



23815981017 52122829.525 13978728930 36134882.090909 57595336308 188984179.2 12880395.050505 80775653942 44349870008 104166756265 28095405 19489174.45 43386254424 98961639972 10785816048 12130883.931034 141099801663 32436187.945455 1450729.5 12469118.893939 14149868726 4272530.2658228 20734783.4375 53139653505 27492694.571429 58737948.25 36602006130 67111.793103448 104878238080 62117055008 34156336.851064 33889837.4

## Basilea schlink my all for him pdf free pdf files download

## Basilea schlink my all for him.

"Do people not have to repent for themselves?" you may wonder. To get empirical verification for this, all we need is one trip with our children to a shopping mall or a supermarket! But to express thanks? Where is some paper? We may find the patriarchal character of that custom hard to swallow, but parents—and grandparents—can bless little ones Here is my own approach. We, too, should have the good sense to refrain from giving people truth that they are not receive, for it will do them no good. It is a community of cross and crown, of conflict and reconciliation, of courageous action and suffering love. they are no longer bound to us. The one is more formal and liturgical; the other is more conversational and spontaneous. Press, 1975), p. This unassuming animal will fill its stomach with grass and other food. See Jesus Christ 286 / RICHARD J. I knew that God is holy and righteous. Press, 1975), p. This unassuming animal will fill its stomach with grass and other food. See Jesus Christ 286 / RICHARD J. I knew that God is holy and righteous. Press, 1975), p. This unassuming animal will fill its stomach with grass and other food. and stood staring back at them, perfectly normal and fully cured. 120. Like Amos of old, we demand that "justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). I was giving a series of lectures at a prominent seminary. George Frederick Handel was able to compose his magnificent Messiah only because he had schooled himself in musical composition. Collected Works of St. Teresa, p. An incident from Thérèse's autobiography, The Story of a Soul, underscores the hiddenness of the Little Way. M., 115 Bouyer, Louis, 100 Brainard, David, 37 Brakel, Theodore, 164 Breath prayer, 122-124 Brothers Karamazov (Dostoevsky), 231 Buttrick, George, 17, 137, 200 C Calvin, John, 197 Cary, William, 57 Caussade, Jean-Pierre de, 18, 55, 58, 161 Celebration of Discipline (Foster), 44, 52, 226 Centering. FOSTER Turning Inward Earlier I said that the Prayer of Examen had two aspects. I had come to a cliff overlooking the beach. 127. We beat on the doors of heaven because we want to be heard 226 / RICHARD J. 30. He enfolds us for love, and he will never let us go."12 You, of course, will not want to neglect the unchallenged masterpiece of devotional literature for half a millennium, The Imitation of Christ. 55:3). Rest. Our petty rationalizations and evasions of responsibility simply will not tolerate the light of his presence. That is a matter that, thank God, belongs to him. It is God's desire to harvest cities, bringing whole communities into Gospel fidelity. It is important for us to resist the temptation to pass over many passages superficially. Old densities, old ways of arranging our religious lives, are breaking up, and new arrangements are emerging. 16. The sun would come up the next day. "Pray without ceasing," enjoins the Apostle Paul (1 Thess. FOSTER "Prayer takes place in the middle voice," writes Eugene Peterson.4 In grammar the action of another, but in the middle voice we both act and are acted upon. Igumen Chariton of Valamo, trans. What I am trying to say is that our ministry of intercession is made possible only because of Christ's continuing ministry of intercession. These notes are often extremely helpful, for over time a pattern sometimes emerges that holds the key to the person's need. William of St. Thierry, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk, for example, believed that praying with images was idolatry because God was found only in the purity of relationship in his image stamped in every human being. The battle cry for us is, "My will be done." We have excellent reasons for the banner of self-will: "Better for me than them to be in control"; "Besides, I would use the power to such good ends." But in the school of Gethsemane we learn to distrust whatever is of our own mind, thought, and will even though it is not directly sinful. We do this by means of five questions to which we respond each week. It is more like haggling in an outdoor bazaar than the polite monologues of the churches."2 Like Abraham we bargain with God over the fate of the city (Gen. What kind of example will my truancy make? I believe they did this because they experienced work and prayer as a seamless robe. May our minds be rejuvenated. We become nearsighted and develop thickened 184 / RICHARD J. We sense his nearness and his love. Many today see their vocation as a hindrance to prayer. Remember, Contemplative Prayer is for seasoned veterans in the life of faith. In a childlike expression of faith we bring our daily needs and desires to our heavenly Father. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us, however, the truth of the matter is that "prayer is not a free-will offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires."1 But duty does not need to be grim. Work came before the fall, and the curse of the fall was that work would be "by the sweat of your brow"—that is, the results would not be commensurate with the labor put in. And we pray by it. In reality, there are any number of "somethings" preventing us, all of which we will explore in due time. Without this releasing the burdens will become too much for us, and depression will set in. I'm sorry. Now, I have never been able to pray in quite the way some do, with their bold pronouncements of accomplished fact. à Kempis, The Imitation, p.7. Thomas Merton, Spiritual Direction and Meditation (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1960), p. I have no idea what I said beyond the hope that he would experience what it means to be crucified with Christ. Forgiveness is not acting as if things are just the same as before the offense. Why would that make such a difference in their—and our—prayer experience? This is where we learn to pray. 21. These are people who long ago walked away from the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is weeping over our sins and the sins of the world. What happened next is hard to explain. The intimacy of prayer must be always counterbalanced by the infinite distance of creature to Creator. It may have been none of these. Thus do I live."15 No wonder Saint Benedict made lectio divina an integral part of his Rule for daily life! Such prayer-filled reading is given by God to strengthen and empower our lives. By refusing to be a puppet on our string or a genie in our bottle, God frees us from our false, idolatrous images. That, of course, is precisely their value. Singing also adds vivacity, buoyancy, and gaiety to our prayers. Sometimes it is, yet not as they Conceive it. Therefore, if we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we will be drawn of necessity to our neighbor. Chapter 14. We confess it instantly. The very air seemed vibrant, and a holy hush fell upon everyone. I am glad for the cooler air today that cuts the edge off summer's heat. Dallas Willard speaks of the three major areas God uses in our continuing transformation—a "golden triangle" of formation, if you will. The stateliness and formality of the liturgy help us realize that we are in the presence of real Royalty. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."9 Note in each case the affective language. And so it is. Put simply, we receive his love for us and love him back in return. "When I'm the president of the company..." "When I'm the senior pastor...then God can bless me." But you see, the only place God can bless us is right where we are, because that is the only place we are! Do you remember Moses at the burning bush? In fact, duty is, as de Caussade teaches us, "the sacrament of the present moment." I want to mention one other reason why we shy away from commitment. Humility is, in fact, filled with power to bring forth life. The demands that your baby makes are immense-more than you realize right now-especially if you are a single parent. It is also easy to detect the joyous spontaneity of this faith-filled community: "Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. No doubt there are also magnanimity, generosity, unselfishness, and universal goodwill. Here mothers and fathers fulfill the priestly role. I consented to come. What a tragedy! What a loss! No wonder people today are weak. We begin to dream our prayer. Aaron and Hur had to step in and hold up Moses' arms until the sun set. Some have curses lying over them from the generations that have gone before: the curse of alcoholism, the curse of alcoholism, the curse of mental illness, and more. In Celebration of Discipline I provide detailed instruction in the practice of fasting, and there are many other good books to guide you. This "abide in me" is the all-inclusive condition for effective intercession. 7:24). In my seeking for you may I be found by you. So many passages of Scripture provide a touchstone for Meditative Prayer: "Be still and know that I am God"; "Abide in my love"; "I am the good shepherd"; "Rejoice in the Lord always." In each case we are seeking to discover God near us and are longing to encounter his presence. She writes, "Along this path of prayer, self knowledge and the thought of one's sins is the bread with which all palates must be fed no matter how delicate they may be; they cannot be sustained without this bread." 4 How startling to think that our own sinfulness can be the bread by which we are fed. 2:6). As difficult as this time of struggle is, we must never despise it or try to avoid it. FOSTER do in the light of God's love, we also do in the dark of God's absence. 3 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), p. On the drive back I spied an obscure sign pointing to a nearby waterfall. 191, as quoted in Heusherr, Penthos, pp. As Charles Spurgeon reminds us, "Prayer is able to prevail with Heaven and bend omnipotence to its desires."13 Fasting is one expression of our struggle. FOSTER Third, we receive. Spiritual gifts are given by the sovereign act of God (1 Kings 3:5-12, 1 Cor. Forsyth Sacramental Prayer is incarnational prayer. Here is one way you can discover a breath prayer for yourself. Remember, prayer is a way of loving others, and so courtesy, grace, and respect are always in order. So in Jesus' name stop it, now!" Instantaneously, Joel's whining and fussing ceased; he laid his head on my shoulder and fell fast asleep. Learn that trust precedes faith. He rolled over and over on his bed laughing, laughi are trying to cut the emotional umbilical cord, and you must help them. Relax. But what little we have experienced encourages us, for we have glimpsed the loving heart of God, all full of grace and mercy, welcoming us to the Communion table of the Spirit. 1:6). One simple suggestion as you sing various Psalms: sing prayerfully, that is, filled with prayer. Abba, dear Abba, you know that the language of love does not come easily to me. But in God's time and in God's way a Copernican revolution takes place in our heart. I bow down before you. The old Quakers used the term centering down. 5:20). Personally, I rather like the understanding of Saint Maximus the Confessor, the sacramental theologian par excellence of the patristic age. 20. I am fully aware that both the Quakers and the Salvation Army do not use outward sacraments, stressing instead the appointed hour of 10:30 A.M., but worship was already well under way. While some I pray for today are still not healed, many others are, especially when I am praying with a team or in a loving community. Some people may find this story troubling because they have always felt that Christians cannot be "demon possessed." They are correct in the sense that demons cannot completely control or "possess" a Christian. 98 / RICHARD J. Then I attended a large conference where a well-known author-one of the featured speakers-shared rather offhandedly how destructive his writing career had been to his marriage. But there are other times, times when we are caught in the whirlpool of a good world gone bad: a collapsing economy that eats up our life savings, a personality feud at the office that adversely affects our position, a terrible accident that changes our lives forever. But the opposite is true: he welcomes us with our 1,001 trifles, for they are each important to him. It is the most natural thing in the world to show love and concern in this way. CHAPTER 14 CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER O my divine Master, teach me this mute language which says so many things. Here we must understand the order in the kingdom of God. He rubbed shoulders with fishermen and tax collectors and other entrepreneurial types. Besides, there are precious people who desperately need help. Who would even want to? We stand here under the mystery of the ways of God, and we are peering through a glass darkly. The essence of Covenant Prayer is captured in the confession of the Psalmist: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, O Heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed out, "You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced; you have overpowered me: you were the stronger. By the use of the diminutive for "father," Jesus reveals that our relationship with God involves not only the strength and empowerment vi PRAYER / vii commonly identified with masculinity, but also the nurturing and caring intimacy often associated with femininity. I wished for more. We are seeing this happen right before our eyes. If prayer is not a fixed habit with you, instead of starting with twelve hours of prayer-filled dialogue, single out a few 14 / RICHARD J. Timothy Fry, ed., The Rule of St. Benedict in English (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1982), pp. Ole Hallesby, Prayer, trans. We insist that changes be made. We turn to the Bible and find it meaningless. He never steps on the weak, never snuffs out the smallest hope. Amen." These, of course, are only suggestions—you are free to pray in whatever way is most comfortable to you. The Blessedness of Winter As winter approaches each year, I like to watch our large maple in the backyard begin to lose its covering of summer green and take on a funeral brown. On one occasion Jesus' disciples tried to heal a child who evidenced signs of demonic oppression. The parents were in a motel near the hospital and decided to pray as I had taught them, picturing in their mind's eye Maria awakening from her unconscious state. Lewis once remarked, "The charge to Peter was Feed my sheep; not Try experiments on my rats."3 Another concern centers around whether liturgical forms of prayer are the "vain repetition" that Jesus criticizes so severely (Matt. FOSTER a small patch of carpet and then slump onto the sofa, exhausted. We are providing the best medical attention for it we can. Jean-Nicholas Grou says, "It is the heart that prays, it is to the voice of the heart that God listens and it is the heart that he answers."1 We-like John Wesley so many years ago-need to have our hearts "strangely warmed." 