

PREDISPOSING OURSELVES FOR PRAYER

While not properly part of Sulpician Meditation, Father Olier insists that we should first predispose ourselves for prayer by abandoning our self-interest and uniting ourselves to Christ Jesus through faith. We do so taking time consciously to put aside our many concerns and distractions, by recognizing that “we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Rom 8:26), and by allowing the Holy Spirit to intercede for us “according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27).

Properly disposed for prayer by being united to Christ Jesus, we enter into His prayer to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.



WHILE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PRAYER METHOD CALLED SULPICIAN MEDITATION CAN BE FOUND IN A VARIETY OF HIS WRITINGS, FATHER JEAN-JACQUES OLIER (1608-57) PRIMARILY ARTICULATED A PRACTICAL THREE-STEP METHOD OF PRAYER FOR HIS PARISHIONERS IN HIS CHRISTIAN CATECHISM FOR THE INTERIOR LIFE AND IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND VIRTUES. BASING HIS REFLECTIONS ON THE SHEMA ISRAEL (DEUT 6:6-8) AND THE FIRST THREE PETITIONS OF THE OUR FATHER, HE OUTLINED A METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER WHICH HE THOUGHT COULD EASILY BE FOLLOWED BY ALL WHO WISHED TO FOLLOW THE PATHS OF PRAYER AS THE MEANS OF FINDING UNION WITH GOD.

SIMPLE AND SUPPLE, SULPICIAN MEDITATION INVITES US TO FOCUS ON THE LORD JESUS SO THAT WE MAY ADORE HIM (JESUS BEFORE MY EYES) IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO COMMUNION WITH HIM (JESUS IN MY HEART), AND THROUGH THAT COMMUNION COOPERATE WITH HIM AS HE CONTINUES HIS WORK OF RECONCILING ALL THINGS TO HIS FATHER (JESUS IN MY HANDS). THIS PRAYER METHOD CAN BE USED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, IN GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALLY: AS A FORM OF LECTIO DIVINA ON THE SCRIPTURES (E.G., THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY), AS A WAY OF PRAYING FOR VIRTUE, OR AS A FORM OF PASTORAL REFLECTION.



SULPICIAN MEDITATION

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