

Oremus Lecture Talk #1: What is Prayer

January 5, 2025, Sts. Anne and Joachim Catholic Church

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (English Standard Version): For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

1. Introduction to Oremus

- a. Eight weeks, covering an introduction to prayer, methods of prayer with the Sacred Scriptures, along with discussing distractions in prayer and spiritual consolation and desolation
- b. Recorded, will be posted online if you miss one and need to catch up.
- c. Ask for 15 minutes of prayer with this method these days.
- d. Workbooks
 - i. Quotes, places to write reflections for each day.

2. Mission

- a. Fr. Robert is a work in progress, and so are you!
- b. Our desire is to fall more deeply in love with the Lord.
- c. Multifaceted spiritual life
 - i. Time, talent, treasure, liturgy, social concerns, all good things!
 - ii. Flowing from a relationship with the Lord
 - iii. How do we form a relationship with the Lord? Prayer.
- d. Difficulties in prayer, easy to give up or be discouraged.
 - i. What are we supposed to pray with?
 - ii. Where are we to pray?
 - iii. Discouraged and we give up
- e. The Father will teach us how to pray through the Holy Spirit, Fr. Robert is just an instrument hopefully leading you to the Lord.

3. What is Prayer?

- a. “As the body cannot live without nourishment, so our soul cannot stay spiritually alive without prayer.” -St. Augustine
- b. Shortcomings in prayer
 - i. Perhaps no one taught us how to pray.
 - ii. Perhaps we feel limited in our prayer.
 - iii. Perhaps we feel God is distant or not present at all.
- c. Different experiences and stories in prayer
 - i. Liturgy, devotionals, litanies, sacraments, all good!
 - ii. Our focus in these lectures will be mental prayer.
- d. Man’s search for God.
 - i. “Man is in search of God. In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. ‘Crowned with glory and honor,’ man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging ‘how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth.’ Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence. All religions bear witness to men’s essential search for God.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 2566)
 - ii. “God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly

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calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation." (CCC 2567)

- e. Necessity of prayer
 - i. Prayer as discipline
 - ii. "Human life without prayer, which opens our existence to the mystery of God, lacks sense and direction." -Pope Benedict XVI.
 - iii. Jesus leads us to the Father, for whom we were made.
- f. Discouragement in prayer
 - i. The evil one does not want you to pray.
 - ii. Feelings of failure with imperfection
- g. Our elevated prayer brings about an intimate relationship and conversation, along with communion with God.
 - i. What do you desire?
 - ii. What does God desire?
 - iii. Prayer is responding to the God who is already there and receiving what he wants to bestow upon us.
 - iv. "The simple truth is that God is already in a beautiful relationship with each one of you and with me and we may not be fully aware of it."
 - v. Receive from God and respond to Him.

4. For the coming week

- a. The workbooks provide a framework for daily prayer, encouraged to pray with it for 15 minutes a day.
- b. Pray reasonably, maybe for the course of these eight weeks these Oremus passages are not just one more thing, replace some other activity or even some other type of prayer.
- c. Don't be discouraged, ever. The Lord wants a relationship with you.
- d. Seek out consistency and a pattern for prayer.

5. Homework

- a. Pray with the following passages, one a day
 - i. Day 1: Jeremiah 29:11-14
 - ii. Day 2: John 15:1-17
 - iii. Day 3: Psalm 139:1-18
 - iv. Day 4: Romans 8:22-27
 - v. Day 5: Romans 8:31-39
 - vi. Day 6: Psalm 63
 - vii. Day 7: Revisit a passage that spoke well to you this week.
- b. With the prayer, answer the questions:
 - i. The "strongest" thought or feeling during my prayer was...
 - ii. My heart "rested" when...
 - iii. I sensed the Lord was telling me...
 - iv. I ended the prayer wanting...