From the Divine Mercy Spiritual Committee

How to Pray?

If God were standing in front of you right now, what would you say? I keep wrestling with that as I think about how to pray, and just like defining what prayer is, it doesn't have a single answer. But I do have a few ingredients that keep showing up in my own time with Him.

None of these ingredients are new. Chances are you already know most of them; they've just slipped from use somewhere along the way: time, listening, silence, humility and hope, faith and trust, perseverance. Let's think about cooking for a moment: even when we all use the same ingredients, our recipes turn out differently, and the same is true with how we pray; that's entirely ok. Whether you pray every day, are skeptical about it, or haven't prayed in years, I'd invite you to explore these anyway: try them, and try them again, even if you're unsure you are accomplishing anything.

The first is simply making the time. Set aside intentional time for God, both when you feel like it and when you don't. Morning, night, even in the car; the place matters less than the intention behind it. We make time for the people and things that matter most to us, and if God is truly the most important relationship in our lives, He deserves that same intentional time.

Once you have the time, the next two ingredients are learning to listen attentively and in silence. Prayer isn't just us talking to God; it's a relationship, and relationships require listening too. Silence is one of the hardest parts, but without it, how can we hear what God is trying to tell us? In that time of silence, when my mind wanders and distractions come, because they do, instead of getting discouraged, I ask God for the grace to listen: "Lord, grant me the grace to listen and hear you in this silence so I may do Your will."

Prayer also asks something of our whole selves, a posture of humility and hope. For me, talking with God involves my whole body, mind, and spirit. Said another way, my posture (kneeling) helps the disposition of my heart be rightly placed. While I'm not always somewhere I can kneel, when I am, it guides me to real devotion, an acknowledgment of who He is and who I am.

From there, I try to pray with faith and trust, which opens me up and connects my heart to His, deepening that relationship because I'm choosing to believe in His goodness and timing, even when I can't see the outcome. There are times I struggle with that, and when I do, I ask Him for help with this simple prayer: Come, Holy Spirit. Teach me how to pray. Teach me what to ask for. Teach me how to listen. Teach me to trust.

Finally, perseverance is continuing to talk to God even when I don't get the answer I hoped for. I keep going because it helps me trust God more, calms my worries, and brings me closer to Him while I wait for His timing. Jesus teaches this in the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1–8) where an unjust judge ignores a widow's pleas again and again until finally he relents. The lesson: keep praying, even when the answers feel slow.

Use those ingredients that speak to you most when you pray. On the days when none of it feels like enough, when your mind wanders, or you wonder if God is even listening, keep praying anyway. Our relationship with God was never based on our feelings. It's based on love, faith, and trust.

Jesus tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). So let us come to our Father with the heart of a child, reaching for whichever ingredient we need today. He isn't waiting for it to be perfect. He's just waiting for us to pray. For our Father is always there, and He thirsts for our love.

Divine Mercy Pastorate Spiritual Committee