



LUKE 13:1-9



Prayer... always presupposes effort

CHECK OUT WHAT CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE BATTLE OF PRAYER CCC 2725



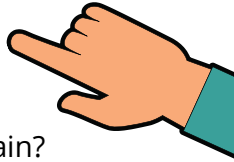
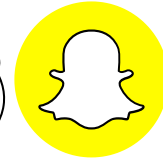
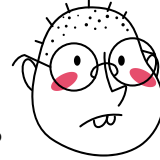
The Battle of Prayer

WOULD YOU RATHER....?

- Lose a toe on each foot
- Eat only your favourite food everyday for a year
- Give up Netflix
- Watch TV
- Chill out on the couch



- OR go bald?
- OR never eat your favourite food again?
- OR give up Snapchat?
- OR go for a walk?
- OR go pray?



WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE FIND IT HARD TO PRAY SOMETIMES?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ "WHY IS PRAYER SO HARD" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



As a teen, Fr Mike knew he needed to be a saint, but didn't know _____

He knew he needed to pray, but he didn't know _____

What did Fr Mike read to help him figure out how to be a saint?

When he read the stories of saints, he thought that prayer was really easy for them. He believed it should be as easy as slipping into a _____!



When he read the Catechism of the Catholic Church he realised that prayer can often be a B_____!

The CCC describes prayer as a "gift of g_____" but also a "determined response on our part." Prayer always presupposes e_____.

The great figures of the Old Testament, the Mother of God, the saints and even Jesus Himself teach us that prayer is a _____.



WHO ARE WE BATTLING AGAINST?

Firstly: _____ What is St Paul's conundrum? Romans 7:19

Think: What kind of things can distract people when they feel they should go and pray?

To engage in the battle of prayer we have to f_____, to s_____ up, to s_____ h_____, and while I'm here to be as _____ to the Lord as possible!

Secondly: _____

The battle to pray is a spiritual battle, and the evil one wants to prevent us from praying, because when we pray we:

- come closer _____.
- become the men & women God created _____.
- glorify the F_____, S____ and H____ S_____.



THE BATTLE OF PRAYER

LUKE 13:1-9

WE PRAY AS WE LIVE BECAUSE WE LIVE AS WE PRAY

Jesus often went away to a quiet place to pray, but He was always in communion with God.

If a married person is away from their spouse, they should not live as if they're not married, but their spouse should be on their mind and their relationship should form how they act.

If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in His name. This means that the graces of prayer time can't stay restricted to prayer time!

We need to make the i _____, on-p _____ and faithful decision to live outside of prayer the way we want to live _____ prayer. This takes humility, _____ and perseverance.



Now Read Luke 13:1-9



When we hear the parable of the fig tree, we might first be struck with the cold and brutal reaction of the property owner: it's not bearing fruit, cut it down! Then we hear the gardener's plea for more time to nurture and prune, full of hope in its possibility to bear fruit. How does this apply to us? God loves us, He cares for us, He never gives up on us. He wants us to respond to His love with ours, because when we let the love of God into our lives, great things can happen! We blossom into the people He has created us to be.

Trying to do this all on our own is impossible. We need God's grace to show us what needs to be pruned and what we need to change. If we're in a healthy relationship with God, these things will come more naturally to us. Prayer is that relationship. Is prayer easy? Not always. It takes effort, dying to ourselves and our own wants and desires, making a commitment and living it out - like the gardener working on the fig tree. Through the effort of prayer, we tune our hearts to God's heart, and become more like Him, and when we're more like Him, we'll draw others close to Him too!

MISSION!

DECIDE THIS WEEK TO ENGAGE IN THE BATTLE OF PRAYER. SET ASIDE SPECIFIC PARTS OF YOUR MORNING AND EVENING THAT YOU WILL GIVE TO GOD, AND STICK WITH THEM. AS FR MIKE SAYS, SHOW UP, STAY THERE AND BE AS PRESENT TO GOD AS YOU CAN POSSIBLY BE. START SMALL - EVEN JUST FIVE MINUTES AT A TIME. PUT AWAY YOUR PHONE. IGNORE DISTRACTIONS AND ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE GRACE TO COME CLOSER TO GOD.



PRAYER TIME!

Lord, You know that prayer can be hard for me sometimes, but I'm here and I'm trying, and I want to know You more. Tune my heart to Yours and draw me closer to You today, now in this moment. Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON PRAYER THIS WEEK

- Into Faith I Go - Pat Barrett
- Heart of God - Hillsong
- Battle Belongs - Phil Wickham
- Show us Christ - Sovereign Grace
- Every Giant will fall - Rend Collective
- The Fig Tree - Berci Sisters
- Surrounded (Fight my Battles) - Upper Room
- Lead Kindly Light - Audrey Assad

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



1:13 MINS



Fr Patrick Cahill: Plunge into Prayer (Paving the Way Home)

2:33 MINS



Letitia Wright (Shuri from Black Panther) shares her conversion story