

Yet prayer is not an individual enterprise - all of us are but a single part of God's creation so in a very real sense we all pray as a community, not just when we pray the public Liturgical prayer of the Church, but also when we pray as individuals. This is because, by our Baptism, we have all become part of Jesus' mystical body.

Categorising Prayer and Spirituality

Generally, verbal prayer is seen as constituting 5 categories:

Adoration is the love (Dulia) we give only to God as our Creator and because he has blessed us with his many gifts.

Praise is giving God the glory that is due to him for his own sake

Thanksgiving is remembering that all we are and receive is God's.

Intercession is love, asking on behalf of others, for others.

Petition in its purest form is asking God for our every genuine need above all the need for forgiveness

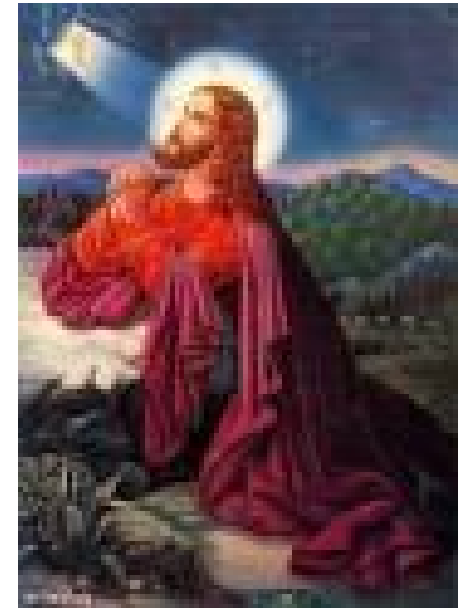
Prayer also encompasses actions, gestures, meditation/contemplation
The basis of the prayer 'The Morning Offering' is that everything we do in our daily routine, if done with the correct motives, is prayer.

Categorising every conceivable spirituality is impossible. However, the objective of every spirituality must be to achieve as close a relationship with Jesus as possible and this must necessitate reception of the Eucharist, because in this Sacrament we actually, albeit for a short period of time, become **ONE** with Our Lord Jesus and obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit. **This is a miracle we can all participate in.**

Only from this key foundation can a Spirituality grow based on a real love of God and of humanity. Integrated within this may then include a Marian emphasis (praying the rosary), or a special regard for certain saints and their spirituality, or a meditative or contemplative approach, or a chosen lifestyle, perhaps based on simplicity or focussing on works of charity - each Religious Order tends to have its own defined spirituality e.g. the Jesuits (Ignatian), Franciscans, Carmelites.

Our Catholic Faith Prayer and Spirituality 2010-2011

1. What Do We Mean By Prayer and Spirituality?



1. What is Meant By Prayer?
2. Is Prayer Different From Spirituality?
3. What Is The Essence of A Good Spirituality?

We All Have Our Own Spirituality

If someone mentions the word Spirituality, there is a danger that our mind immediately thinks of something profound, beyond the grasp of normal people.

However, Spirituality refers to the particular devotions and practices people use to sustain them in trying to live out the Gospel teachings in their quest for an ever closer relationship to God the Father, to Our Lord Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit.



As such, all Christians already have their own spirituality.

In the early Church of the New Testament a certain tension can be recognised between the great gifts and new life given to Christians by Baptism and the Holy Spirit, and the need to persevere and to pray not to lose this new life. For us, too, Christian living is both a wonderful experience, source of great joy and peace (Gal.5), and a struggle to remain faithful in the trials of everyday living (Eph.6:10) Therefore, having an ongoing Spirituality is an essential part of who we are, and who we hope to become, as Christians.

Whatever kind of Spirituality you already have has been shaped by how you have been brought up, what you have learnt in school, what you have read, the example of others, and your own life experiences.

However, you may not be acquainted with many of the different spiritual traditions, nor how spirituality has changed and developed from Old Testament times through to the modern era. The objective of the present series of talks and reflections is to provide an outline of this process to help you in your own Spiritual journey.

What Is Not A Good Spirituality?

In our search for God there is a very real danger of becoming like the Pharisees of the Gospels. This must be avoided at all costs.



The Pharisees thought that by following the smallest detail of the Law to perfection this would **oblige** God to reward them. We, too, are in danger of thinking that by our good actions we become better than other people and that God **must**, therefore, let us enter Heaven. **Nothing can be further from the truth.** God's graces and blessings, including entrance into Heaven, are entirely his gift. Whatever good we do is what we **should do**, like a servant serving his master. A humble disposition tells us that this is true.

So, a genuine spirituality, whatever particular form it takes, is one that recognises human actions guarantee nothing and our salvation depends entirely on God's grace.

What is Prayer?

Prayer is an integral part of Spirituality - how can anyone achieve a close relationship with God without communicating with him?

Prayer is really communication with God, communication in all its forms. It may be verbal, it may be gesture based, it may be associated with what we do, our good actions and works, or it may be meditative or contemplative - what all these methods of prayer have in common is the intention to communicate with the eternal God, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The most important quality in communicating with God is humility. How else can we, in our nothingness before Our Creator, ever dare to approach him? Remember, we must never become Pharisees.