

ENCOUNTER

THE HEART OF PRAYER

Week 1

HELP ME PRAY

Notes

Quotes From the Video

“Man is in search of God. In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. ... Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence. All religions bear witness to men's essential search for God.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2566

“The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 27

“Many Christians are aware of the necessity and the beauty of contemplative prayer and have a sincere yearning for it. Yet, apart from tentative efforts soon abandoned, few remain faithful to this mode of prayer, and even fewer are really convinced and satisfied by their own practice of it. ... We would like to pray, but we cannot manage it. ... Our time of prayer passes leaving us distracted, and since it does not seem to yield any tangible fruit, we are tempted to give up. From time to time we take up a book on ‘meditations’ which presents us, ready-made contemplations we ought to produce ourselves. ... Often fear robs us of the confidence to take steps on our own.”

— Hans Urs von Balthazar, *Prayer*

Suggested Small Group Questions

- What brought you to this study?
- At this stage in life, where are you in your relationship with God?
- What do you want from God?

For Your Prayer - Week 1

Below is a Scripture passage for each day of the next week. You are invited to pray with the whole passage. Under each Scripture is a possible phrase to focus on and/or question to consider.

Fr. Mark has also recorded a short meditation for each day's Scripture. These audio recordings are designed to aid the preparation of your prayer time. You can find the recordings on our diocesan website under the video for this week's session: htdiocese.org/encounter.

Day 1 | JEREMIAH 29: 11-14

"I know well the plans I have in mind for you"

Day 2 | PSALM 63: 1-3, 6-8

"O God, you are my God for you I long"

Day 3 | ISAIAH 43: 1-7

"Because you are precious in my eyes and because I love you"

Day 4 | ISAIAH 49: 1-16

"Upon the palms of my hands I have engraved you"

Day 5 | PSALM 37: 1-7

"Find delight in the LORD who will give you your heart's desire"

Day 6 | ISAIAH 62: 1-7

"For the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be espoused"

Day 7 | PSALM 139: 1-16

"You knit me in my mother's womb"

When praying with this psalm, consider praying with the question:

"God, what is your favorite thing about me?"

Suggestions for Praying with the Scriptures

- Read the passage once to become familiar with the text.
- Slowly read the passage a second time.
- Very slowly read the passage a third time.
- Pay attention to which word, words, or phrases capture your attention or tug at your heart.
- Talk to God about what is on your heart... and listen.
- After you pray, journaling in some manner could be helpful. Simply jotting down a word, phrase, or sentence about one thing that stuck out to us from our prayer can help us as we look back on our those notes and remember how God has been speaking to us.