134 / RICHARD J. 32:30b). We speak the truth. People can wrongly turn it into a passivity toward injustice and evil. They experienced dogged hope and mounting despair: "I am here, calling for your help, praying to you every morning: why do you reject me? We practice it by turning inward. I like the way you laugh." On they went from one store to the next. At any rate, we will be looking at this matter more in a later chapter. To the Romans he says, "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer" (Rom. I also remember the refined dignity with which Gloria carried herself. I said, "Don't you know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lives in the eternal now, can enter that old painful memory and heal it so that it will no longer control you?" He did not know this was possible. Winter is necessary for the tree to survive and flourish. Anthony Mottola (New York: Doubleday, 1964). 2:21). Then one day I walked into his hospital room to find the shades pulled down and the lights off. A good example is Sister Helen Cecilia Swift, A Living Room Retreat (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1981). Abraham prayed this way, as did Joseph, Joshua, Hannah, David, Gideon, Ruth, Peter, James, John, and a host of other biblical luminaries. See Glenn Clark, I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), p. But a day is coming when the blinders will be removed and the scales will fall off, and then we will see a glory in our sufferings that will blaze like the noonday sun. The fuller answer lies in the purposes of God in transforming the human personality. Always before, the physician of the body, the physician of the mind, and the physician of the spirit were the same person. Most of all, I was afraid people would fall off the deep end. Jesus, you see, set people free rather than put them in bondage. 20, 1990): 29-31. The Lord's Prayer is essentially petitionary—asking. Obviously, common sense and a respect for the integrity of others will keep us from engaging in this work lightly or carelessly. 245. The way of 50 / RICHARD J. Simple Prayer involves ordinary people bringing ordinary people bringing ordinary concerns to a loving and compassionate Father. There is no hankering for martyrdom here. It feels less like work and more like delight. 67. At other times we do not feel up to praying, and the words of the liturgy "prime the pump," as we say. Then it settles down quietly and, through a process of regurgitation, reworks what it has received, slowly moving its mouth in the process. The biblical authors frequently use the words interchangeably and even on top of one another: "I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you" (Ps.35:18). He proceeded to explain that as I began praying, he saw a vivid mental picture of his church with a funeral service going on inside. From Rob Goldman, "Healing the World by Our Wounds," The Other Side 27, no. Thrill to the grace-filled way God ultimately freed him from what he called "the whirlpools of vice"—pride, ambition, sensuality, laziness, prodigality, emulation, fear, vengeance. In Meditative Prayer the Bible ceases to be a quotation dictionary and becomes instead "wonderful words of life" that lead us to the Word of Life. At first I misunderstood these words, assuming that they referred to my relationship with a small group of writers I was with at the time. As I stated earlier, here is one place where it is completely possible to say "both/and" rather than "either/or." The Freedom of Liturgical Prayer While not all forms of Sacramental Prayer are liturgical, all liturgies are, rightly conceived, sacramental. With deep sorrow in his eyes, this man related how he had prayed desperately that God would get them out of that mess. From the child to the simple, from the sophisticated to the simple, from the most powerful to the least influential, all can undertake this ministry of small things. It is a wonderful truth to know that we are saved by faith alone, that there is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God. I have an acquaintance I shall call Derek who once went to the hospital to visit a friend who was nearing the valley of the Eternal. At times this should be our plea as well. All dark and evil spirits must now leave. He urged his disciples to "ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. Is there anything special you want said or done?" I queried. In back of unreasoned and excessive resistance to the Gospel message are demonic forces of disobedience and distraction. I'm trying to tell you that your sins are forgiven you!" The woman stopped midsentence as if her breath had been taken away. Light praying will make light preaching. I even know PRAYER / 207 of people who have effective healing ministries in their own right that are themselves crippled by some persistent physical malady. Perhaps it is because devout writers fear the self-centered aspects of Simple Prayer. There is perhaps no more appealing invitation in all the Bible than Jesus' gracious words, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matt. As quoted in Arthur Wallis, God's Chosen Fast: A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1986), p. So often we hide our true condition with the surface virtues of pious activity, but, once the leaves of our frantic pace drop away, the transforming power of a wintry spirituality can have effect. Obedience begets obedience. Besides, if we are unaccustomed to it, just slipping quietly into the presence of God can be so exotic and fresh that it delights us enormously. It is a valid concern. Think of the list of those suffering giants of the faith in Hebrews 11 and the appropriate epitaph, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. Manifold demands were placed upon you, and still you worked in unhurried peace and power. Immediately we make restitution. 251. This...is the perfection of life."9 Now that is a goal worth dedicating our lives to, is it not? It is easy for us to think that God is so majestic and so highly exalted that our adoration makes no difference to him. The second most common posture is with the hands lifted and the palms up.16 The posture to which we are most accustomed—the hands folded and the eyes closed—is found nowhere in Scripture. FOSTER in resting in the loving awareness of God and is not usually attached to any particular thought or Scripture passage. Hazen Foundation, distributed by Association Press, 1938), p. Perhaps this is why Madame Lot-Borodine calls it the "Mystery of Tears." 8 But rather than fret about what we do not know, let us try to be clear about what we do know, let us try to be clear about what we do in Authoritative Prayer. Frankly, I wish it were otherwise. The adult can reason better and carry heavier loads because both brain and brawn are more fully developed, but the child is doing exactly what we would expect at that age. Finally he closes his prayer with exactly the right perspective: "We do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies." What a prayer! This is what we are to do. We experience peace, stillness, serenity, firmness of life orientation. The Apostles laid hands on the first deacons so they could care for the daily distribution of food with wisdom and equity (Acts 6:6). One of its great values comes when we are at the sunset of life and our rational faculties begin to falter. How appropriate! The trysting prayer is our special date with God. As you read on in this chapter, I hope you will engrave into your mind's eye the picture of yourself falling into the arms of Jesus, fully satisfied, fully at rest. I list these questions for you: consider how you might respond. 111. This is a kind of reading in which the mind descends into the heart, 150 / RICHARD J. He invites us into the workshop of 1 2 / RICHARD J. We willingly "waste our time" in this manner as a lavish love offering to the Father. Second, we ask. "Lord," you may pray, "bring back to life what will please you and advance your kingdom. Pope Paul VI, "The Role of Suffering in the Life of the Church," in The Pope Speaks 19, no. Alexander, ed., Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), p. Who notices if anonymous people in Los Angeles begin loving their enemies and sharing their goods with one another? They go around commanding this and that to happen in the most unkind and destructive of ways. Rather, I Seek in myself the things I hoped to say, But lo!, my wells are dry. On this occasion the Amalekites had 191 192 / RICHARD J. It is common to experience unusual anointing of the Holy Spirit for specific ministry situations. Think of Stephen and his stoning. We can also be drawn into breathtaking wonder through the warmth and intimacy of spontaneous worship. It is part of the birth pangs we endure in order to see new life come forth. Eventually it will take an act of God to make union a reality."12 This language reminds us of Jesus' great union statements in the Upper Room discourse: "Abide in me as I abide in you," "I am the vine, you are the branches"; "I ask...that they may all be one; as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us' 17:21). The first has been traditionally called recollection. There is a religious word for what I have been describing: supplication. Chapter 15. I am also acutely aware of the manifold pressures upon faithful pastors that hinder adequate preparation for the preaching task. To be sure, this life of unbroken fellowship is not automatic or effortless. I was tired and frustrated. As quoted in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible, trans. Why does God seemingly require relinquishment before bringing something into being? Is it that we learn the secret of praying as we work? We feel strained, hurried, breathless. How can this be? The laying on of hands is a simple act of obedience that guickens our faith and gives God the opportunity to impart healing. We can be free and at ease because we are entering into the heart's true home. At other times we experience such a flaming vision of light that we are forever blinded to all competing loyalties. I am also glad that on one dark afternoon Franky and I together dared to ask for his sight. The child relaxed and became still, listening to this strange and wonderful song. An Eskimo man whose face and hands displayed the leathery toughness of many winters came by and watched me for a while. In the ministry of power we take authority over whatever is opposed to our life in the kingdom of God. Donald Bloesch writes: To pray in the name of Christ means to pray in the awareness that our prayers have no worthiness or efficacy apart from his atoning sacrifice and redemptive mediation. Know that it is by silence that the mysteries of God were known to them."2 It is this recreating silence to which we are called in Contemplative Prayer. We allow God to reshuffle our priorities and eliminate unnecessary froth. The interruptions never end. Another concern centers around relevance. The passive side involves the many trials that come into the course of our daily lives. When appropriate we should wait for the power of the Spirit to increase, all of the time surrounding ourselves with the light of Christ and covering ourselves with the blood of Christ and sealing ourselves with the Shannon Dr., Greenville, SC 29615. This is how we are empowered. He is the pastor of a small congregation that is a microcosm of all the sin and hurt of the modern world. Sitting there, however, I recalled Carolynn's good-bye words to me at the airport: "I want you to come home refreshed!" Soon I found myself praying simply, "Refresh me, Lord. -Madame Jeanne Guyon Through the Prayer of Rest God places his children in the eye of the storm. I have been taught how to take charge. We all live under the gracious shadow of the cross, forgiving and being forgiven. What I have said in this chapter 10, "The Discipline of Confession." 13. FOSTER A Warning and a Precaution At the outset I need to give a word of warning, a little like the warning labels on medicine bottles. Her death, however, was far from sudden or dramatic. "Who," he writes, "can disentangle this most twisted and most inextricable knottiness? 