

STC 203 - INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY
Tangaza College: Kevin Kraft, O.P.
August – December, 2013:
Course Notes

I – Theology of Spirituality: An Introduction (Aug. 19th)

Some basic vocabulary of spiritual theology: identification of terms used in the survey administered in the opening class. p. 2

II – Scriptural Foundation (Aug 26th & Sept 2nd)

1. Old Test. Spirituality: esp Torah/Liturgy, Prophets, Wisdom Lit. . . . p. 3
2. Spirituality grounded in New Test. - Syn. Gospels, Paul, Johan. Lit. . . . p. 4

III – Doctrinal Aspects of Spirituality (Sept 9th & 16th)

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2. Fund. Anthropology: Sin, Conversion & Grace: the paschal mystery . . p. 8

An optional interview with a non-Catholic (Christian, Jew or Muslim) about his/her personal Scriptural piety. Due: Sept 16th p. 9

IV - Liturgical Spirituality (Sept 23rd & 30th)

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Mid-term Break (Oct 7th)

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2. Progress in holiness: three classical stages; Carmelite school; ‘dark night’ of resistance... spir. direction and Ignatian discernment of spirits p. 17

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VII – Conjugal spirituality (Nov 11th)

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I – Theology of Spirituality: An Introduction (Aug. 19th)

1. Concept of spiritual theology and its methodology (deductive, but also – and especially—inductive). Distinction from dogmatic theology...
2. Various possible approaches:
 - history of Christian spirituality;
 - following a given school of spirituality (e.g. Carmelite, Ignatian...);
 - an informal inductive approach from the experience of the participants
 - or a scientifically inductive approach from social surveys of religious experience;
 - a systematic (deductive) treatment of its principles and resources...

In this course will follow an *eclectic* methodology, but perhaps closest to the last methodology mentioned.

3. Survey of terms, phrases and names in Spiritual Theology (not for credit; just to ‘test the waters’ and see what sort of background the students have in this area of study)
4. Presentation of the Course Outline, requirements, structure and evaluation of the course.

II – Scriptural Foundation

1. O.T. Spirituality: esp Torah/Liturgy, Prophets, Wis. Lit. (Aug 26th)

“**Torah mysticism**”, revelation and spirituality of the Word: Moses on mtn., Shema – Dt 6; Joshua, a man of the Word – Josh 1; 24; Josiah and the renewal of the covenant by the reading and ratification of the ‘Book of the Law’ (2 Kings 22); again in Neh 8; Jeremiah and a passion for the Word of God (Jer 15:16; 20; 23); Psalms of the Law 1; 19B; 119; murmuring / memorization and recitation of ‘the law of the Lord’; **liturgy, life and law** are closely interrelated, alternated in the Pentateuch. The “Torah” is not all laws: a large part of it is history, and revelation of God, but it is all “teaching” for right living...

The prayer of the patriarchs and early leaders of Israel: intercession, far from being an inferior type of prayer, is present in key moments in the lives of the greatest OT figures; in its most dramatic moments in the form of **arguing, bargaining, remonstrating with God**, “standing in the breach” (Abraham – Gen 18; Moses – Ex 32; Num 11; 14; Jer 14-15; Ezek 15; 2 Macc 14; Job); Jacob’s ladder – Gen 28; **spiritual life as a struggle / battle**: Jacob wrestles with the angel - Gen 32; Moses with the Amalekites – Ex 17... even Song of Songs...

Exodus: desert (trials, tempt. Prov.), Mt. Sinai, promised Land.

God’s absence / hiding / inaction: believer’s distress, thirst / yearning for God: prayer of lamentation; Job; Jer 12; Hab 1; Lamentations; **God’s presence, favor of God**: Psalms of confidence: Ps 16; 73; 131; “Emmanuel” (Is 7; 12 etc.); covenant relationship; Jerusalem... **the vision of God** / the ‘light of his face’: Jacob; Moses - Ex 33-34; Gideon, Elijah – 1 King 19; Isaiah 6; Ezek. 1, Psalms...

Prophets: vocational experiences & personal prayer relationship with God (God’s self-revelation to Abraham, to Moses in the burning bush; prophets’ varied calls, responses & trials, esp. “Confessions of Jer.”); ongoing vocation (Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Jeremiah); experience of the holiness of God (Elijah, Isaiah); spirituality of the *anawim* (Tr.-Is., Zeph, -- Magnificat)

Hymns: the very existence of the psalms (which we shall look at more closely in relation to the liturgy) and ‘Odes’ (canticles, in LXX): Prayer-book(s) of the Bible: contrast Qur’an, and even NT prayer / canticles... Special character: simple, mostly universal (pan-human) symbolism; parallelism which permits translation of sense and beauty (contrast Qur’an); practically the whole spectrum of human situations and sentiments are represented

Creation as revelation of God’s glory (Pss 8; 19A; 104) and the **invitation to praise God for / with creation** (Gen 1-2; Dt 8; Dan 3; Ps. 148; Sir 42B-43; St. Francis’ “Canticle of the Creatures”; Albert the Great, Teilhard de Chardin...

Genesis, Ruth and Tobit: **spirituality of marriage & family life**; “Wherever you go”; Song of Songs and the celebration of human sexuality

2. Spirituality grounded in N.T. -Syn. Gospels, Paul, Johannine Lit. etc. (Sept 2nd)

Preliminary remarks: the New Testament is not for Christian spirituality just “another” or even a “primary” source, as if it were a quarry from which to extract nice building blocks to construct, according to one’s own taste, one’s spiritual life. Rather, it is *the source*, the touchstone of authenticity, the well from which we receive the life-giving waters, without which there is no Christian life. The New Testament is also a way in which we ground our knowledge of Jesus and his life-work and his will for us. The New Testament is *normative* for every Christian. So the New Testament (the properly Christian Scriptures), much more so than the Old Testament, is an *indispensable* reference and criterion of authentic Christian living. There is no question of picking and choosing what one likes from it; it is rather a fully-blown heritage which we must live up to, which will in the end “judge us” (John 12:48).

