



NOVENA
CHURCH OF ST ALPHONSUS

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ST. ALPHONSUS' MENTAL PRAYER



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St. Alphonsus Liguori is called the “Doctor of Prayer.” Even though he was a respected moral theologian, he considered his books on prayer to be the most important books that he wrote. Prayer is important, because it helps us grow closer to God, know and understand God’s will and receive the grace we need to live a good life and ultimately, achieve eternal salvation. ‘The one who prays,’ St. Alphonsus says, ‘will be saved!’

Here is a simple method of mental prayer that St. Alphonsus developed. It follows a simple 5-step methodology. It is meant to be a guide and an aid, flexible rather than rigid. We are not meant to be analysing what we’re doing or slavishly following the steps. The steps serve to help us connect with God and to be open to the Spirit.

STEP 1 – PREPARATION AND LECTIO

In your sacred space, quieten yourself in the presence of God. Tell God that you are here to spend this time with Him. Ask God for the grace to persevere through this time of prayer. When you're ready, begin with Lectio, which means reading. You could read a passage from the Bible, the readings of the day or any spiritual book or passage you find helpful. The passage serves as a catalyst to lead you into meditation. The objective is not to finish the passage or the book. Once you come across a line or word that inspires you, put down the reading and proceed with meditation.

First of all, it is good to read something, especially something that lends itself to reflection and leads us to recollection. However, when the soul feels itself moved by some devout sentiment, then reading should be left aside and you should occupy yourself with reaping the fruits of meditation.

STEP 2 - MEDITATIO

Focus your mind on the passage that you have read or the line that caught your attention. St. Alphonsus believed that when we habitually reflect on the teachings of Jesus and on Christian values, they will become interiorized and soon, our actions will correspond.

Talk to God as often as you can for He never tires of listening to you. If you truly love God, you will never lack for things to say to Him. Tell Him everything that happens to you, tell Him about your concerns just as you would to your dearest friend. It delights our God to come down to our level and He is thrilled to hear from us, God is so devoted to your interests.

ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

STEP 3 - CONTEMPLATIO

This is a time to lose yourself in the love of God. Sit in silence and allow God to speak to you. You can also use any form of contemplation that you are familiar with. Christian meditation, the use of the prayer word like Maranatha, the Jesus Prayer or even a chant.

Accustom yourself to speak to God, one to one, in a familiar manner as with the dearest friend you have. It is a mistake to think that conversation with God is nothing but boredom and tediousness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your God is ever at your sight, indeed, within you.

ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

STEP 4 - RESOLUTIO

When you are ready, make a concrete resolution to practice some virtue or to refrain from something that takes you away from God. Ask God for the grace to help you to do this.

Before finishing the prayer, the person ought to make or renew some particular resolution, to overcome some habitual fault or to practice some necessary virtue.

ST. ALPHONSUS, THE PRACTICE OF MENTAL PRAYER.

‘Ask and you will receive.’ Without prayer, all our meditations, all our resolutions, all our promises, are useless. In order to do good, to overcome temptations, to practice virtue, in short, to observe the divine commandments and counsels, it is not enough to be enlightened by God, or to reflect and make resolutions, but we need above all the actual assistance of God. The Lord gives this assistance to those who pray.

ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, PRAYER, THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION.

STEP 5 - CONCLUSION

Thank the Lord for this time of prayer and ask Him to continue to be with you throughout the day.

Besides more specific acts of devotion (*the sacraments, devotions and mental prayer*), whenever you are engaged in external occupations such as study, work, or any activity that may be involved in your state of life, never forget when beginning any action to offer it to God, praying for His help to accomplish it without fault. Keep yourself as much as possible in a state of recollection and union with God in this life, try to turn your every sight and sound into an opportunity of raising your mind to God.

ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.