42 / RICHARD J. Often people will add the accompanying means of anointing with oil, following the counsel of James 5:14. Simple Prayer 1. Just as We Are What I am trying to say is that God receives us just as they are. I would also like to point out Dallas Willard's The Spirit of the Disciplines (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), as well as many of the classics of devotion such as William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, ed. 8 (July 21, 1991): 29-31. FOSTER Self:-emptying, 55;-knowledge, 30-31; -serving prayer, 106 Sibbes, Richard, 241 Silence, 21, 101-102; of God, 155; the prayer of quiet, 162-163 Simon Magnus, 195 Simple prayer, 7, 9; being where we are, 12, 23 Sin, 183-184, 189; original, 41;(s) of the self, 54. None of us would give our children a stone if they asked for bread, says Jesus. Now, before we dismiss this Old Testament Sabbath rule out of hand, it is important to see that there 96 / RICHARD J. Who will understand this call to aloneness? I listened in reverence. What is it about Jesus going to the Father that so radically changes the equation? I did not fully understand the reasons for my inner seclusion. I know that these few comments will not erase the dilemma you feel over unanswered prayer. Go to a brook and splash some water onto your burning face. 105. Finally, if we are drawn to bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking forth the words of the Psalmist, "Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless the Maker of heaven and earth, we may want to stand with arms stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, speaking for the stretched out before him, palms up, sp commitments of any kind. FOSTER surgeon, the plumber, the secretary, the lawyer, the homemaker, the farmer, the teacher—all are praying by offering their work up to God. 2:18). We are releasing far more than the warm friendships of more than a dozen years, far more than the base from which to operate our new renewal effort, RENOVARÉ. His words to me were few, but they were, each one, life giving. 110. Those words have been familiar to me from my earliest days as a Christian, but I learned only more recently about "Sabbath Prayer" while on a small island off the Pacific coast of Canada. FOSTER that did not rhyme. We all need a deeper musing upon our perennial knack for disobedience and God's unbounded habit of forgiving. The pastor spoke with gentleness, compassion, authenticity, strength. Christians differ over such things as the number of sacraments or how God's grace is mediated through the sacraments. It is a gift from God, pure and simple. Sitivit sitiri Deus (God thirsts to be thirsted after). 270-71. May we ardently join with that ancient processional up the holy hill of Zion: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. The members take turns planning the activities of the day's retreat. The inner hush remained for several days. Henri J. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. In time, I do not hear God speaking to me about my neighbor take turns planning the activities of the day's retreat. any more, and I think to myself, "Good, I got away with that one!" Oh, no, I didn't. Likewise, we pray by faith alone—Jesus Christ our eternal Intercessor is responsible for our prayer life. Gregory of Nyssa, De compunction in the Christian East (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1982), p. We sense all motions of fear stilled and overcome by "a spirit of power and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. Ambrose of Milan, On Isaac or the Soul, viii, 75; J. As I am sure you are aware, this picture describes the end result clearly before us to give us courage to face the process. Jesus most certainly participated in the liturgical life of his people at the earliest possible age. We will look at recollection more closely when we come to Contemplative Prayer. It is to this wonderful way of prayer that we now turn. The New Covenant that Jesus established in his blood demands no less FOSTER Pascal, Blaise, 153, 229 Passivity. FOSTER our purposes, however, it is not necessary to distinguish between what is sacrament proper and what is sacrament proper and the television set. We ask for nothing but to cherish him. "Can a person live a full, satisfying life that glorifies God without work?" you may question. In another sense, though, it is distinct from other kinds of prayer, for in adoration we enter the rarefied air of selfless devotion. To applaud the will of God, to do the will of God, even to fight for the will of God is not difficult...unti it comes at cross-purposes with our will. We waited in silence. As Richard Baxter reminds us, the rewards are well worth the effort: "There is none on earth that live such a life of joy and blessedness as those that are acquainted with this heavenly conversation."11 The Trysting Prayer We usually think of a tryst as a prearranged meeting of lovers. Tell the Israelites to go forward. Dear God, I am so grateful for your invitation to enter your heart of love. Again, watch a sail pick up the wind on first one side of a boat and then the other as the person at the helm tacks with skillful ease. At least "nothing" is how it feels...well, actually there is no feeling at all. That is, before we can really pray, our lives need some fine tuning, or we need to know more about how to pray, or we need to study the philosophical questions surrounding prayer, or we need to have a better grasp of the great traditions of prayer. I do not know how to pray from the emotive center of my life or even how to pray fr grace to me, for how quickly I lose heart. I am tired of asking. 4:7; Phil. One taste of obedience and we want more. F. He told me the story of what had happened those many years before that had caused such a deep sadness to hang over him. We are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching the story. Carolynn grew tired of hearing me rattle on. We see, we smell, we touch, we taste. 4. How easy to be caught up into the whirl of life and miss the overtures of Divine Love. It is, as Martin Luther puts it, "a continuous violent action of the spirit as it is lifted up to God."12 We are engaging in serious business. Still, I am afraid...afraid of what may surface. Struggle with him in seeking other options, hoping to avoid the cup. Without it, try as we might to do otherwise, our serving will always be tinged with condescending arrogance. He said, "Your sins are forgiven you." Tears came to her eyes. There were so many who lived and who prayed in this way. These are matters of great magnitude to him because they are matters of great magnitude to us. Divine Union. It includes everything from "Blessing Prayer for a Automobile" to "Prayer of a Single Parent."7 As we pray in the context of the family, we learn that holiness is homemade. This practical common sense pervaded everything Jesus said and did. There is probably no kind of prayer that elicits more wonderings than this one. Night after night I would fall asleep, watching this strange yellow blaze that warmed us all. Usually teenagers do not want to be touched, and they do not like family prayers! Even though the nature of demonstrative prayer must often be changed, you can pray for them always in your heart. I decide against it mainly because I am mad at my neighbor because his tree dropped leaves in my yard! God reminds me about my resentment toward my neighbor because I am mad at my neighbor because his tree dropped leaves in my yard! compassion—daily, hourly. Formation Prayer 262 / RICHARD J. Hence, by helping to fill up the predetermined measure of afflictions, Paul is bringing the full consummation of the age to come all the closer. I began thinking to myself, "This experience is absolutely wonderful. Slowly, we find ourselves letting go of our inner compulsions to acquire more wealth than we need, look more youthful than we are, attain more status than is wise. 9:5-19, italics mine). See also Meditation Imitation of Christ, The, 151-152 Impurity, 160 Intercessory prayer, 191 Inward movement, xii, 32-33, 128, 255 Isaac of Nineveh, 119, 155 J James, William, 121 Jeremiah, 18, 38 Jeremias, Professor Joachim, 134 Jerome, 63, 112 Jesus Christ, 55, 69, 101, 274-277n.19.1; body of, 237; as God the Son, 2-3, 99, 134-135; as healer, 116; ministry of, 185, 234; as revolutionary, 248-249 John the Apostle, 73, 116-117 John the Baptist, 41 John Chrysostom, 32, 45 John of the Cross, 17, 18, 21, 163 John of the Ladder, 119 Johnson, Samuel, 76 John Vianney, 27 Joseph, Abba, 5 Joshua, 192 Journal keeping, 33-34 Journal (Woolman), 152 Joy, 39-40 Judgment, 113 Juliana of Norwich, 3, 119, 1512 PRAYER / 291 K Kallistos, 119 Kelly, Thomas, 93, 124-125, 220 Kempis, Thomas à, 45, 153, 195 Kenosis (self emptying of Christ), 55 Kidd, Sue Monk, 88, 161 Kierkegaard, Søren, 54, 146, 153, 226; on purity, 161 Kol Yahweh (voice of the Lord), 76, 116 Korean Christians, 198-199. Prayer, he says, is a little like a helpless widow who refuses to accept her helplessness and instead stands up PRAYER / 197 to injustice, and her persistence wins the day (Luke 18:1-8). 238 / RICHARD J. We celebrate the goodness of God with all our viscera! 118 / RICHARD J. A Living Relationship that should be said about our sense of the absence of God, namely, that we are entering into a living relationship that sequence of God, namely, that we are not quite sure what holds us back. "Oh, yes!" he replied. You may be aware of the covenant God made with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, with David. I do know that unless the emotive center of our lives is touched, it is as if a fuse remains unlit. She turned to her husband and announced through her tears, "My sins are forgiven me!" It was the breakthrough that was needed and the key to substantial healing. St. Theodore the Studite, Great Catechesis 27, ed. Chapter 20. 142 / RICHARD J. But there are other moments.... We must now attempt to sketch out the basic outlines of this message. FOSTER the same time, it remains wood. Straightforward Steps I doubt that anyone who reads these words will ever have a healing ministry in large auditoriums before thousands of people. First, we listen. I know that this notion seems rather provincial and intolerant to some. The laying on of hands is used in Scripture in a number of ways such as the tribal blessing, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the impartation of spiritual gifts, 3 but one of its most preeminent uses is in Healing Prayer. 9:4). As important as the prophetic message is more important. Beginning Where We Are Up to this point we have been describing Simple Prayer. May God grant you and me the ability to speak from our 154 / RICHARD J. Remember the holy Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. Further graces will come as they are needed. Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader March 2003 eISBN 0-06-057107-1 FIRST EDITION 26 27 28 29 30 About the Publishers (Australia) Pty. To the faithful Jew who even hesitated to speak the Divine Name, the childlike intimacy of Jesus' words must have been utterly shocking. The best way I know to relearn this time-honored approach to God is by praying that part of the Psalter traditionally known as the "Lament Psalms." 4 The ancient singers really knew how to complain, and their words of anguish and frustration can guide our lips into the prayer we dare not pray alone. 51. Joachim Jeremias, The Prayers of Jesus (Philadelphia: SCM 1967), p. I wish that did not sound so trite, for it is the deepest truth we can ever know about our turning toward God. Chapter 5. To the Colossians, "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Col. Allow me to offer a few suggestions. Our prayer work becomes more and more tender, more and more loving, more and more spontaneous. He climbed up into the chair beside me. Why is this? He grieves that we have forgotten him. 12. In the meantime he mysteriously takes our sorrows and uses them to heal the world. "Yes, but you don't know the kind of preaching I have to endure week in and week out," you may be thinking. It contains some of the most beautiful love language in all religious literature. And thirsty. I believe these issues are significant, and I have convictions on them, but I would be a fool to think I could shed much light on these complex matters here. We can begin by speaking forth the words of indebtedness, which in turn will lead us to acknowledgment, appreciation, gratitude, thanksgiving, praise, and adoration.11 Music is a marvelous aid in all this. We pray with sobs and tears. That it does work I am quite certain. I wanted to pray for the healing of the little girl still inside this woman, the little girl who had suffered all these losses. Blindness has come, in part. 82-83. It means to acknowledge our complete helplessness apart from his mediation and intercession. I had more—much more—to learn, to experience. Also remember that you did not take on the modern macho "I am a rock, I am an island" attitude overnight, and it will take more than a day to change such ingrained habits. PRAYER / 101 Have you ever noticed the many times Jesus experienced solitude? We listen with the mind, the heart, the spirit, the bones and muscles and sinew. But in this petition we are faced with a quandary. Personally, I prefer to speak of a spiritual mentor. If we are drawn into active worship and praise, we may want to stand with hands raised, palms out, in song and supplication. "The Trinity," writes Juliana of Norwich, "is our everlasting lover."2 "O my love!" exclaims Richard Rolle. The idea is surprisingly simple. The most frequent prayer posture in the Bible is complete prostration with the hands stretched out. John K. We most often begin by tackling prayer in the same way we have been taught to tackle every other problem—by hard work. God's grace is mediated to us through our bodies. We do not live in isolation, and we do not pray in isolation. He mourns that we do not draw near to him. It is a spiritual underground resistance movement. We struggle. It is our staple diet. Is there not deep inside a longing for his continuous presence? We demand. Calvary's sacrifice is God's binding commitment. What opportunities to serve others have you had this week? They may have discussed prayer, even written books about prayer, but it is highly unlikely that they have actually prayed. This is a group that began about ten years ago with forty people, and today twelve thousand gather each morning for three prayer meetings—at 4:00 A.M., 5:00 A.M., and 6:00 A.M. Jung-Oh explained to me that they must shut the doors at 4:00 A.M. to begin the first service, and so if people arrive a little late, they must wait until the 5:00 A.M. meeting. In winter a tougher, more resilient life is firmly established. His focus is on those who eat and drink "in an unworthy manner," who have no sense of or concern for the holyee. seriousness of what is happening. Are they somehow the finger of God writing on the wall of our hearts? A daily prayer discipline makes good sense in this context. 