

St. Joseph Church

136 HENRI DE TONTI PO BOX 39 TONTITOWN, ARKANSAS 72770
(479) 361-2612 FAX (479) 361-9271 E-Mail: stjoeontitownad@att.net

How can I improve my prayer life?

No matter at what stage of development our prayer may exist, the Lord has more for us. He draws us into an ever closer relationship until we are offered the grace of contemplation - the highest form of prayer and union with God.

We begin with passing from the elementary prayer of "raising our hearts and minds to God". At any stage of prayer we enter into an awareness of Emmanuel - God is with us. This is not a feeling but an act of faith. Jesus promised to be with us so we turn in faith to His presence. One may use their imaginations to picture Jesus present. Best is to be before the Blessed Sacrament - the great gift of Jesus. Realize the Lord is eager to receive your prayer and faith.

Praise and thanksgiving should be offered at the beginning of prayer. We are worshipping as we pray. Paul reminds us to be always thankful in everything. God our Creator can change anything to the building up of the Kingdom. Even adverse situations can become opportunities for growing in the Spirit. So we accept where we are in life even if we would like the situation to change.

What about the proper environment for meditative prayer?

Distractions cause havoc. Churches are usually built without clear glass windows so that sight distractions are limited. Perhaps more important a quiet location lends itself best for praying. No TV, no radio, MP3 player, stereo, etc. Some feel that soft music can assist in meditating. I don't recommend it.

Personal preparation

We live in a fast paced society. The prayerful person must be truly counter cultural and slow down for serious prayer. Begin to focus on to Whom you are speaking. Realize He has already supplied the needed calm to approach Him. He loves each of us. He awaits our prayer. Many find beginning with a Scripture reading helps both focusing and calming.

Msgr Mancini