Catechism of the Catholic Church is available online at:  
[https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)