

*Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:*

### **Message for April**

Dear friends in Christ:

Catholics are not the only religion or religious people to have repetitive prayer in their tradition. There are many examples of repetitive prayer, especially in the major world religions:

- For Catholics of course it is the rosary and litanies
- For Muslims it is the entirety of their call to prayer (5x a day) and their dhikr prayer on beads
- Mantra prayers for Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists (again using beads)
- For Jews it may be found in chanting the psalms

Most protestant and fundamentalist religions do not have an appreciation for prayers that have a repetitive quality to them. Some think it is an abomination or a slap in the face to God because we are not trusting in His Providence and Grace but like small children we are pestering God with words. The value of repetitive prayers is something we must be able to explain to our critics or adversaries. What is the perspective we must have personally to pray, in an authentic way, these types of prayers?

In Christ;

Fr. David

*Open with Sign of Cross and Prayer to the Holy Spirit*

## **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

**L: Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.**

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

**L: Let us pray - God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.**

R: Amen

**L: You, O lord, will open my lips.**

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

**L: Incline unto my aid, O God.**

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

**L: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.**

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

**Read the following and answer the discussion questions please.**

**St. Therese of Lisieux said:** “For me, prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy.”

**CCC Paragraph #2559 gives this very helpful definition of prayer, saying that:**

*"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."*

**CCC Paragraph # 2562 speaks to the origin of prayer as coming from the heart:**

*Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.*

**And so I believe that if your “heart” is not in the right place to say the prayers you are praying, this is a danger for your soul. Babbling (or the saying of words without any meaning behind them) is spoken of by Christ in the Gospel of Matthew 6:5-13.**

*“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

*This is how you are to pray”*

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread;  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors;  
and do not subject us to the final test,  
but deliver us from the evil one.**

**Now these questions:**

- When you tell someone in your life that you love them, do you think that they can really tell if you mean it or not? What do you really mean when you say “I love you”? Would it mean more to say it more often to that person or to say these words less frequently?
- Anything good is rooted in humility; this is as true to say as - evil is rooted in the deadly sin of pride. Repetitive prayers **can** come from a simple heart of love or they can come from a heart that wants to impress God or others with an impressive length of prayers. How do you attempt to pray with humility? What thought or practice centers your prayer from being about God and His Love and Mercy to being about my achievement (or place) before God and others?
- Your physical heart is an involuntary muscle. It beats without thought and yet it has such great purpose. Use the notion of your heart and continue your discussion about repetitive prayer. Draw connections between the two realities.
- Finally, consider now how you would teach a child to pray. God uses you and your methods to accomplish this great habit in the very same way that you learned from your parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters or religious education figures. Now we know that St. Paul taught us to put our childish ways behind us but we remain to be “Children of God”. We reflect that we are creatures. We must remain true to ourselves and so... what does all this say about repetitive prayer? How would you face the challenge that saying the Rosary is “babbling” like the pagans?

**For prayer, reverently, with long pauses do the “The Divine Praises,” which is truly a repetitive prayer. Leader says a line than it is repeated by group. Then say an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be to conclude.**

### **The Divine Praises**

Blessed be God

Blessed be His Holy Name

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man

Blessed be the Name of Jesus

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete

Blessed be the great Mother of Christ, Mary most Holy

Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception

Blessed be her Glorious Assumption

Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin and Mother

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints

**Next Months Upper Room will be about meditation.**