20. November 2026
ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
Part V
"Prayer: Walking in God's Presence"

Inner Preparation as Part of Prayer:

God is the truly loving Father whom we may approach with complete and unguarded openness. We can always lay bare our inner, personal situation before Him, and we need not approach Him only when we have, so to speak, everything "under control" and nothing to reproach ourselves for! No, we should bring every situation before God, even if our stance is not yet clearly on the "Lord's side of victory" and, for example, we have not yet sufficiently reined in a disordered desire. What is important is that our inner will is nevertheless directed toward God and that we ask Him to let the situation unfold as it corresponds to His will.

Self-Knowledge

Spiritual teachers emphatically draw our attention to how important self-knowledge is. It is part of the inner purification process, for it dispels the illusions we may still harbor about ourselves. It is of great help in freeing us from forms of self-absorption. This does not mean constantly accusing ourselves before God, nor does it mean a gloomy, anxious self-examination of whether our own life situation is still in order, nor does it mean scrupulously tormenting ourselves with fear. Such wrong attitudes ultimately bind us to ourselves and block our path to encountering one another with openness as children of the divine Father's love.

The fundamental realization, on the other hand, that we are accountable to our loving heavenly Father allows us to calmly speak out and confess attitudes that cause us sorrow in the presence of God and before others. The more refined our self-knowledge becomes, the more it brings us into contact with God and His infinite mercy and enables us to grasp His nature more deeply. At the same time, instructed by the Spirit of God, we become increasingly aware of our own inner shortcomings, which do not yet, or perhaps not yet sufficiently, correspond to truth and love. All of this takes place primarily in prayer. We cannot be grateful enough to the Lord when we are allowed to

recognize ourselves more clearly in Him and thus also participate more effectively in the process of inner purification, to the extent that it is possible for us. Why should we fear coming to know ourselves better and recognizing those things that, with God's help, can be overcome? Certainly, it may be humbling that we have not yet overcome this or that, that we still discover things in our hearts that are unseemly and unholy. But we still have them, and God does not demand that we approach Him only as perfect people; rather, He wishes to lead us along the path to perfection.

The more sincere the prayer, the more precise our self-knowledge becomes. It is the Spirit of the Lord who accomplishes the work of purification in and with us.

Prayer as Walking in God's Presence

The inner sincerity of our relationship with God leads us to a continuous inner awareness of His great love. As a rule, it is not possible for us to think of God constantly. And yet, through a life of prayer, His presence becomes ever more palpable, even in the situations of everyday life.

Just as contact with a loved one is never truly broken because they remain ever-present in our hearts, so too does our growing relationship of love with God make His presence ever more evident to us. In addition to specific times of prayer, during which we give our full attention to God, our lives become a constant dialogue with Him. In the process, we will notice that we are moving away from our own worries and needs and becoming more attuned to others' difficulties, striving to help them to the best of our ability. The Lord, too, will entrust us with more of what is close to His heart.

This ever-deepening and growing connection with God leads us to seek His will with ever greater discernment. Our gaze becomes a constant, loving alignment with the will of the Heavenly Father. Nothing should happen without God's consent.

This heightened sense of God's presence leads to the perception of inner guidance through the Holy Spirit, which we consciously accept and strive to follow.

Inner Guidance by the Holy Spirit

There are many ways in which God wishes to guide us on our personal journey. For the person who prays, it is important to become increasingly attuned to inner guidance: the Spirit of Truth, who leads us into all truth (cf. John 16:13). It is God's Spirit Himself who increasingly takes charge of this inner guidance, which we learn to perceive attentively. This is not a passive "surrender," but an active alertness to God's workings. At the same time, it is a calm alertness, for "restless agitation" and "inner tension" prevent us from listening and understanding.

God's inner voice is a warning when our path is heading in the wrong direction. It is reassuring and encouraging when the path is in harmony with God.

In this way, the Spirit of God teaches us to connect every situation with Him so that we may respond to it correctly. At the same time, that same Spirit teaches us to see things and circumstances through His wisdom and keeps us from becoming ensnared by daily events.

Over time, we become familiar with this inner guidance, so that it becomes a reliable compass for the path of following the Lord.

Meditation on the reading of the day in the Novus Ordo:
https://en.elijamission.net/a-predication-can-be-bitter-3/