We will return to this privileged role of the Scriptures in the Christian life when we speak of “The Bible, the Eucharist and the Sacraments” in unit IV, on “Liturgical Spirituality”. For the moment, with all that said, let us look at the different New Testament elements which constitute the matrix of our Christian faith.

Synoptic Gospels: centrality of the historical figure of Jesus.

There are many different contributions to the matter of the spiritual life in the first three Gospels: Jesus’ example and teaching on prayer (beautifully and succinctly explained in the CCC), exhortation to conversion and growth in a life of virtue (although cf. Mk 4:26-29); proclamation of the Kingdom of God; centrality of the cross in Christian spirituality; figures (Bl. Virgin Mary, Peter, M. Magdalene; Martha & Mary)... But one well qualified writer on the subject¹ suggests that the *distinctively* Christian focus of spirituality of these Gospels may be expressed in relation to the two ‘great commandments’ which Jesus singles out from the Jewish Law as being the most important:

- Wholehearted, single-hearted love / service of the Lord: in radicality, precariousness, itinerancy, poverty, celibacy / renunciation of family / goods, obedience (discipleship) = spirituality of the *anawim*.
- Jesus is discovered by the eyes of faith (and so must also be loved) in the community, in the brother/sister, neighbor, the poor, the sick, the persecuted, the “little ones”.

Paul: author of the earliest Christian documents, and one of the principal subjects of the first written “Church history” (Acts). His conversion (esp. Phil 3).

New life “*in Christ*” (2 Cor 5); life “*with Christ*” (Rom 6:3-4; Eph 2:5-6; - - not just imitating or following Christ, but living with him his very life – 1 Cor 12; Gal/Phil; cf. Jn 15): the Church, mystical Body of Christ; the Eucharist as sacramental body of Christ (1 Cor 10-11)

We are Temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3; 6; 2 Cor 6) and we practice a new spiritual worship (Rom 12:1-2)

The **paschal mystery** (Lk 24:26; Phil 2-3; Acts 14:22; Heb 2:10; 5:7-10; Jn 12:24); apostolic sufferings; experience of the power of Christ; hope of (future) glory

Spirit of adoption; “Abba”; grace and the action of the Holy Spirit in our prayer (groaning, making our prayer possible, teaching us how to pray...); Holy Spirit, first fruits / pledge of full redemption / glory

Hope & eschatology: this passing world and its “spectacle” (1 Cor 7:29-31); end times are near; what lasts; see him face to face (1 Cor 13:7-13)

¹ C.P.M. JONES, in JONES – WAINWRIGHT – YARNOLD, *The Study of Spirituality*, 64-67

John: a “mystical Gospel”? at any rate, a fully Jewish Gospel; richly symbolic character but also ‘down to earth’...

Process of conversion (Jn 4; Jn 9) and the sacramental life (gradual growth of the divine life in us under the watchful and provident care of the Father (RCIA and Lenten catechumenate Sunday Gospels, cycle “A”)

We are called to become (not just in name but in reality) the adopted children of God: filial relationship. John 1; 1 Jn 3

“I am” + complement statements are all soteriological, especially the Vine and the branches (image of pruning; theology of grace); miracles as “signs”

Life, love, truth, glory; abide / remain... mystical content of this Gospel expressed in deceptively simple vocabulary

Indwelling of the Trinity: our incorporation into the intimate relationship between the divine persons through and in the Son (esp. Jn 14-17)

Grace: the Father *draws* us to himself in and through Jesus... (Jn 6:44, 65)

Hebrews: theology and spirituality of the priesthood of Jesus Christ: self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and our access / appropriation of salvation by means of the sacrifice of obedience (Heb 5:7-10)

New covenant in Jesus Christ, with its own distinctive worship replacing the Jewish economy of salvation;

Perseverance amidst trials (10:19ss, 31ss); “run with patient endurance the race” (Heb 12:1-4); Jesus, originator and perfecter of our faith (12:2)

1 Peter: royal priesthood of all believers; living stones in a spiritual temple (1 Pet 2); undeserved suffering (throughout the ‘epistle’); spirituality of elders (presbyters) 1 Pet 5:1-4

2 Peter: partakers of the divine nature (Orthodox theologians use the audacious expression of “divinization” of the believer) – 2 Pet 1:4

Revelation: Jesus is with and among his people (Rev 1-3);

Severely critical approach to the political & social realities of this world (entirely under the dominion of Satan; the sectarian viewpoint)

Hope and courage in confronting the empire of Satan; spirituality of martyrdom; non-cultic service of God

III – Doctrinal Aspects of Spirituality

1. Trinitarian Spirituality: Father; Jesus as God-man; Holy Spirit (Sept 9th)

God the *Father* (not just Creator, Conservor, Judge... but Father!!, and not simply a revelation, but a new *relationship* established in Christ) [Is 63-64; *Abba*; Our Father]; source and objective of all Christian life, prayer... (vs. a-theological, even impersonal forms of “New Age” spirituality of angels, candles, experiences, light...)