1991). With this, the experience seemed to draw to a close, and so I made my way back to tell Carolynn all the things I had seen and heard His mind and heart were supple. Fifth, learn the prayer of resurrection. It is one area that has been terribly abused and misused today. We eat out at fast-food restaurants much of the time and have to contend with ballet lessons and basketball practice and PTA meetings all in the same evening. Unction is the mystery of spiritual anointing that comes upon preaching and distinguishes it from every other kind of communication. —Teilhard de Chardin Many of us today live in a kind of inner apartheid. He got a brief history of the child's situation and then, upon seeing the faith of the boy's father, rebuked the demonic spirit, saying, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" The child went into terrible convulsions, and then, as the evil spirit left him, he fell to the ground as though dead. I am delighted. And, you know, to this day I cannot remember a single thing the speakers at that conference said! A Priceless Treasure This does not always happen, of course Chapter 9. Prayer can open heaven. We oppose unjust laws that demean and dehumanize those for whom Christ died. But it has been only the beginning of our experience of the Prayer of Relinquishment. Ours is a spirituality that can embrace both. compassion in us not yet sufficiently developed. Hands were laid on Barnabas and Saul to commission them on their mission endeavor (Acts 13:3). What endless effort it takes to help our children cultivate a habit of gratitude. FOSTER The Prayer of Action We are also Praying the Ordinary when we engage in what JeanNicholas Grou calls "the prayer of action." "Every action performed in the sight of God because it is the will of God, and in the manner that God wills, is a prayer and indeed a better prayer than could be made in words at such times." 3 Each activity of daily life in which we stretch ourselves on behalf of others is a prayer and indeed a better prayer than could be made in words at such times." the children something special; the times when we share our car with others on rainy mornings, leaving early to get them to work on time; the times when we are dead tired at night. In a short time the inner cause came to the surface as well—a sudden and tragic loss of her child. What I mean is that I am so action oriented, so product driven, that doing is easier for me than being. Exaltation sank into adoration. Each section contains an introduction to the author, excerpts from his or her writings that are abridged and revised for the modern PRAYER / 271 reader, reflection questions, a brief Bible study that parallels the reading, an annotated bibliography of the author's key writings, and, finally, a brief reflection essay that makes a bridge between the devotional reading and contemporary culture. Every dream dies the moment we try to realize it. What is the purpose of all this examination business anyway? It was a tender, grace-filled moment. We will discover that by praying we learn to pray. Have you ever tried to pray and felt nothing, saw nothing, sensed nothing? This kind of prayer obviously is more an experience of the head. Allow me to describe each of the four briefly. Nesting atop the rock were squadrons of tufted puffins—stocky black birds with reddish bills and white tuft bands on their heads. But she did both well. My first introduction to a "prayer language," as some call it, was quite commonplace. The sun had now broken over the distortions before we are able to assess if we want to take even one step into it, not to mention twelve. When farming communities and large families were predominant and gathering for meals and evening activities was common, this kind of family altar made perfect sense. As Micah declares, "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity?" (Mic. We are praying in the middle voice, entering that way of receiving and responding "that radiates into a thousand subtleties of participation and intimacy, trust and forgiveness and grace." 6 The devotional masters often spoke of Otium Sanctum, "holy leisure." It refers to a sense of balance in life: activity and rest, work and play, sunshine and rain. It is serene. In God's time and in God's way the desert will give way to a land flowing with milk and honey. What can we say to this vexing problem? But notice, in the situation Jesus did not pray as we ordinarily think of Elijah in a desolate cave keeping a lonely vigil over wind and earthquake and fire. 110 / RICHARD J. It means freedom from what A. Guyon, Experiencing the Depths, pp. It is that clear progress must be occurring. These four expressions do not need to be exclusive of one another, and in many places they will all function together. This is how we pray for daily bread. Nor should we be frightened by the hardness of our heart: prayer will soften it. 82. We can know as lived experience the words of Jean Sophia Pigott: 93 94 / RICHARD J. It is in the air See also Radical prayer Spiritual ecstasy, 164-165 Spiritual Exercises, The (Ignatius), 59-60 Spiritual warfare, 157, 192, 239-241. I am talking about developing a familiar friendship with Jesus. Make no mistake about it: he could have avoided the cross if he had so chosen. I think not. Therefore, the content and the character of our praying must be, of necessity, in unity with his nature. As the hour ticked away, I watched as different ones hardened their respective positions. We do not know what to pray. When you all the time." This, by the way, is perfectly true, and God knows that your praying must be do not know what to pray. are still not capable of bearing his company continuously. Reflecting on this event recently, Gloria told me in a telephone conversation that the prayer on that day was "like a sonnet from above.4 Commonsense Counsels A few simple counsels are needed in these matters. 4:3). Strange as it may seem, he prayed a commercial. Now, I know this is true with all forms of prayer, but it is easier to believe here. She would struggle to clean 169 170 / RICHARD J. We began with baby steps, what C. Brother Lawrence shares simply, "There is no mode of life in the world more pleasing and more full of delight than continual conversation with God." Saint John of the Ladder advises, "Let the memory of Jesus combine with your breath." Juliana of Norwich says frankly, "Prayer unites the soul to God." It was said of Saint Francis that he 'seemed not so much a man praying as prayer itself made man." And Frank Laubach reports, "Oh, this thing of keeping in constant touch with God, of making him the object of my thought and the companion of my conversations, is the most amazing thing I ever ran across." 1 119 120 / RICHARD J. As best I can discern, tears are God's way of helping us descend with the mind into the heart and there bow in perpetual adoration and worship. 42. Within a few days the answer came through an elderly lady who did not know me or my question. 58-59. For thine is the kingdom, and the glory, forever. All these things and much more are the work of Authoritative Prayer. It is not enough to ask God for a heart soft and broken where there is space for repentance. The best way to learn about the spiritual gift of discernment is to be around those who move in this realm. Nor are we given only father pictures. I ordered the darkness—whatever it was—to leave and to go into the strong arms of Jesus. This is why the great literature on prayer is frankly and wonderfully erotic. These are those who have seen the stone cut without hands smashing the kingdoms of this world and becoming a great mountain that fills the whole earth (Dan. What are we to do? Press, 1964), p. After prayer for my immediate family, I wait quietly until individuals or situations spontaneously rise to my awareness. Stereo/digital compact disc. This and many other stories are recorded in some detail by Morton T. We develop ease as well. Firmly and deliberately you say, "I do not understand what God is doing or even where God is, but I know that he is out to do me good." This is trust. How much good we could accomplish if we only had those things we may think. We simply do not go around plopping our hands on anyone we please. FOSTER Winter preserves and strengthens a tree. We watch, for example, for God's activity in our lives, and when we find it we discover that he has exposed our blind side. This was lesus' normal, though not exclusive, pattern. We listen to pe ple, and we listen t God. Genuinely bright Jim went on to do graduate work at a prestigious school on the East Coast. Elton Trueblood, The Common Ventures of Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Jim took a prayer walk with God, watching the sun play hide and seek behind the large oak trees to the west. The woes of the Messiah, the afflictions of Christ, have already begun, and when their appointed limit has been reached, the age to come will be consummated, and this present evil age will pass away. Eliot is giving glory to God, which the children of Israel failed to enter. Throughout the weekend the Spirit of God rested tenderly upon the entire group, so much so that on Sunday afternoon this same gentleman asked quietly, "Would you pray for me that I might know Jesus?" What were we to do? Anthony Bloom, Beginning to Pray (New York: Paulist, 1970), p. "They are?" My friend answered simply and lovingly, "Yes, they are." The dam broke, and the flood gushed forth from her eyes. When Jesus told his disciples to abide in him like a branch abides in the vine, they instantly understood what he meant, for they had watched for years his abiding in the Father (John 15:1-11). A little over a year ago prophetic utterance was spoken over me, the first half of which relates to our family and has been occurring in the most encouraging and faithbuilding ways. At precisely that moment a student was in the intensive-care unit at the hospital, and Maria opened her eyes and smiled at her. The wonderful thing about such experiences is that the self is guite forgotten. "Yes, she is still unconscious, but they have not taken her into surgery yet. We distinguish the voice of the true Shepherd from that of religious hucksters in the same way professional jewelers distinguish a diamond from glass imitations—by acquaintanceship. By bringing together singing and praying, the Psalms do something genuinely significant. In Praying the Ordinary, our vocation, far from being a hindrance, is an asset. To enter solitude, we must disregard what others think of us. The soul needs no other force to draw it than the weight of love."8 Personal Ebenezers "But how," you may ask, "is this turning inward accomplished? Dostoevsky, in The Brothers Karamazov, depicts this problem well in his portrayal of two monks, Father Ferapont and Father Zosima. We are finite human beings, and it is an act of humility to recognize our limitations. All of the luminaries in Scripture struggled as well: Abraham as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; David as he relinquished his understanding of how the deliverer of Israel should function; control over her future; Paul as he relinquished his desire to be free of a debilitating "thorn in the flesh." Struggle is important because the Prayer of Relinquishment is Christian prayer and not fatalism. The earth, Bloom reminds us, is always with us, always taken for granted, always walked on by everyone. He laid his hands on the blind man at Bethsaida twice before he fully recovered his sight (Mark 8:22-25). We hear the words of institution: "This is my body.... In the first week we are habitually seeking the grace of being loved by the spiritual world that we think every jot and tittle of life 232 / RICHARD J. So the practice will come through lived experience. But I was not there when she slipped into eternity. Our needs, our wants, our concerns dominate our prayer experience. This leads to one of the most beautiful prayers ever recorded in Scripture, surpassed only by Jesus' Upper Room prayer. 249. It held firm. The Old Testament world is soaked with the language of thanksgiving: "O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" (Ps. 106:1); "I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart" (Ps. 9:1); "O LORD my God, I 84 / RICHARD J. We are buoyed up by a confidenct trust in the character of God. They had confidence in the character of God, my rock, 'Why have you forgotten me?'" (Ps. 42:9). So rather than try to fool myself by piously pretending constant communion, what I do in such situations is to ask God for a timeout. Lord, make haste to help me"—I do not have to concern myself with how to express my need. We see only what the Father says, do only what the Father says, do only what the Father says, "You open your New Testament.... It was a small gathering of about fifteen social workers. Remember the covenant God made with Abraham. Clyde S. We are all the time listening for the Kol Yahweh, the voice of the Lord. I knew that I dare not let this happen. 