



3.4. Does the Prayer of the Heart Replace Spoken Prayer for Others?

This question is often brought to me.

Franz Jalics, a Jesuit priest who taught the Prayer of the Heart to many during his lifetime, responded to this question as follows: He regarded contemplative prayer and the person pursuing this path as being on a different level. However, he did not mean this in a judgmental way. Rather, he emphasized that anyone embarking on this path should fully commit and trust in it.

In this context, he suggested pausing spoken prayers initially. Everything that was previously achieved through spoken prayer can surely also occur through a direct connection with God.

Thus, during the transition to the contemplative path, spoken prayer is temporarily set aside. This is how I understood him.

However, I would not go so far as to generally recommend giving up spoken prayer entirely. Yet I see it similarly: In contemplative prayer, everything happens. It is a trust in a deeper power of prayer beyond conscious thoughts.

I would now like to reflect on some related questions.

Does it help others if we simply think about them?

Merely thinking about someone is not yet prayer. If we think of someone we are perhaps concerned about, it may prompt us to reach out and actively do something for them.

However, if we merely think, worry, or try to mentally solve their problem without actually communicating, I do not believe it truly helps them.

How does spoken prayer help?

In spoken prayer, we do more than think; we open ourselves to a spiritual force beyond our thoughts. We may consciously focus on this person and send them love and blessings. I believe the power of prayer lies in this spiritual connection.

However, it is also crucial who prays and with what inner attitude. How deeply is the person themselves connected to the spiritual force? How close are they to God, to whom they pray?

If we speak emotionlessly and without a genuine spiritual foundation, simply saying someone should get well, it is unlikely to have a significant effect. However, if we have an intense prayer life and a deep heart connection to God, we can even send blessings without words.

Do our wishes and thoughts dictate what God does?

An important point to consider is that we cannot dictate to God what He should do - or how He should resolve a situation. That would be presumptuous.

Often prayers are so specific and fixed that they try to predetermine the solution.

In psychological counseling, I have often seen how people block themselves by fixating on a specific outcome. Better and often unexpected solutions usually appear only when we let go of our fixation.

Of course, it is sometimes good to know what we wish, and we can share that with God.

But at the same time, we should remain open to His will.

Therefore, at the end of my prayer, I usually say:

"But please guide our lives and change us as You will. Your will be done!"

Very often, I have been positively surprised afterward by how wisely God acted against my superficial desires. My own transformation has often amazed me. My original goals would have been unrealistic and far less liberating and fulfilling.

As humans, we often lack the foresight and wisdom to understand what is truly best for someone. That is why I prefer open-ended prayers—offering love and blessings without defining how they should manifest.

How does this work in contemplative prayer?

In contemplative prayer, praying for others often arises naturally.

If someone is truly dear to my heart - whether out of compassion or an earnest wish for their well-being - this person naturally appears in my awareness during silent prayer.

Without having to do anything mentally, my heart sends love and blessings to this person.

In this spiritual attitude, it cannot be avoided.

It becomes more challenging when we wish to pray for someone or something to which we have no emotional connection. In such cases, there is the option to consciously dedicate the prayer.

To do this, I can bring the concern to mind before the prayer and internally align myself with it. Then I give myself wholeheartedly to inner communion with God and trust that it will have an effect.

An example of this is the following introductory blessing prayer that I say in the morning before contemplation to dedicate my prayer to others:

Blessing prayer

May our lives and prayers be a blessing,
for our ancestors,

for our children,
for our families,
for our spiritual children,
for all our siblings,
for our beloved True Parents,
for the people in Augsburg (our region),
for all people and all beings.

May the sun of love shine upon everyone.

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