Jesus as the exemplar of Christian prayer (God-Man - CCC); Jesus’ life becomes the Christian way of salvation (handout); Suffering Servant & Son of Man Christology (cross / glory; Christology of 1 Cor; Phil 2); Incarnation, Paschal mystery and Christian spirituality (What was not assumed is not redeemed - Gregory of Nz.; Humanity of Christ is the divine instrument of our salvation – St. Teresa of Avila); meeting Christ in the sacraments: Eucharistic / sacrificial spirituality. Jesus is the ‘door’ (Jn 10), our ‘way’ into the intimate life of the Trinity (Jn 6; Heb 10) and we become ‘first born sons’ in the Son (Heb 12)

Holy Spirit, creative source and renovating force of the entire spiritual life – Lk 1; 10; Rom 8;26; Heb 9:14; Spirit of filial piety (‘sonship’); Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit; Discernment of Spirits...; charismatic spirituality & a rediscovery of the graces of Confirmation

Trinitarian spirituality in the last supper discourse; loving relations between the Divine Persons (and our thriving in that climate of intimate love); Trinitarian endings to Roman rite ‘collects’ and doxology of psalms; [vs. ‘unitarian’ focus of some Christian Churches, spiritualities...] *indwelling* presence (continuation of tabernacling presence in OT) through Baptism; Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity.

2. Fundamental Anthropology: Sin, Conversion and Grace: Paschal mystery (Sept 16^t)

First hour:

Spiritual life as continual, ongoing conversion: Phil 3; monastic *conversio mores*; St. Augustine's conversion; religious life as a state of *seeking* 'perfection'; practice of confession as a means of continuing conversion; Ch de Foucauld's conversion; cf. introduction to Chesterton's book on conversion

Repairing the damages of sin (our own or others'); **inner healing** (cf. reading assignment for this class, which introduces the concept and the practice of inner healing); asceticism and **progressive transformation** through growth in the virtues: vocation to holiness (more on this in another class);

The Way of the Cross, an unavoidable element of every Christian life: purgation; confrontation with evil (cf. Immaculée Illibagiza, *Left to Tell*); obstacles and failures; sickness & death;

Resurrection: the power of God's grace in us overcoming evil, supernaturally strengthening our weak human nature; raising us up above our natural human capacities to share God's life; goal of our Christian life, fullness of life in God.

Interplay of grace and human free will ('nature'): God's grace perfects, elevates, but does not destroy or suppress our free-will and normal human activity; there are various distortions in Christian anthropology and most of them result in distortions in the domain of spirituality:

- quietism;
- disincarnated spirituality (vs. corporal prayer);
- undervaluing of our nature (psychology, sexuality [encratism], social nature [individualistic spirituality], political vocation [Jehovah's Witnesses]);
- pelagianism (self-salvation) or voluntarism;
- this-worldly focus (deficient eschatology, transcendence [political messianism; some brands of Liberation Theol.]);
- salvation without the Cross ("success" spiritualities, "winners" churches, "miracle crusades")...

Second hour:

Our theme for the dialogue in the second hour will be: Christian anthropology in the spiritual life, as illustrated by **African saints** (whether canonized or not). [Cf. the list of “African Saints and Holy People” in the Appendix of horizontal notes.]

Please select one person (or one group) from the last 3 pages of the attached thumb-nail sketch of African saints / martyrs / holy people (that is, select one from the 20th or 21st centuries, *not* your congregation’s founder from the 1800’s nor from your home country), **do some research** on this figure (in encyclopedias, books, Internet²), and prepare something to share with the class concerning the work of grace in that person’s life. The following questions will help you to focus your reflections along the lines of the topic we’re looking at this week. (You don’t have to answer all three questions on your figure; one would be sufficient).

1. Did this person (these persons) have a notable **conversion experience**? If so, what were the factors in play in that process?
2. What evidence is there that they **struggled** to allow God to lead them and transform their personalities over the course of their life?
3. In what ways did **the Cross** (paschal mystery) enter their life? What forms did it take? Did they freely and consciously accept it?

The work of grace in the lives of some modern African saints:

- Charles de Foucauld (successive conversions, calls)
- Bakhita (discovery of God’s mercy; healing life’s traumas);
- Cyprian Tansi (slow, solid growth in the virtues, with a surprising outcome of his vocation);
- Ugandan martyrs; Trappist monks of Tibhirine, Pierre Claverie et al. in Algeria (fortitude in shouldering the cross of fidelity amidst persecution);
- Edel Quinn (strength of grace supporting a weak human nature);
- seminarians of Buta (witness to bonds of brotherhood in Christ);
- Julius Nyerere (grace transforming one’s political vision / activity: ujamaa, relations with Muslims, integrity; peaceful transition);
- Mark Nikkel (grace among the refugees; peace-making);
- John Kaiser (facing the cross of persecution in order to ‘redeem’ those under the cross of oppression);
- Cardinal Otunga (grace in his role as pastor)

² In some cases the document I’ve sent you (“Some African saints”) gives you indications of bibliography in the footnotes.

**Interview with a non Catholic Christian [or Jew, or Muslim]
about the person's *Scriptural piety***

Possible questions to orient your interview with a non-Catholic believer concerning their use of Scripture in their personal prayer. It's not necessary to use all of these questions, or even any one of them. You're free to create your own questions, or just allow the person you interview to speak freely about his / her way of incorporating Scripture in his / her devotional life. Please be careful not to slide into the area of public worship, which is a different matter of investigation. The topic for this interview is Scripture in the *personal* prayer and faith life of the person interviewed.