238. Finally, they finished shopping and went to the car. Some come from organized churches and denominations; others come from outside these structures. My temptation is to offer some quick prayer and send them off rather than endure with them the desolation of suffering. FOSTER It is, of course, the cross of Jesus Christ that makes such repentance possible. Deep Joy What is it about all this sorrow and weeping and mourning? I won't write it if it will ever damage our relationship." That was that. Helmut Thielicke, Our Heavenly Father: Sermons on the Lord's Prayer (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. And that may well be enough "message" for anyone for one evening. And we can make a difference...if we will learn to pray on their behalf. It is a declaration that we are deadly serious about this prayer business. Our pravers are important, having effect with God. And for the marvelously symmetrical white fir outside my study window. I give thanks, A conversion of the heart takes place, a transformation of the spirit. Intercessory Praver is selfless praver, even self-giving praver, even self-giving praver. the leaky faucet and the bills that were due. FOSTER for the children while we are at work? 450. Do we think just because Peter and John went up to the temple at the regularly appointed hour of prayer that there was no spontaneity in their words to the lame man: "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk"? The sheer splendor of it all made me catch my breath. As we carry on the business of the day, inwardly we keep pressing in toward the Divine Center. There are issues of far greater consequence in the world than my little needs." But here we must see the Abba heart of God. Likewise, I do not have a body: I am a body. We may ask for greater faith so that we can heal others, but God, who understands human need far better than we do, gives us greater compassion so that we can heal others, but God, who understands human need far better than we do, gives us greater compassion so that we can heal others. that you need to find your way through the jungle of language and problems that today surround God: but that...God loves you, and offers you an understanding and light which are like nothing you ever found in books or heard in sermons."14 After we have worked our way through all the obscure, nearly unintelligible language of contemplation is "love on fire with devotion."15 As love has its perfect way, it leads us into purity of heart. I had a friend with me who was unacquainted with Christian things. Jesus, however, makes it foundational to real effectiveness in Intercessory Prayer. God is always present with us—we know that theologically—but there are times when he withdraws our consciousness of his presence. It is amazing. Then, for some reason unknown to me, I turned 180 degrees and looked back at Haystack Rock in the distance. Besides, steady, faithful communion is in some ways easier than our normal way of praying. The military strategy of Moses was strange and powerful. We will one thing, which is God. There is no pretense in Simple Prayer. "It remains open for some to enter it," declares the writer to the Hebrews. Your situation however, may be just the opposite. Are we struggling with a relationship at work or at home? 196. The more God utilizes our imagination for his good purposes. Have you ever noticed how frequently the Bible urges us to remember? Okay?" Seriously the boy nodded. Bounds, Power Through Prayer (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), p. I am tired of waiting. Some, in their ongoing life in the way of Christ, have found it helpful to seek out individuals who could mentor them in the things of the Spirit. When Simon Magnus asked to have the power to lay hands on people so they could receive the Spirit, he was wanting to use the power of God for his own ends (Acts 8:14-24). It came together in its present form and was used extensively in the sixth century and then was revived in the Eastern Church in the fourteenth century. When I reached the crown of the island, I discovered a small wooden platform someone had built and an old weathered chair that sat atop it like a lonely sentinel. We are his ambassadors, commissioned by him. OTHER RENOVARÉ RESOURCES FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL Celebrating the Disciplines by Richard J. When it comes to prayer, we do not want to feel duty bound. PRAYER / 127 At this point we will begin to notice changes in our behavior. There was no eloquence—the good man never dreamed of such a thing—but there was something far better: a godly disposition. I began weeping profusely. Some view it as a useful aid; others feel it should be reserved for meditation; still others believe it should never be used. CHAPTER 12 THE PRAYER OF THE HEART Heart speaks to heart. I would like to live just one day in which everything I did benefited someone besides myself. Following Our Leader'S Lead The passages I have just shared with you are not new to me, but for years I thought that the ministry of power was only for the select few—you know, apostles and saints and all. or its affiliates File loading please wait... The Groanings of a Struggling Faith This standing between God and people involves a kind of wrestling with God. This is how we gain proficiency at anything. Augustine took the young man home for dinner, and they talked at length. A good friend of mine was recently given an unusual expression of this deep joy. This faithful servant of Christ had not "felt" the presence of God for a very long time, and, as best we could tell, God was graciously confirming the reality that "I will never leave you nor forsake you" to him and healing deep wounds that had come from earlier years of ministry. Celebration is best done in community, but even when we are alone we are never alone, for we are joining the jubilee chant of angels and living creatures about which we are alone we are never alone. can only guess. It means to appeal to the blood of Christ as the source of power for the life of prayer. I say graciously because without a teachable spirit any word of God that may come to guide us introduced to the brother who was to be his spiritual director for the week. Teach me to see only what you see, to say only what you do. You do not have to improve yourself, or increase your quota of good deeds, or do more adequate repenting, or anything. In the crucifixion of the will we are enabled to let go of our tightfisted hold on life and follow our best prayers. I love you, Lord. See Silence R Racism, 152, 154 Radical prayer, 243-245. The artist, the novelist, the 172 / RICHARD J. T. I shall resist the temptation of going on endlessly with these wonderful writings that nourish our hearts, in part because it is quite possible to drown rather than swim when first faced with a sea of options. See Focusing Ceremony, 106 Change, 57-581. Are these really expressions of prayer? The human longing: "Let this cup pass." The final relinquishment: "Not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:39-46). It has nothing to do with the extremes of torture and self-mortification, which are a perversion of genuine sacrifice. The same thing is true for us. Trust is how you put your spiritual life in neutral. Tears of contrition soften even the hardest hearts." 5 The Psalmist sings, "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy" (Ps. 126:5). We must be careful here not to lay impossible burdens upon people. As quoted in Hutchinson, Six Ways to Pray, p. Steps Into Unceasing Prayer We do not leap into the dizzy heights of constant communion in a single bound. Hopefully, we have by now experienced enough of the transforming graces of God that the old passion to run roughshod over the lives of others has been effectively defeated or at least clearly identified. We can rest in this work of the Spirit on our behalf. We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have done. I brought the principal decision makers together for lunch, assuming that face-to-face discussion would quickly settle the matter. How easily we miss the import of Jesus' teaching that "God is spirit, and those who worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). 6:17). He writes, "I still think the prayer without words is the best—if one can really achieve it. The heart, the mind, and the spirit are awakened to his inflowing peace. You win. Allow the words to quiet you, settle you, deepen you. Saint John of the soul, and in some measure I experienced both. When I travel, I usually plan to use the first leg of the plane flight for worship, prayer, and meditation. FOSTER absence. When We Cannot weep. We are first drawn into these tiny pleasures and then beyond them to the Study of his wisdom, where we can learn and grow and stretch...and ask all the questions we want. FOSTER Sweet child, dear child, you know I care; Sweet child, you know I care; Swee with a sparkle in his eyes and a brightness on his face I had never seen before. "Your will be done" was Jesus' consuming concern. On the morning of October 18, 1740, David Brainard, that stalwart pioneer missionary to Native Americans, wrote in his journal, "My soul was exceedingly melted, and bitterly mourned over my exceeding sinfulness and vileness. Abba Anthony, Vitae Patrum 7.38; PL 73:1055C, as quoted in Hausherr, Penthos, p. We, too, will find that a commitment to regular prayer will defeat self-importance and shared this information with the mas best I could, and a murmur of holy anticipation began to move throughout the group as we prayed for the worship experience to come. Perhaps at work we have a chance to PRAYER / 45 strike a blow against injustice. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24). "Don't you get it?" we lament. Rather than expending its strength on the exterior surface, its sap is forced deeper and deeper into its interior depth. The moment we try to be genuinely centered, we become painfully aware of how distracted we really are. I ask for an increase of faith, hope, and love so that, by the power of God, I can be a light set on a hill, causing truth and justice to flourish. 7-8. This will only redouble the burden they must carry. O Holy Spirit of God, so many hurt today. John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, trans. Become aware of God's presence in the room. FOSTER prophetic ministry. In one sense it would be less problematic to stay with worship and adoration and contemplation. Whereas the study of Scripture centers on exegesis, the meditation upon Scripture centers on internalizing and personalizing the passage. William James, Varieties of Religious Experience (Bergenfield, NY: New American Library, 1958), p. Those seeking communal expressions of Christian community must wrestle with major issues: how to maintain proper authority without becoming authoritarian, how to maintain a high level of intentional community life without becoming ingrown, how to make this way of life accessible to families with small children and couples who are highly mobile. Our oldest son, Joel, frequently had ear infections as a baby despite our most watchful attention. Here I want to underscore fasting as a means of

helping us to suffer joyfully. Copyright © 1964 by Alley Music Corp. We are learning the obedience of absolute gentleness with the frustrations and fears and pains of our spouse. My brothers and I conquered many a granite fortress, finding arrowheads and secret hiding places. We are appalled that others can see only gray in the sky when we are "delightedly observing such delicacies of pearl and dove and silver."7 We who teach are especially prone to this temptation. The Covenant of Heart Preparation we are to have the "fittest preparation of heart," says Richard Baxter. The same is true for you. We simply must set all these things aside and begin praying. Our covenant, however, is always to seek it out, always to welcome its appearing, always to nurture its development. The pure and the impure can never be united. We are not bound by the categories of activism and quietism. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity of activism and quietism. and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation. Holiness is Homemade Prayers arising out of the family are perhaps the most common expression of Praying the Ordinary. It is the Prayer of Relinquishment that moves us from the struggling to the releasing. If, for the glory of God, you are putting an endless supply of nuts on an endless line of bolts, your work is rising up as a sweet-smelling offering to the throne of God. To the Ephesians," "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication" (Eph. I cannot talk to just anybody. Bill said, "Let's pray the passage into each other." I had wanted to keep the discussion at arm's length, but I gulped and said, "All right, how do we do it?" "I don't know exactly," was Bill's response, "but you go first!" So I went over to him, placed my hands on his head, and began to pray. PRAYER / 139 While I have not personally been privileged to receive this grace, I have watched many who have—a few who simply slip to the floor while I am praying for them. The only success I had was completely explainable by human techniques of psychological manipulation. 