

Theory 3b

MEDITATIVE PRAYER: HELPS TO REFLECT: AIR SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

AIR – Attractions, Instructions and Recognitions

The “Attractions” (How is the Holy Spirit getting my attention?)

- What *caught* my attention?
- Was I *impressed or struck* by some point?
- Is there something I was *drawn* to spontaneously?
- How were my thoughts, imaginations, emotions, memory and/or desire *engaged*?
- What thought, feeling, memory about God, myself, others and/or life... *occurred, or surfaced*?

The “Instructions” (What does God want for me?)

- Was I pointed toward something specific? What was it?
- Did I discover something that “stirred my heart” or moved me toward a new direction? What was it?
- Did I receive some new knowledge, something I didn’t know before? Did I come upon a truth new to me? What was it?
- Did I receive a correction? What was it?
- Did I receive support or a confirmation in some area of my life? What was it?
- Did I recall some pain or difficulty? What was it?
- Did I experience some comfort, reassurance? What was it?

The “Recognitions” (What am I spiritually coming to realize?)

- What previous understanding about God, myself, others and/or life has changed?
- Why do I think God wanted me to be aware of this understanding?
- How does this impact my good and the good of others with whom I’m in relationship?
- If I was made aware of a memory, where is God in this memory now as opposed to the past?
- Did I come to understand a greater way to be united with Christ or follow Him more closely?
- Did I see how I could love Christ more?
- Did I come to be surer of my faith?
- Did I learn something about the Church and God’s relationship with the Church that brings satisfaction to my personal faith?
- Did I feel a desire to turn more toward God in some area of my life that I was afraid to face?
- Has a particular virtue(s) been made my focus?
- Did I receive a new reality about my relationship with God that reveals God’s particular love for me as His son/daughter, brother/sister?
- Did I find myself asking for forgiveness with the desire of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- Did I find myself thanking God, praising Him, or more clearly focusing on a need that I have in a prayerful way?
- Is there some intention toward a particular good that I ought to fulfill?
- Did I have an appreciation that the insights I discovered are especially my own, that is, intentionally given to me by God for my own good?

Areas of Spiritual Growth from Meditative Prayer Done Over Time

“Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness,
they shall have their fill.” (Matt. 5:6)

“By their fruits you shall know them.
Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?” (Matt. 7:16)

“...the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness,
generosity, faith, gentleness, self-control, and charity.” (Gal. 5:22-23)

If you are faithfully, correctly, sincerely, and patiently practicing daily meditative prayer, what noticeable results should be expected?

Below is a list of different areas of possible spiritual growth. By knowing the areas of spiritual growth from meditation that are possible, it becomes easier to create some small action or resolution for the day.

All you need is to form one small action item in one area of spiritual growth to have a resolution.

Areas of Spiritual Growth from Meditative Prayer:

- Achieving greater growth in virtue (these are varied and numerous, human & spiritual)
- Lessening the habits of venial sins, and ending mortal sin
- Increasing growth particularly in the virtues of humility, courage, and gratitude which are fundamental to praying
- Having and showing care for the spiritual and material good of others, that is, charity, a fundamental virtue that indicates a person who has a life of prayer
- Taking interest in being taught and corrected in your personal moral life, as the Church teaches, believes, and professes, so as not to offend God or others
- Recognizing oneself as a Christian in a cultural battle with the world whose standard of morality is moral relativism, which is “whatever the individual feels is right for themselves” regardless of the standards that God has naturally put in the makeup of human beings created by Him; a Christian, therefore, ordinarily opposes the godless standards of the world.

- Seeing the Pope and Bishops of the world as the official teachers of faith and morals; using the teachings of the Church to know what living under the standard of God is and means for our daily life
- Becoming more aware and concerned for imitating Christ's life as seen in the Scripture, becoming more Christ-like
- Becoming more selfless in our personal plans (or intentions) for the sake of others and as a sign of being led by the Holy Spirit to help build up God's Kingdom on earth
- Increasing one's spirit of self-sacrifice and growing in disinterest in earthly things
- Having a more accepting attitude about earthly suffering and seeing the spiritual value in it
- Using God-given material gifts, talents, and socio-economic position to build up His Kingdom, as opposed to becoming selfishly obsessed with things and obsessively dependent on them, which is materialism
- Becoming more responsible in the fulfillment of ordinary duties in whatever vocation God has given us
- Seeing the practice of Christian perfectionism in the ordinary fulfillment of our role as disciple of Christ, whether we are married, a religious, or a single person
- Growing in our desire for the things of God as our greatest treasure – prayer, Sacraments, Word of God, the Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church, holy friendships, the saints and angels, selfless giving, and our ultimate goal of heaven
- Turning toward holiness and life in the Church rather than being secular, which is the disregard for spiritual things and the indifference of living a religious life
- Becoming more convinced of the unconditional love of God and our dependence on and friendship with Him
- Understanding and seeking the forgiving and merciful love of God
- Growing in awareness of God's presence in the present moment

Seeing these areas of spiritual growth, from practicing meditative prayer over time, can help in forming resolutions.