1. Do you follow a pre-determined daily plan of reading / meditation upon passages of Scripture that others have elaborated, or a program of Scriptural prayer or reading that you yourself have drawn up, or do you use Scripture texts spontaneously in your personal prayer?
2. What are the main books of the Bible [of the Hebrew Scriptures, Qur'an] that you use most frequently in your personal meditation / devotion / prayer?
3. Do you remember a time when God spoke to you powerfully through a verse or passage of Scripture? Would you mind describing it briefly?
4. Do you prepare for Sunday [Sabbath, Friday] worship by reading / meditating the texts that will be used in it? If so, how do you do it, and when?
5. [Christians] What is the role of the Gospels in your prayer / devotion?
6. [Christians & Jews] What is the role of the Psalms in your personal prayer? Do you ever sing the psalms in your personal prayer? Do you have a favorite psalm? Which one, and why?
7. Please mention a few of your favorite Scriptural [Qur'anic] texts.
8. Do you ever / often share biblical [Qur'anic] prayers with those you live among (family, roommates, colleagues)? If so, how, concretely, do you do it?

IV - Liturgical Spirituality

1. The SS (in ecumenical perspective), Eucharist, Lit. Year, & Sacraments (Sept 23rd)

To explain the importance of this week's and next's topic we can summarize:
Catholic spirituality is a liturgical spirituality.

All Christian spirituality is rooted in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, but a properly Catholic spirituality is ruled *by the Scriptures according to the mind of the Church*, and *guided by the Church's pedagogy* which is found above all in the various dimensions and phases of the divine liturgy. [Vs. typically protestant focus of "daily Bible reading", but on what plan? A particular pastor's scheme? A publication of Bible study guide? Impossible to be as rich as the Catholic liturgy!] As Pope Pius IX said in a memorable phrase: **"The principal instrument of the ordinary magisterium is the Liturgy."**

To understand this phrase adequately, however, we must take the word "liturgy" in all its amplitude, and not limit it simply to the Mass. We can consider briefly the *four basic cycles of the Catholic liturgy*, going from the shortest to the longest which intersect and mutually enrich each other: the daily cycle (Lit. of the Hours); the weekly cycle (the weekly Eucharist); the annual cycle (Liturgical Year), and the life cycle (the Sacraments). In this class we will primarily consider the latter three cycles (the Sunday Eucharist, the Liturgical Year, and the Sacraments); the first cycle (Liturgy of the Hours) is the theme of next week's class.

The Eucharist:

The Liturgy of the Word is structured to represent optimally the Church's own pedagogy of the Christian life. Relationship between the readings, with their own culmination in the Gospel; liturgical expressions of the excellence of the Good News. Examples: the Gospel in the Mass and Office; the Paschal Vigil.

The Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian life" (SC 47; CCC 1324), and the fullest expression of an authentically biblical spirituality. Sunday observance of rest, community / family prayer; visits to sick / family; arts...

The Liturgical Year:

Pedagogy of deepening / heightening spiral... Learning how to pray, to read the Scriptures with the Church... Example: Isaiah in Advent & Holy Week. Elements of a liturgical spirituality in tune with the Liturgical Year... (e.g. Advent)

The Sacraments:

In general: grace working through our personal growth cycles, transitions (& vicariously, touching time and again the principal stages of life & growth)...

Diaconate and Priesthood: *in persona Christi*. 1 Peter 5:1-4³

- leadership is service, not domination
- liturgical acts are prayer, not performances
- finances are sacrificial, not lucrative
- travel is for the mission, not for tourism

³ Cf. also Hebrews; Pastoral Epistles; F. SHEEN *A priest is not his own*, and JOHN PAUL II, *Gift and Mystery*

- work is a vocation / ministry, not a “job” or career.

IV - Liturgical Spirituality

2. The Church at Prayer: Liturgy of the Hours (Sept 30th)

It may be helpful to remember that this is not a Liturgy course (whose task is to explain the history, principles, norms etc. of each kind of liturgical celebration, analyzing its parts and studying the relationship between its constituent elements), but a class in Spirituality, or more precisely Spiritual Theology. That means that our focus here is not so much on presenting and explaining what the Liturgy of the Hours *is* and how it works, but seeking to understand how the Liturgy of the Hours fits into, contributes to, enriches, and even is an essential element of Catholic spirituality - - at very least for religious and clerics. We must also look at the difficulties or hindrances encountered in the Liturgy of the Hours, inasmuch as these can frustrate the role of the Liturgy of the Hours in our spiritual life. Nor will it not be enough just to identify and catalog such difficulties; we must look at practical remedies to overcome them and permit the Liturgy of the Hours to fulfill the role it is intended to fulfill in a Catholic's life of prayer. As we said in the beginning of the course, we will use not only a deductive methodology (based on principles, Church documents, etc), but there will also be room to consider concrete individual's experience on this score, so in the second hour we will begin with those who wish to share something edifying, interesting or enigmatic from their interview, to contribute to the class discussion.

The Liturgy of the Hours is one of the most intensive uses of the Psalms (or of any part of the Bible, for that matter) in the entire Christian world. Imagine: hundreds if not thousands of religious here in Nairobi, multiplied by thousands of other towns & cities across the world, all reciting psalms morning, (midday), evening, (night, and some in the middle of the night) day after day, month after month, year after year. I believe there's nothing quite like it. What other Christian denomination, if not the Orthodox or the Copts, prays nearly the entire Psalter, mostly sung, daily, throughout the entire world?

A fundamental idea of the Liturgy of the Hours is to extend the graces of the Eucharist throughout the day, to "sanctify" (to offer to God, allow him to transform) all the moments and activities of our day. For this reason Vatican II insisted that every 'hour' of the Office should be recited at its proper time (and not piled together in order to fulfill the obligation and 'be done with it' in one long marathon prayer).

