

Meeting God in Prayer:

Brief Bullet Points from our first three classes

Sept. 16: Prayer FAQ's

- We suggested that a prayer book would be beneficial, recommending the Ancient Faith Prayer book.
- We talked about what prayer is and what it does; it is communication with God.
- St. John Climacus says: "Prayer is by nature a dialog and union with God. Its effect is to hold the world together." *Step 28*).
- Prayer has four key elements to it: Praise, Repentance, Petition, and Thanksgiving.
- Prayer is not about changing God but about our own transformation.

Sept. 23: Difficulties in Prayer (part one)

- We identified many of the problems that we encounter when we pray.
- We focused on the more common difficulties that might beset beginners, but we all could use reminders!
 - finding time to pray
 - dealing with distractions
 - managing the 'expectations' we bring to prayer
 - feeling not good enough to pray- either because we are not experienced at it (so we feel we are "bad" at it), or because we feel that we are not holy enough, unworthy, or held back by our sins.
- Solutions discussed:
 - incorporating prayer in small bits throughout the day
 - setting aside a set time for prayer
 - creating a specific prayer space (such as an icon corner)
 - quieting ourselves (e.g., turning off cellphones and fostering silence)
 - using a prayer book to guide us- but also including spontaneous prayer
 - prayer is very easy - it can be done by anyone, anywhere, and anytime
 - prayer is also very hard because as soon as we begin we are beset by the enemy of God who wants us to cease to pray.
 - distractions are very real, but there are ways to counteract or ignore them.
 - while we are all unworthy to meet God in prayer, God in His Love makes us worthy and calls us to pray.

Oct. 7: Difficulties in Prayer (part two)

- The challenging problem of spiritual aridity or dryness in prayer.
- The difficulty of trying to pray when feeling disconnected from God, and the experience of the loss of God's presence (a feeling of abandonment) in prayer.
- The teachings of the Church Fathers can guide us through these challenges.
- These difficulties in prayer are overcome through humility, obedience, patience, perseverance, and love for others.
- We take comfort in knowing that the prayers of others hold us up, and that God's Love for us is an unbreakable tether that keeps us connected to Him even when we don't feel it.

