

JUNE 25, 2023: 12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



A few years ago, I read the book **The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic** by Matthew Kelly. It is a book I highly recommend to you. The first sign he speaks about is prayer and its necessity in any disciple's life. We cannot truly have a real relationship with Jesus/God without a real prayer life. The most essential element of growing in that relationship is giving ourselves the space in our life to have a real conversation with God. But Matthew Kelly points out that we are often telling people about the necessity of prayer without giving them the tools for prayer. I believe most Christians know they need to pray, but (as the book makes clear) many try but fail to develop a real prayer

life. And part of that failure occurs not out of lack of desire, but frustration in not knowing what to do. They attempt many times to develop a prayer life but do not have a clear sense of how to go about it.

Matthew Kelly gives a very simple plan for how to pray, which I would like to share with you. The first step is to find a place where you will feel comfortable and then follow these seven steps:

In The Prayer Process we take time—a minute, two minutes, or maybe ten minutes—to spend time with the Lord every day. Pick a specific time when you will pray: for example, Morning Prayer or Night Prayer. It is an intentional way that we grow in our faith. The seven steps of The Prayer Process are as follows:

1. Gratitude: Begin by thanking God in a personal dialogue for whatever you are most grateful for today.
2. Awareness: Revisit the times of the past twenty-four hours when you were, and were not, the-best-version-of-yourself. Talk to God about these situations and what you learned from them.
3. Significant Moments: Identify something you experienced today and explore what God might be trying to say to you through that event (or person).
4. Peace: Ask God to forgive you for any wrong you have committed (against yourself, another person, or Him) and to fill you with a deep and abiding peace.
5. Freedom: Speak with God about how He is inviting you to change your life, so that you can experience the freedom to be the-best-version-of-yourself.
6. Others: Lift up to God anyone you feel called to pray for today, asking God to bless and guide them.
7. Finish by praying the Our Father.

What Matthew Kelly shares with us is a very simple and straightforward way to approach a prayer life. And it has all the essential elements for really growing in our conversation with God. I would like to challenge everyone in the parish to take seriously the need to pray daily. I really believe that if we can become a parish that prays well, we will see dramatic and dynamic changes in our community.

I also know that we do not all pray in the same way, and so over the next few weeks I would like to offer some other ways that we can pray. The most important reality of prayer is not *how* we do it but *that* we do it. We need to pray both liturgically as a community and privately/devotionally as an individual. In a sense we have two prayer lungs, and to breathe in the Spirit of God fully we need both lungs working. It is not enough to simply come to Mass, nor is it enough to simply pray by oneself. Christ prayed both with his community and privately, and we need to live our lives following his example. Let us then take up the challenge of growing in our prayer life on a daily basis and getting both of our lungs working.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@theholyrood.org, or if easier please call or text me at (978) 254-0560.

Please keep me in your prayers.