The Liturgy of the Hours thus establishes us in a *daily rhythm of prayer*; it is a (community) encounter with God in the Church. It is also one of the most concrete, down-to-earth, grass-roots ways of living the Church year (the Liturgical Year)... And it is simply *the most frequent, immediate liturgical prayer* for large numbers of committed Catholics. So it supports to a great extent our spiritual life.

In it, our personal (individual) prayer life is sustained by that of the community and the Church. The witness of many Christians accustomed to long years of liturgical practice of the Divine Office, --and not just priests and religious, but also laity,-- confirms this fact.

Difficulties frequently encountered in celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours:

- A. *Not understanding what a given psalm means:* one doesn't understand or "get" the historical or symbolic references.
- B. *Not being in tune with the feelings expressed by a given psalm* or group of psalms:
- C. *The style of community praying* doesn't help one to pray, in fact it positively *impedes* one from entering into the psalms.

A few suggestions to counteract or overcome these difficulties:

- A. Study and careful meditation of a particular psalm (during a day of retreat, a free morning or afternoon) by means of an attentive reading (or *lectio divina*) using some commentaries or biblical resources in order to understand its historical references and structure, and to 'open up' its key phrases and concepts.
- B. An introductory motivation (orientation) which suggests how a particular psalm might be related to the needs and experience of the greater Body of Christ can be of immense help in this regard.
- C. There are diverse ways to pray the psalms (in community) which can help one to meditate and assimilate their message.

A first way is varying the format of recitation in one way or another

- varying the alternation of speakers
- occasionally reading a psalm (aloud or silently) and then after a period of silence inviting those who wish to, to repeat aloud a phrase which particularly struck them (with the liberty of turning it into a brief personal prayer).
- to 'update' the language of a psalm by 'rewriting' (interpreting) it using more meaningful language and references. This method, however, is somewhat arbitrary and is best done individually. It's not recommendable to be done communally, since not all would be in agreement on the same 'updating', and it's best not to alter the biblical text itself with which we pray.

A second, more profound way of personally assimilating the psalms' message is to look for (be aware of) a line or phrase of even a single one of the psalms in each 'hour' of the Office which particularly strikes you. Stay with that line or phrase a moment during the recital of the psalm, and then in moments of silence go back to the same phrase and repeat it to yourself until you memorize it, and then carry it with you during the entire day. Sometimes such phrases will stay with you during weeks or even months, and may become important guideposts in your spiritual journey.

Another major help in the communal praying of the psalms is to put them to *music* (since the psalms were meant to be sung!), according to your particular community's traditions and possibilities:

- 'recto tono': to sing just on a *single* note. [It's still better than just reciting.]
- to use *psalm tones* (of which there are a large variety, from very simple ones to more complex ones). This is the normal way to put psalms to music, and has been the preferred method throughout the centuries of Church history.
- Then there are also *songs* based on the psalms (whether standard metrical songs or special ones, i.e. particular versions of individual psalms) put to a much more complex music which is very attractive and upbeat, still more interesting than psalm tones, but also require more time & expertise to learn and to use in community.

V. Personal Prayer

1. Introduction to Personal Prayer (Oct 14th)

Outline of the accompanying notes on personal prayer

1. What is prayer, types of prayer (liturgical, community, interpersonal and personal prayer) - - and their interrelation? A regular time and a place for personal prayer.
2. The essence of personal prayer: a conversation with God. Implications of this rather simple understanding of prayer... on our part, on God's part.
3. Listening to God: not such an easy thing, but absolutely essential to any authentic prayer. Ways in which God can speak to us...
4. Some ways of analyzing personal prayer (cutting the cake): intensive / diffuse; formality / informality; matter (resources) used;
5. Some ways of analyzing personal prayer (continued): attitudes or stances of prayer (& "balanced diet" of prayer); faculties used (spirit, mind, voice, body...)

Methods of Personal Prayer

6. Some methods of personal prayer: conversational prayer, scripture meditation (esp. of Gospels, Lectio Divina, Rosary), practice of the presence of God, the Jesus prayer / mantras, Eucharistic adoration...
7. Our journey of personal prayer (workshop with individual & group exercises to foster sharing and appreciation of our different but largely parallel paths in prayer)
8. The gifts of the Holy Spirit and prayer; prayer of inner healing, charismatic prayer; daily examen / personal review of life.
9. Seasons in the life of personal prayer: beginnings; honeymoon (time of consolation); desert period (prayer of faith), temptations and trials; deeper prayer but perhaps less felt; initiatives of God's grace...

Difficulties in Personal Prayer

10. The most common difficulties encountered in one's journey of personal prayer, an analysis of their origin, and concrete suggestions to solve these problems:
 - 1) Distractions: of various types, with their respective remedies
 - 2) Aridity / Dryness: of various origins, with diverse interpretations accordingly
 - 3) Lack of faith: again, from different causes, with different way of responding
 - 4) Activism: legitimate and illegitimate reasons to skip personal prayer
 - 5) Confusion concerning one's prayer life, and remedies for it
 - 6) Stagnation: last difficulty to be considered; diverse types & diverse responses

V. Personal Prayer

2. INTRODUCTION TO *LECTIO DIVINA* (Oct 21ST)

The term itself: *Lectio divina* means spiritual reading, but that term in English has come to mean generally non-biblical Christian writings, whereas *lectio divina* is used almost exclusively for biblical texts, so perhaps a more descriptive phrase is best used to translate it, such as “prayerful reading” or “meditative reading”

A brief history of *Lectio divina*:

In the Scriptures and early Judeo-Christian tradition (Ps 1; Col 3)
Community *lectio divina* in Origen (3rd Century)
The monastic tradition (Guido II, Carthusian in 12th Cent.)
Vatican II and modern proponents; new contexts

The process itself, in its classical four steps

Lectio: attentive reading and understanding of the text in itself
Meditatio: meditation upon its significance in the context of one’s own life
Oratio: prayer arising from the very process of *lectio divina* in relation to the text
Contemplatio: God gives us insight into our life through this prayerful reading

Practical considerations:

Individual and community forms of *lectio divina* (pros and cons, variants)
Particular adaptations or use of *lectio divina* in different congregations / groups:
Monks (contemplatives), Jesuits, Dominicans, Vincentians...