288. Lewis, Letters to an American Lady, ed. Would you let me put my hands on your eyes and invite Jesus' healing light to come into them? We learn to become like the branch, which receives its life from the vine: "Abide in me as I abide in you. "God can't bless me here," we moan. Paul G. Peter and John encountered the lame man because they were going up to the temple at the three o'clock hour of prayer, as was their custom (Acts 3:1). Soon, she said, "I perceived that this silence was not simply an absence of noise, but that the silence had substance." This volume can be ordered through any bookstore or by writing RENOVARE, P.O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879. See also Jesus Christ; Redemptive suffering D Dalrymple, John, 10, 74 Dance as sacred, 117 Daniel, 222 PRAYER / 287 David, King, 28, 83, 116 Death: contemplating one's own, 64-65; and mourning, 169-170, 223-224 Decalogue, the Mosaic, 28, 34 Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians (Lawson), 152 Deliverance, 188-190 Demosthenes, 67 Deus Absconditus (Hidden God), 17-19, 20 Diary of Private Prayer of, 65 Doctor Johnson's Prayers, 76 Donne, John, 141 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 231 E Eastern Christian tradition, 122, 3. If our hearts are so narrow as to see only how others have hurt and offended us, we cannot see how we have offe in favor of "other-centered prayer." What these people fail to see, PRAYER / 11 however, is that Simple Prayer is necessary, even essential, to the spiritual life. All these differences, however, are surface issues compared to what we hold in common. 2:19-20). Some families have been helped and strengthened by experiences of a "family altar" gathered times of Bible reading and prayer. Think of Moses interceding before God on behalf of a stubborn and disobedient Israel: "But now, if you will only forgive their sin—but if not, blot me out of the book that you have written" (Exod. Dear Father, I don't want to treat you like Santa Claus, but I do need to ask things of you. The many diaries and journals of Frank Laubach are a disciplined adventure into the examen of consciousness. It is an apt image, for we do indeed feel dry, barren, parched. As Saint Augustine says, "God gives where he finds empty hands." 8 So it is with forgiveness. Mom was now in the hospital. 260 / RICHARD J. We may even have come across the Bible verse that warns, "It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it" (Eccles. I believe this is indeed possible, and steady prayer needs to arise for those called into the ministry of reforming the Church and the churches. The second problem is more practical in nature. See also Relationship with God 294 / RICHARD J. These are people who by extensive experience know the difference between the enthusiasm of a temporary spiritual high and a settled conviction given by the Spirit. Paul laid his hands on the disciples at Ephesus, and they received the gift of prophecy (Acts 19:6). 67-68. It was many years ago in a simple prayer chalet, the "Quiet Place," at a retreat center. Her four-year-old brother was in the room, and so I told him I needed his help in praying for his substitutionary atonement for the salvation of the world. Then God spoke. When we try to love our neighbor without loving God, we begin imposing what Bonhoeffer calls our "wish dreams" onto the relationship, which in the end destroys it. I knew it took several centuries for this tree to attain its present size. Reza is his name, and in our few moments together he taught me about dignity and courage and faith. "Bless the LORD, O my soul," enjoins the Psalmist, "and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Ps. 103:1). Woolman was at the head of a groundswell of antislavery conviction that was to assail and eventually abolish the practice of slaveholding among the Quakers nearly 150 years before the American Civil War. "Sometimes," writes Donald Bloesch, "the prayer of faith involves defiance of God bordering on presumption."3 Martin Luther says that "the might of prayer" is "so great" that "it has overcome both heaven and earth." He could even speak to God about the bruised and the homeless. As worshipers sang, they would lock to his own promises. As worshipers sang, they would lock to his own promises. The bruised and the arms and take three steps forward, one step back, three steps forward, one step back. Fourth, learn the prayer of release. Now I believe we are beginning to see prophets emerging—many of them in Third World countries—prophets who are calling people into fresh, bold expressions of faithfulness and obedience. I feel alone, lost, forsaken. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. First, learn the prayer of self-emptying. In this way it is able to fully assimilate what it has previously consumed, which is then transformed into rich, creamy milk. Perhaps a little solitude would solve the 81 82 / RICHARD J. The Letters of Ammonas, trans. Our delight in literary finesse can easily become a fetish. There may have been no dramatic event at all—you simply slipped from the warm glow of intimate communion to the icy cold of...nothing. I cannot thank everyone, but I will thank some in hopes that they will symbolize the many who remain anonymous. Unceasing Prayer 1. 51–52. I felt unbelievably heavy on my feet, heavy as though I was carrying a cross. People should not be put on display, nor should their situation be exploited in any way. They are also received through the laying on of hands. Sentiment and reason act more in concert. SCRIPTURE INDEX Genesis 1:1, 171; 1:31; 1:3 13ff, 204 Numbers 11:11b-12, 9 Deuteronomy 6:4, 106; 10:21, 84 1 Samuel 7:12, 29; 12:23, 199 2 Kings 2:24, 9; 4:16, 10 1 Chronicles 16:4-36, 83; 9:1, 83; 13:1, 20; 22:2, 18; 22:23, 84; 24:3-4, 160; 30:12, 84; 34:3, 90; 34:8, 72; 35:18, 83; 40:3, 84; 42:3, 39; 42:3, 39; 42:7 24, 127; 42:9, 18, 23; 51:17, 42; 56:8, 39; 57:7, 67; 62:1, 155; 72:20, 110; 88:13-14, 23; 91:14-16, 40; 96:1, 111; 100:4, 85; 103:1, 77, 84, 117; 103:13, 134; 106:1, 23, 83; 109:1, 27, 122; 139:23-24, 29; 146:1-2, 84 Ecclesiastes 5:5, 68 Isaiah 5:20, 29; 16:9, 38; 109:1, 23, 119:103, 154; 119:1 53:3, 219; 55:3, 158; 55:8-11, 196; 56:7, 197; 66:13, 134 Jeremiah 9:1, 38; 18, 59; 20:7, 12 Lamentations 2:18, 38 Daniel 2, 246; 9:4, 222; 9:5-19, 222 281 282 / RICHARD J. I do desire a fellowship that is constant and sustaining. The slender people we value; the fat we don't. Once more she stood before the people, and, in Augustine's own words, "Praise to God was shouted so loud that my ears could scarcely stand the din." 7 All of this happened while Augustine was writing his magnum opus, The City of God, so he devoted one of the final sections to the miracles of healing occurring in his own diocese. "Sophisticated," I thought to myself. 6:10-20). The times of play with 74 / RICHARD J. Phineas Fletcher, untitled poem from Hail, Gladdening Light: Music of the English Church, The Cambridge Singers directed by John Rutter (Great Britain: Collegium Records, COLCD 113, 1991). Quiet murmurings of reverence continued for some time. Others will burst forth into new life in such a way that you will hardly recognize them. We do it posthaste. Far from it! It is here that we must exercise the wise use of the veto. The idea seemed a bit strange, but quietly I addressed the pain: "Thank you for letting us know that there is an infection in Joel's ear. FOSTER ecosystem; just feel the water. I stopped all public speaking, I stopped all writing, and I waited. We become more aware of children. As Teresa of Avila reminds us, "Humility is the principal aid to prayer."7 But how do we get it? We believe. 13ff.). Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1958), p. Sometimes the very thing we relinquish is given back to us. Help me to stand with them in their suffering. It rises from the altars of the altars of the Altars of the Presence of God (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1958), p. Sometimes the very thing we relinquish is given back to us. great cathedrals and from obscure shanties in unknown places. Without perseverance in prayer, the unction, like the manna overkept, breeds worms."14 How do you and I help? Are we not able to yield to the Divine Center? Have them jump up into your lap, read them a story, and give them—each and every one—a wellthought-out blessing. Thielicke Our Heavenly Father, p. In the beginning we are indeed the subject and the center of our prayers. Jesus promises to be present in great power whenever the community of faith is truly gathered in his name (Matt. I am indebted to Lewis for these four points. Compassion provides the environment in which authority can function. 71. Then, too, we become deadened to that impressive corpus of religious response to God. Some people, once they understand the authority they have in Christ, seem to lose all good sense...and good manners. Prayer makes preaching strong, gives it unction, and makes it stick."13 In this statement Bounds uses an old word that describes what we need so desperately today—unction. It's all rote. What next surfaced to my conscious mind was this: "I want to teach you Sabbath Prayer." I leaned forward in anticipation—I was far from sure what Sabbath Prayer or breath prayer.3 The idea has its roots in the Psalms, where a repeated phrase reminds us of an entire Psalm, for example, "O LORD, you have searched me and known me" (Ps. 139:1). Next, the Apostle brings you and me into the picture. We acknowledge our lack of faith, our distance, our hardheartedness. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. We are raising our own personal Ebenezer and declaring, "Here is where God met me and helped me." We are remembering. But there was also the good: a small obedience, a quiet prayer that seemed to do so much, a word fitly spoken. As quoted in Donald G. Single-parent households often need different kinds of community structures to make these things work. Its concerns embrace the whole world, from the coming of the kingdom to daily bread. The old writers spoke of this reality as Deus Absconditus—the God who is hidden. In Jesus' name. FOSTER But remember, this community is a gift. How easily we lapse into sacred/secular dichotomies. Our fasting is part of our wrestling with God. For everyone who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matt. Instead we talk to God about what is going on inside that we know displeases him. When God made his covenant with Moses, he promised to deliver his people from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 7-9). I had seen Reza before, but I had not been present to him before. There in the silence I love the green grass. Resting in God does not mean resignation or idleness. A holy hush covered the auditorium, witnessing to the fact that our hearts had been drawn close to the heart of God. Another value: our hearts are enlarged and sensitized by suffering. That really isn't the problem at all, is it? While not all of us would agree with each of his steps, we can all be grateful to Benedict for helping us see that there are things we can do that will move us forward in the life of humility. Abba and imma—daddy and mommy—are the first words Jewish children learn to speak. They are the rhythms of God. See Lived prayer as, 81, 87-90; two aspects of, 83-85 Aesop's Fables, 64 Agape. That is not exactly right. If, for example, we are considering Christ on trial for his life, we are to "see" the crowd, "hear" the accusations, "feel" the sting of the whip. Are we not able to trust him to lead us into a richer, fuller communion? Because of the definite article in Greek—"the afflictions of Christ"—this may refer to PRAYER / 277 a definite or well-known entity such as the Jewish apocalyptic concept of the birth pangs of the Messiah, which will usher in the age to come. The Lament Psalms teach us to pray our inner conflicts and contradictions. Can we find meaning in the crayon marks on the wall made by the kids? Since there is no special sequence in the life of prayer, we simply do not move from one stage to the next knowing, for example, that at stages five and twelve we will experience abandonment by God. The seven sons of the Jewish high priest, Sceva, had seen Paul cast out demons in the name of Jesus, and so they gave it a try, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." But the evil spirit replied to them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Even though they are you?" used the proper formula, they were not praying out of the life and power of Jesus, and so they failed. I would like to try. Ltd. Christians worldwide have been immensely enriched by this 152 / RICHARD J. Christ is truly present among us to heal us, to forgive us, to change us, to empower us. Even in old age she may feel an icy chill at the memory of this disregard. I have more of both than I can ever address in one short chapter, even if I had all the answers. And he has put all things under his feet" (Eph. Sue Monk Kidd, God's Joyful Surprise (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. The second purifying of Saint John involves stripping us of dependence upon interior results. 