Thus the experience of *Lectio Divina* is like the rainwater (which is the *same* water falling on different soils and absorbed by different plants, nourishing different animals), which produces healthy vegetables in vegetable plots, succulent fruits on the fruit trees, makes for sturdy lumber in the forest, and small wildflowers in the field, and again satisfies the thirst of animals that drink from the puddles or streams, be they lizards or birds or large beasts: so God’s Word produces different effects according to the different vocations and gifts and needs and situations of his People. (1 Cor 12:4-11). Praised be God!

VI. Principles of a life lived in the Spirit

1. Virtues in the Spiritual Life (Oct 28th)

1. Old Testament preparation: cf. Wis 8:7

2. New Testament foundations:

A number of New Testament passages, especially from the letters, speak of a whole constellation of virtues which together form the complement or even the basis for the Christian life:

The 'theological virtues': 1 Thes 1:3; Col 1:4-5; Gal 5:5-6; 1 Cor 13:13
Constellation of virtues: 2 Peter 1:5-7 (cf. literary context of vv. 3-11);
Col 3:12-15; cf, 1 Cor 13:4-7; Mt 5:3-10

These virtues are at one and the same time the work of God and the free response of the human being to God's grace, solidifying the human responsiveness to God's action in him/her: this is true holiness, and not simply the accumulation of acts of piety. Christian holiness is a matter of the transformation of the being and acting of the person...

3. Patristic and Scholastic development of the theory of Christian virtues (esp. St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas):

Taken in its widest sense virtue means the excellence or perfection of a thing, just as vice, its contrary, denotes a defect or absence of perfection due to a thing. In its strictest meaning, however, as used by moral philosophers and theologians, it signifies a habit superadded to a faculty of the soul, disposing it to elicit with readiness acts conformable to our rational nature. "Virtue", says Augustine, "is a good habit consonant with our nature." From Saint Thomas's entire Question on the essence of virtue may be gathered his brief but complete definition of virtue: "habitus operativus bonus", an operative habit essentially good, as distinguished from vice, an operative habit essentially evil. Now a habit is a quality in itself difficult of change, disposing well or ill the subject in which it resides, either directly in itself or in relation to its operation. An operative habit is a quality residing in a power or faculty in itself indifferent to this or that line of action, but determined by the habit to this rather than to that kind of acts. Virtue then has this in common with vice, that it disposes a potency to a certain determined activity; but it differs specifically from it in that it disposes it to good acts, i.e. acts in consonance with right reason. Thus, temperance inclines the sensuous appetite to acts of moderation conformably to right reason just as intemperance impels the same appetite to acts of excess contrary to the dictates of our rational nature.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1917, s.v. "Virtue"

St. Thomas Aquinas on the virtues (*S.Th. IIa IIae*); prayer to obtain virtues.

4. Some particularly important virtues:

Theological virtues: faith, hope & love (agape / caritas, whence "charity");

Moral ("cardinal") virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude;

Intellectual virtues: science, knowledge, intuition

Subalternate virtues: humility, contrition, obedience, chastity, detachment, generosity, religion, gratitude, devotion...

Acquired vs. infused virtues

5. Reformation controversy on justification vs. sanctification;

Bl. Francisco Palau's "School of Virtues";

S. Pinkaers' theory of virtues

VI. Principles of a life lived in the Spirit

Growth in holiness (Nov. 4th)

- 1, Three classical stages of the spiritual life:⁴
 - purgative way: purification of the soul
 - prayer of beginners; mental prayer
 - penance: avoiding and atoning for sin
 - mortification: discipline of mind & will
 - struggle against capital sins (pride, envy/jealousy, anger, gluttony, lust, sloth, avarice)
 - temptations, esp. illusions, inconstancy, over-eagerness...
 - illuminative way, or progress in Christian virtues
 - affective prayer: advantages and dangers of the moral virtues
 - the theological virtues
 - counterattacks of the enemy
 - unitive way
 - the simple or active unitive way
 - Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - Fruits of the Holy Spirit; the Beatitudes
 - Prayer of simplicity
 - Infused Contemplation
 - Nature, advantages & call to contemplation
 - Night of the senses, of the spirit
 - Different phases: prayer of quiet, of union
 - Extraordinary mystical phenomena, diabolical phen.
2. Carmelite school: a particularly gifted tradition in terms of teachings on prayer and the mystical life - - and lived examples of contemplative life: St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross; St. Therese of Lisieux and Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity; Bl. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)...
- The two Spanish figures of the reform of Carmel were gifted at putting sublime doctrines into very simple language, for example:
 - parable of irrigation as stages in the life of prayer, and
 - imagery of the "interior castle" in St. Teresa of Avila
 - St. John of the Cross' incredibly compact poetry).
3. Spiritual direction (different models and mediations)
4. Discernment of spirits: special charism of the Jesuits: holy indifference; evangelical value of choices considered; ecclesial confirmation; fruits...

⁴ The notes of the three stages of the spiritual life are based on the development of this topic in A. Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life*.

Interview with a Catholic married couple on the relationship of their married life with their faith / prayer / relationship with the Lord

Here are some possible questions to orient your **Interview with a Catholic married couple** (the interview must be with a *couple*, and not just with one married person, i.e. it must be with a husband and wife together):

It's not necessary to use all of these questions, or even any one of them. You're free to create your own questions, or just allow the couple you interview to speak freely about their married life in relation to their faith / prayer / relationship with the Lord.

1. Did the faith dimension enter into your period of courtship, or did it awaken in one or both of you later on? If it was already present in your courtship, how was it manifested? Did you pray together, talk about your beliefs, try to respect the sexual boundaries of courtship, make decisions about raising your children in the Catholic faith and practice? Comment a bit, if you would.
2. Were there any other couples that "showed you the way" to live your faith together *as a couple*, either by counsel or by example? Could you speak about them a bit, and their influence on your marriage?
3. Have you helped each other to grow in faith over the years? Please comment.
4. What crises (psychological, financial, of family relationships, or of health) have you faced in your married life? How have you helped each other as spouses in these crises? Did you experience God working through you in your relationship as spouses?
5. Do you pray together regularly as spouses at the present time? How often? And how and where do you do it, concretely? What are the biggest benefits you have received from that conjugal prayer? And what are your greatest difficulties in being faithful to it?
6. How do you discern together important decisions facing you as a couple or as a family? What happens when you're opposed in your viewpoints or preferences on important matters? Do you have an example that you can mention?
7. How do your *differences* of faith, preferred type of prayer, and relationship with the Lord hinder or enrich your conjugal relationship?
8. Do you know and share with any other couples about your conjugal prayer, faith and Christian commitment as a couple? Do you have any joint apostolate as a couple?

VII. Conjugal Spirituality (Nov. 11th)

Points of synthesis / summary concerning conjugal spirituality:

Accepting the vocation to marriage and preparing one's children for it, supporting them in their marriages. **Project of forming a truly Christian family**, loving dedication to their children: holy families: domestic Church (LG 11; FC 14-15; 21)

Deeply, intensely in love with each other in Christ: literally *sacramental* value of spouse; love between Christ & the Church; supernatural, sacrificial, life-long faithful love (FC 12-13; 18-20; 56)

Communicating, **drawing each other along in the path of holiness**, seeking of God: aid to each other in the path of holiness; maturing spiritually together or separately, but helped mightily by the spouse (FC 51; 56)

Influence of examples of married saints (SS, Trad.) on their own conjugal spirituality; saints as a "living exegesis" of the Scriptures (Verb. Dom. 48-49a, 83, cf. 97-98);

Promises made at marriage never to impede the other's faith-life: a particular concretization / implication of their marriage vows

Exquisite conjugal delicacy, sensitivity; care for spouse in sickness, failure: love for Christ manifested in one's spouse (FC 25abc)

Inculturation of marriage (FC 10)

Sexual attraction; conjugal sexuality (FC 11)

Seeking the discernment / counsel of one's spouse in all important matters: *conjugal* discernment, although there are also times when one must follow one's own conscience without the understanding / acceptance of one's spouse. **Evangelical discernment** as to influences which foster or destroy authentic family life (FC 4-5)

Heroism in the service of life (FC 28-34)

The importance of family prayer, fundamental expression of the living relationship that they share as family with the Lord (CCC 2685; FC 39; 59-62)

Shared caring for, raising, education of children (FC 21.25.36-38) going beyond traditional gender roles; women working outside the home to support family (esp. after husband's death / imprisonment); husband being more centered in the home...

The evangelizing, catechizing mission of the parents, of the family (FC 52-54)

Facing with resignation & faith the death of one's children

In the absence of children... new and different ways of consecrating oneself to God during marriage (FC 14d), and not only after one's spouse's death.

Supporting the trials / responsibilities of the extended family: sick and elderly parents; relations with the in-laws: overcoming prejudice or meanheartedness with constant, humble love; reconciliation within the family circle (FC 21d,e,f; 58)

Complementarity of married & celibate life; relationship with a religious community (tertiaries); importance of spiritual directors; also complementarity between parents & children

Joint apostolic activities: solidarity of married couples; hospitality in the home; opening out of family 'beyond their four walls'; missionary dimension of the family (FC 41.44. 47-48. 54) **Couple to couple apostolate** (FC 69.72)

Renewing the temporal order; professional work: **specific vocation of the laity** (AA 2; 7; but cf. FC 23);

Unintentional suffering which one causes to one's spouse (or suffering caused to one's spouse by one's blindness & ignorance, later repented of); 'taking up one's cross' in the sacrament of marriage

Sharing knowingly the uncertainties / risks of the vocation of the other, even when it involved the eventual disappearance of one of the spouses: the paschal dimension of marriage. **Saving one's spouse's life** (even to the point of offering one's life for one's spouse); a particular grace of Christ who gave himself up for the sake of his spouse, the Church... Final expression of marriage vows (until death)

Fidelity to marriage in forced separation (imprisonment, migrant labor FC 77): crucified experience of marriage; special strengthening of the Spirit to withstand this trial

Continued relationship beyond death: love, intercession, presence, 'sealed' love (cf. GS 49ac; CEC 1026-1029; 1050)



Instances of apostolic movements /programs / centers for couples:
Teams of our Lady; Couples for Christ; Bodas de Cana; Caresto;
Marriage Encounter, Engaged Encounter, Retrouvaille...

VIII. Spirituality of the Consecrated Life and Ministry

1. Some landmark Catholic spiritualities through the ages (Nov 18th)

(Desert Fathers and the heremital life... Carthusians, Camoldolese...)