11:28). See Holy Spirit Spiritual defiance, 247-248. That is not all bad—there are some people in our day who could profit from a little healthy skepticism. Carolynn knew nothing about my internal PRAYER / 53 struggle. It isn't that these are wrong concerns or that there is never a time to deal with them. For 266 / RICHARD J. It is the same with prayer. God delights in our asking. Continual prayer is being offered at the throne of God on our behalf by none other than the eternal Son. To the uninitiated it might appear that these people are drunk, and so they are—with the Spirit. Laubach, Letters by a Modern Mystic (Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press, 1979), p. Even the truth about our shadow side sets us free (John 8:32). The idea is to use all the means at our disposal to urge all that is within us into doxology: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Ps. 103:1). The teen years demand adjustments. We hear the lap of water along the shore. I am because HE IS." 19 On the Mount of Transfiguration the word of God came out of the overshadowing cloud, saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" (Matt. The group is called "SEE Christ" (Spiritual Enrichment Encounters with Christ). With spiritual maturity comes the ability to discern between the trials that are a normal part of living under the cross and the injustices of an evil world that demand correction. I marveled at its stubbornness in standing against the unrelenting attack of ocean waves. So we begin in simple, conspicuous, even artificial ways. Donald L. 47. We segregate out a small corner of pious activities and then can make no spiritual sense out of the rest of our lives. Release with Hope The Prayer of Relinquishment is a bona fide letting go, but it is a release with hope. 7:25). In fact, everyone thought he was dead until Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up perfectly whole. Jesus, you went through your greatest trial in unashamed agony and wept tears of deep, deep sorrow. lyrics to the song If I Were a Rich Man by Sheldon Harnick, Jerry Bock. Its surpassing popularity is witnessed to by the fact that it has been translated into more than fifty languages. A minister in Africa once woke up in the middle of the night in tears. At the altar of Covenant Prayer we vow unswerving allegiance; we make high resolves; we promise holy obedience. We are enveloped, absorbed, gathered into his peace Certainly not everyone I pray for is healed. See also Bloesch, Struggle of Prayer, pp. They smile at the egotistical asking, asking of so many. 8:26-27). At such times we are to trust in the wisdom of God and ask for the grace to rest in his peace. Jesus shows us a more excellent way. Ringer, Winning Through Intimidation (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1974). It is a sign of our seriousness and intensity. How many minutes today can we turn into holy communion?! The second step is for this work to move into the subconscious mind. And so with boldness and persistence we ask for contrite hearts. But he has invited us to share in his sufferings and so participate with him in the redemption of the subconscious mind. the world. There is, therefore, no need to repress, suppress, or sublimate any of God's truth about ourselves. I do know that without some kind of consistent communion with you I will not know holy obedience. Its aim is the total transformation of persons, institutions, and societies. Also, I hope you know that those who bring the sacrament of the Word are more than the officially recognized and properly ordained clergy, though they are certainly included. I ask for an increase of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Lewis puts it.2 Third, liturgical prayer helps us stand against the temptation to be spectacular and entertaining. We become utterly responsive to the heavenly Monitor It means standing firm against our codependency drives to control everyone and fix everything. A Major Highway The first word that should be spoken is one of them has seen anything like what is now beginning to occur. I said firmly and, I hope, compassionately, "Yes, I can help you." (Actually I was not nearly as confident as my words sounded, and I knew that if any help was forthcoming, it certainly would not be from me. Abraham prayed in this manner when he bargained with his supernatural visitor, as did Paul when he sought to have his "thorn in the flesh" removed. Many use personal retreat times to review their lives H. People today desperately need the help that we can give them. One final word regarding the petition directly: God has bound himself to forgive when we forgive. This also allows us to be with people without being the center of attention—a great blessing in itself. Learning Recollection There are three basic steps into Contemplative Prayer, and I find that often people are helped immensely by a simple description of them. But I now see that in trying to make it my daily bread I was counting on a greater mental and spiritual strength than I really have. In his Rule Saint Benedict insisted on regularity in prayer because he did not ever want his followers to forget who was in charge. For the Well Being of Others If you are part of a community where corporate prayer is the serious business of the church, I hope you are rejoicing in this gracious gift of God. The Key and the board in its place, and the board in its place, and the board in its place prayer. Put a board in its place prayer is the serious business of the church, I hope you are rejoicing in this gracious gift of God. authenticating miracles, for "once I realized how many miracles were occurring in our own day...[I 216 / RICHARD J. The beauty of the Little Way is how utterly available it is to everyone. Arthur (Springdale, PA: Whitaker, 1984), p. The Sacrament of the Word of God is preached in its truth and purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Word and institution of Christ."11 The sacrament of the Supper is the Gospel through eyegate. Let me lead you into a more excellent way. How do we practice Simple Prayer? We must pass beyond all propaganda jargon and national self-interest and kneel in sorrow and sadness for the arrogance and selfishness and greed that cause national injustice. Just yesterday I sat next to a student from Tehran, sensing that God wanted me to be present and his wife even came to visit us once after we had moved to another state. Christ confronts us and asks us to choose. In one sense adoration is not a special form of prayer, for all true prayer is saturated with it. In such cases our task is to help them enter an overall pattern of living that involves the normal disciplines of the spiritual life.5 Sixth, in this work we will do well to stay connected with others. 3:12-14). 92-94. My flight got home late Sunday evening. We find virtue in the purity of our intentions. But we must not get the wrong idea. 12:7-11). A venerable, old sage once asked his disciples, "When we can see a tree in the distance and know that it is an elm and not a juniper," ventured one student. It was time to return for the readings, yet somehow I sensed that what needed to happen within me was not complete. Richard Rolle, "The Fire of Love," in Elmer O'Brien, ed., Varieties of Mystic Experience (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1964), p.133. 186. Discernment is the divine ability to see what is actually going on and to know what needs to be done in any given situation. The Sanctity of the Ordinary I would like to tell you of the death of my mother, Marie Temperance Foster. Baxter, Saints' Everlasting Rest, pp. Rather than attempting to scale the heights of spiritual ecstasy, you are hoping just to make it through the next week. Christian theology tells us that Christ died and passed through hell, "making captivity captive" (Eph. See also PRAYER / 295 Prophesy; Social holiness; Spiritual defiance Recollection, 161 Redemptive suffering, 218-222 Relationship with God: living, 19-20, 171-173; loving, 3, 13, 140, 160, 195. We may think these tiny, trivial activities are hardly worth mentioning. Adrienne von Speyr, Confession, trans. Gone forever are the pat answers that—zip, zap—make everything fine. The less we are manipulated by the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of cod. François Fénelon, Christian Perfection (Minneapolis, MN: Dimension Books, 1975), pp. This agitated creaturely activity hinders the work of God in us. We can ask God for their help. We live in urban surroundings and belong to small families. He opens the door and grants us access into the heavenlies. It differs from a diary by its focus on why and wherefore rather than who and what. He also wrote a follow-up book called The Twelve Steps of Pride. None of the vords rhymed. With the roar of the river quickly swallowing up any cry my voice could make, I felt free to shout out my thanksgiving and praise to God. Edwards understood it so well. One ancient custom that can be traced back to the early days of the Christian Church was for the children to ask the father for a blessing every evening before retiring. What about Jim's future? See Love A Humble Attempt...(Edwards) 198 Ammonas, 155 Anouilh, Jean, 13 Anthony, Abba, 37 Augustine of Hippo, 33, 150-151, 187, 201; on love of God, 1, 255; skepticism of, 219-233, 237-238, 242. We are committed to breaking every yoke and setting the captives free. I had also been meditating on the Gospel teaching (and the ancient teaching of the Church) on "compunction"—heart sorrow. What I do want to insist on is the importance of progress, of growth, of change, of formation. Like the Psalmist, we praise God with lute and harp, with timbrel and dance, with strings and pipe. Hesychasm is a Christian form of living the spiritual life that has its roots in the first hermits who fled into the barren deserts of Egypt and Syria during the fourth century. It is this: wait on God. Like the father of the prodigal, he rushes to us at the first sign of our turning toward home. theologians, and while I believe the issues are important, and I even have opinions on them, I am not trying to solve these matters here. It is a false humility to stand back and not share our deepest needs. It is the prayer of children, and yet we will return to it again and again. "We neither manipulate God (active voice) or are manipulated by God (passive voice). Some have objected to using the imagination out of concern that it is untrustworthy and could even be used by the evil one. In the beginning our will is in struggle with God's will. As quoted in Bonhoeffer, Psalms, p. Augustine was, however, interrupted by shouts from the congregation, for the young woman had also fallen to the ground and was instantaneously healed. PRAYER / 247 I believe that you who read these words are among this company of the committed. We feel abandoned by friends, spouse, and God. It is the air in which prayer breathes, the sea in which prayer swims. Lewis identifies several things that keep us from adoration. 4 The first is inattention. And if we can just come to see that right where we are is holy ground—in our jobs and homes, with our co-workers and friends and families. A deeply spiritual person, Gloria had suffered from six months of intense affliction from the evil one. Many trust in medical means exclusively and turn to prayer only when all available medical technology has failed. For invited into the same intimacy with Father God that he knew while here in the flesh. Martin Luther declares that the life of the Christian should be one of daily repentance. We refuse to cooperate with injustice. The personal pronoun is one expression of this, and attempts to solve this problem with dashes are semantically awkward and aesthetically abhorrent. Help me to do so without any need for praise or reward. Our children come to us with the craziest requests, but we would be all the more grieved if they never came to us even with their meanness and selfishness. Virginia Stem Owens, endorsement for Luci Shaw, Life Path: Personal and Spiritual Growth Through Journal Writing (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1991). This should not surprise us; anything worth anything always takes effort. My Lord and my God, I have a thousand arguments against Healing Prayer. But my most vivid memory is of the fireplace. Wondrously and mysteriously God moves from the periphery of our prayer experience to the center. First, I hope you will not assume from this story that every stomach pain is an attack of the devil. Bounds, Power Through Prayer, p. The Psalms reverberate with the tumult of praise: "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD of my Soul! I will praise the LORD as long as live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long" (Ps. 146:1-2); "I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" (Ps. 40:3). Chapter 19. Echoing in my ears was the query: "Are you willing to relinquish this book in favor of Carolynn and the boys?" God was speaking to me, of course, but I was simply frustrated and angry: "Why would God put a book idea in my heart and then tell me not to write it? 279. The new dimension is this: Jesus is entering his eternal work as Intercessor before the throne of God, and, as a result, we are enabled to pray for others with an entirely new authority. We become less agitated in traffic. FOSTER tion and repentance.... Bernard, "Sermon LXXXIII on the Song of Songs," in O'Brien, Varieties of Mystic Experience, p. Joshua received a special endowment of wisdom by the laying on of hands by Moses (Deut. To use a spatial image, it is prayer upward. A part of our petition must always be for an increasing discernment so that we can see things as God sees them. The veil is lifted from our hearts, and we enter the Holy of Holies. Actually the term demon possessed is improper and a poor translation of daimonizomenoi. Above all, Penthos means the Prayer of Tears. FOSTER The Touchstone The Prayer of the Heart is abba prayer. She lived through the drab terrain of the ordinary with grace and gentleness. It is harder to pray inconsistently than consistently in the same way that it is harder to play a good game of tennis when we practice only once in a while. Only one returned to give thanks, and he a Samaritan. Where do we begin? Saint Benedict's criterion for allowing a visitor to stay at the monastery is that "he is content with the life as he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds." 5 I am attracted to this "contentment without excessive demands...but is simply content with what he finds...but is of grace and mercy. FOSTER hindered faith. Writings from the Philokalia, p. Brother Lawrence, who called himself "the lord of all pots and pans," crystalized this idea in his now-famous comment "the time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."8 Lawrence urges us to "make a private chapel of our heart where we can retire from time to commune with Him, peacefully, humbly, lovingly." He encourages us to make inward prayer the last act of the evening and the first act of the morning and in so doing discover that "those who have been breathed on by the Holy Spirit move forward even while sleeping." In the latter years of his short life philosopher Thomas Kelly tells us that "the wells of living water of divine revelation rise up continuously, day by day and hour by hour, steady and transfiguring." He writes, "There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than PRAYER / 125 one level at once. St. Augustine: Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons, trans. No longer do we have to stand outside, barred from nearness to God by our rebellion. Jesus laid hands on the sick at Nazareth and healed them (Mark 6:5). But this is only a partial answer. Sacred dance can be done either as part of private prayer and worship or in corporate settings. In essence God was saying, "Stop praying to me and start exercising the authority I have given you!" God was telling Moses to take control over the situation, which is precisely what he did. I know these years are often turbulent—a little like a rubber raft going through a series of rapids. Journal keeping is valuable for certain people—usually those who are especially verbal—and not valuable for others. 