Monastic spirituality: Benedictines, Trappists, Eastern Orthodox monks, various communities of nuns (Benedictines, Trappistines, Poor Clares, Dominicans, Carmelites...)

Whole of one's life ordered according to the rhythms of liturgical and personal prayer, day and night.

Conversion of life: life-long ideal and at the same time requirement of monastic life: readiness to be corrected, guided, called to account: obedience; Rule

Stability: to commit oneself to this community / monastery for life

Cloister: to respect the monastic solitude and purpose

A life of silence: discipline of recollection in the search for God; "Into the Great Silence"

Work: whether agricultural, artisanal, or other sort of work, normally carried out in silence to permit one to pray

The Divine Office, as we know it today, is practically an invention of the monks, for them it was the "work of God", and they bequeathed it to the Church

Lectio Divina is another essentially monastic development, now also practiced widely in the Catholic Church

Spiritual reading: Fathers of the Church; their own monastic founders, saints and writers (Bernard of Cl., Aelred of Rievaulx, Thomas Merton...)

Missionary dimension in the early Church, evangelizing England, Germany, etc.; in recent times with missionary Benedictine monks & sisters (Peramiho, etc.)

(Canons regular... beginning with St. Augustine, Norbertines, CRM...)

Spirituality of the Mendicant Friars: Franciscans, Dominicans, Trinitarians, Mercedarians, Agustinians, Carmelites, Servites...

Monastic roots (conserved in varying degrees), but outside ministry / itinerancy (OFM: Breviary; OP: OP Rite); structure of provinces & houses...

Theological training in the universities; involvement in urban & ecclesial life; missionary work far & wide

Specific spiritual and theological traditions: theologians, mystics, apostles, martyrs.

Characteristic forms of prayer: OP – Holy Name, Rosary; OFM: Nativity scene; Stations of the Cross; O Carm: scapular

Clerical (OP), lay (OFM) or heremtical (O Carm) in origin, they began to take on certain common characteristics of "friars": democratic structure; fraternal spirit; independence of episcopal control (papal privileges)

lay branches ("Tertiaries" or "Third Orders"), with the respective spiritual characteristics of 'their' friars, which subsequently developed also into active sisters' (and brothers') congregations

(Hospitaller, Military Orders: OH St John of God, Camillians...)

Ignatian Spirituality: Jesuits, and many many congregations modeled on them, esp. women's congregations (e.g. SND, IBVM); Christian Life Comm'ties

New, greater mobility for the service of the Church, by a further reduction of any monastic elements: Choral Office, cloister, community life itself...

Busy contemplatives / contemplatives in the world

Ignatian teaching on discernment, especially through the unique "spiritual exercises" (30 day retreat) based upon his own experience: Jesuit legacy to the Church

Reasoned analysis of one's spiritual life (e.g. once or several times daily "examen"), corresponding to the Renaissance 'turn to the subject'

Missionary mystique: Church's paratroopers (fourth vow, of obedience to pope)

Principles of Ignatian spirituality applied to lay life: Christian Life Communities

(Ecumenical, Protestant rel. comm'ties: Taize, Reuilly...)

Spirituality of the modern Catholic Missionary Societies: (CSSP, SMA, MAfr, MHM, MCCJ, IMC, SVD; Maryknoll, Guadalupe, SPS, SME...)

Internationality; inculturation in missionary situations; indigenization of the mission
Spirit of sacrifice (readiness for death, even martyrdom); preparing the ground for others to take over; detachment from permanent installations

Missionary prayer (intentions; pushing for a fully inculturated liturgy)

Prayer with the People of God (parishes, outstations...) and not so much within the missionary community

Founders' spirit; cultivation of the native saints, indigenous traditions of prayer

Openness of spirit: dialogue with traditional religions, inter-religious dialogue etc.

VIII. Spirituality of the Consecrated Life and Ministry

2. Ministerial spirituality (Nov 25th)

“12-Step” spirituality (AA, NA, similar programs for people with addictions in the areas of over-eating, gambling, sex, smoking, etc.)

Neither Catholic nor Protestant per se (nor even Christian; open to any believer in a higher power to whom he / she can turn for help), yet deeply and authentically religious...

Pre-eminent is belief in the saving power of the grace of God in the face of human helplessness to overcome / escape from one's addiction

Prayer to God (one's 'higher power') to help one

Searching moral inventory and concrete steps to make amends, also under the power of God's grace

Cultivation of one's spiritual life through prayer

Concrete reliance upon the community to support one, and commitment to help others as well by one's testimony, moral support and other forms of aid

Radical equality, anonymity, non-subsidized nature of the brotherhood

Intransigently non-sectarian, non-denominational, non-political: their only reason for existence is to help people achieve sobriety (from alcohol, drugs, compulsive gambling, sex/pornography, etc.)

(Catholic): Matt Talbot and other saints who overcame addictions

Spirituality of Liberation

Biblical themes especially from Exodus and the historical books

The book of Job and the suffering of the innocent; sacrificial spirituality

Valuing one's own tradition (G. Gutiérrez: “We drink from our own well”)

Mixing contemplation and (social) action; a *political* spirituality

Love, not hatred as the motive force

Spirituality of Justice & Peace

An integral part of the Gospel, and therefore of Christian spirituality

The struggle for justice and the ‘dark night of resistance’

The spirituality of Christian peace-makers and justice-seekers

Reconciliation in our context, between tribes /ethnic groups, religions..

An ecological spirituality

Respect for creation; celebrating the natural world

Values of sustainability; “Small is beautiful”...

Figures with an ecological sensitivity, esp. St. Francis of Assisi