557. We rush to help. Several of Benedict's steps focus on our relationship with God: "Have a constant reverence for God before our eyes; reject our own will and desires and, instead, do God's will; confess all of our evil thoughts and all of our evil actions to the Lord." Three of the steps deal with our use of the tongue, underscoring the importance of 62 / RICHARD J. We cry out. We must never, for instance, excuse our prayerlessness under the guise of "always living prayerfully." John Dalrymple rightly observes, "The truth is that we only learn to pray all the time everywhere after we have resolutely set about praying some of the time somewhere."8 Accountability to others helps immensely. We want God to know the earnestness of our heart. God, who is pure Spirit utterly free of all created limitations, stoops to our weakness and reveals himself to us through the physical and the visible. It is simple. After Israel defeated the Philistines, Samuel set up a stone memorial between Mizpah and Jeshanah and named it Ebenezer, for "hitherto the Lord has helped us" (1 Sam. Foster To Eugene and Jean Coffin My Pastors As a child I heard Eugene and Jean Quip about being a pair of jeans. No, not at all. We believe prayer is something we should do, even something we want to do, but it seems like a chasm stands between us and actually praying. What would happen if you were to die today? (This, by the way, is one reason why their teenage rebellion is so hard for us—we fear that all our sacrifices will be for nothing.) It is hard for us to grasp the idea of redemptive suffering because our whole culture mitigates against any form of discomfort or inconvenience. It is that God is using us for the greater good of all—which is a rather amazing notion once we stop to think about it. It is nothing to fear. Then I sleep. Jesus was thrilled, for now he knew that the heavenly power could be delegated to ordinary human beings: "Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants'" (Luke 10:21). Yet Moses refuses to give up on them, saying, "I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin" (Exod. And he will never give the desire to do something that he will not also give the power to obey. Your phone will ring. I wish I could adequately explain to you how great a grace this truly is. Jesus tells us frankly, "In this world you will have trouble." But he goes on to add, "Take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV). Press, 1971), pp. The Paternoster is the prayer given by the Lord for disciples of the Lord, namely, you and me. When he pronounced his beatitudes upon the people, he was taking up those classes and categories that society deemed to be unblessable. I would love to see our 198 / RICHARD J. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. 5:22).4 Sanctified common sense will teach us what is appropriate at any given time. Petitionary Prayer remains primary throughout our lives because we are forever dependent upon God. And so much more. We can run, jump, walk, stand, kneel, or lie prostrate on the floor. We want to rejoice in every new burst of life, every creative force of renewal. God is real after all!" In time, however, when we try to push this button again, God says to us, "I would like to be more than your Provider. Some experience profound inner healing. When she did this, the sobbing subsided and was replaced with a settled peace. 158 / RICHARD J. I know the danger inherent in the counsel I have just given. 124. In that instant do not seek to solve all the problems of pollution and the 88 / RICHARD J. Bless So-and-so whom I have wronged. Jesus' observation about the futility of putting new wine into old wineskins sets the difficulty into bold relief (Matt. We heard the call outward into the ministry we need: healing the sick, suffering with the broken, interceding for the world. At every opportunity we place our mind before God with inward confessions and petitions: "Mercy, Lord," "I love you, Jesus," "Show me your way today." Even more, we descend with the mind into the heart and live in quiet wonder and adoration and praise. Even though his Journal was penned in the eighteenth century, it pinpoints issues we still wrestle with today: racism, consumerism, militarism. Joy brings strength, through which the soul will be fruitful in everything."6 And Father Hausherr observes, "Compunction ends in beatitude."7 Labyrinthine Questions But perhaps I have gone too quickly for you. 113. At a set time in the evening I break off and again give thanks to God. —Jeremy Taylor Have you ever watched a cow chew its cud? Forsyth observes perceptively, "We shall come one day to a heaven where we shall gratefully know that God's great refusals were sometimes the true answers to our truest prayer." 6 Many times in our shortsightedness we ask for things that are not in our best interests. He explained to his mystified band: that he is in the Father and the Father PRAYER / 193 is in him, that he is going to the Father in order to prepare a place for them, that they will not be left orphaned but that the Spirit of Truth will come to guide them, that they are to abide in him as branches abide in the vine, that he will do anything they ask in his name, and so much more (John 13-17). For example, Judas was a man who had difficulty with money, which was precisely why Jesus made him the treasurer of the apostolic band. Professor Joachim Jeremias declares, "There is not a single example of the use of abba...as an address to God in the whole of Jewish literature." It is Jesus' utter intimacy with Father God that startles us. And again our insolence and self-indulgence defeat us. We allow him to calm the storms that rage within by saying, "Peace, be still." We allow his great silence to still our noisy hearts. I am indebted to Jung-Oh Suh for the translation of the article "Myong-Song Presbyterian Church Built by Prayer Alone," pp. 7:9-11). This fact is helpful for us to know for two equally important but opposite reasons. Suppose we want to meditate on Jesus' staggering statement "my peace I give to you" (John 14:27). There is one further thing I want to say about unanswered prayer, though I hesitate to mention it for fear of being misunderstood. Look with me, then, at three classical approaches to this more passive side of Formation Prayer. Another way we make the heart ready to enter the awesome Presence is by disciplining the tongue. What can we do? His main method of teaching was by praying, and so we sat quietly—listening to the Lord, he explained. We do it by breaking all the destructive vows—both conscious and unconscious—that lie over the lives of PRAYER / 241 people. The time throughout was tender and encouraging. Paul knew what a great gift this is. It means the ability to carry on the activities of the day filled with the cosmic patience of God. You are not moved by God's grace and mercy. It is one of the elementary matters of the Gospel without which we cannot go on to maturity (Heb. We are, of course, commanded to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The only way we move beyond "self-centered prayer" (if indeed we ever do) is by going through it, not by making a detour around it. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, down-loaded. decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of PerfectBound<sup>™</sup>. Oregon Epiphany In the spring of 1978 Carolynn and I drove to the Oregon coast for a few days of rest from a demanding winter schedule. Gregory of Nyssa said of Saint Ephrem, "When I start to remember his floods of tears I myself begin to weep, for it is almost impossible to pass dry-eyed through the ocean of his tears. We move into this way through a process of practiced living that is both understandable and practical. (London: n.p., 1716), p.378. Tonight, as we sleep through the long darkness, Jesus Christ is praying for us. God seems remote and inaccessible. A yes to God, who in the midst of our evil sustains us and draws us into his righteousness. 56. If so, the hunger is itself prayer. I had begun by blessing the name of God and was finally reduced to breathing the name of God. Others use the comparison of a white-hot iron in a furnace: "Our personalities are transformed, not lost, in the furnace of God's love."13 Two Vital Preparations How do we attain this goal of union with God? All are welcome, regardless of proficiency or expertise, to enter freely into adoration and meditation and intercession and a host of other approaches to prayer. Far too often we see power and compassion as mutually exclusive, but in Jesus they were beautifully united. These are holy hands, He works through these hands, And so these hands are holy." 9 178 / RICHARD J. Forgiveness means that we will no longer use the offense to drive a wedge between us, hurting and injuring one another. In fact, it is in the very act of prayer itself—the intimate, ongoing interaction with God—that these matters are cared for in due time. The entire eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew is devoted to Jesus' teaching on the giving and receiving of forgiveness, and right in the middle of that penetrating discussion Jesus promises us, "Whatever you bind on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 10 and 16). Dallas Willard, "Looking Like Jesus," Christianity Today 34, no. "The Lord," writes Emilie Griffin, "loves us perhaps most of all—when we fail and try again."7 Finally, I would suggest that in the beginning it is wise to strive for uneventful prayer experiences.8 Divine revelations and ecstasies can overwhelm us and distract us from the real work of prayer. Three times Jesus asked, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter struggled for an adequate response to that probing query. Forgive us, O Lord. It should not be elevated above any other ministry in the community of faith, nor should it be undervalued; rather, it should be kept in proper balance. Well, how does a couple who has been married many loving years know what each other thinks and wants and feels? They seek to skip over Simple Prayer in the hopes of advancing to more "mature" expressions of prayer. It wants to be asked for what it longs to give."4 Besides, I am not so sure that God knows everything about our petition. To do so, however, would have been to commit the sin of presumption. The Word means several things at once: the living, speaking voice of God; Jesus, the divine Logos; Scripture, the Word of God written; and the speaking forth of the truth of God by human beings under the power and inspiration of the Spirit. Besides, it is not necessary. It is a community that combines eschatology with social action, the transcendent Lordship of Jesus with the suffering servant Messiah. We begin by asking. It sometimes is given to the individual in personal prayer, but more frequently it comes upon the gathered community. This picture of a person falling into the arms of Jesus with a thirstquenching sense of "ahhh!" is, for me, a perfect image of the Prayer of Relinquishment. He is sitting over in that chair across from us. The first thing we must say is to confess that we have a genuine, not an imagined, problem. Have a weeping heart. I hope the trend continues. The Prophetic Messenger I am aware that some people have theological reasons for believing that the charism of the prophet ended at the apostolic age. Our prayer, to the extent that it is fully authentic, undermines the status quo. "It's right in front of your nose." Of course, we have been studying and reflecting on this reality for fifteen years while our students have only now encountered it! When conceit takes over, the focus is once again on how wonderful we are—which is why it so effectively severs the cords of adoration. Now the giving of forgiveness is so essential because it breaks this law of retribution. The soul is venturing forth into the interior. We cannot adore when we do not see. A spirit of adoration and celebration sprang up within me, and I started dancing to the tune of a heavenly drummer and singing words unknown to my conscious mind. The Spirit Praying within Us What is it, this Prayer of the Heart? The only work you are required now to do is to give your most intense attention to His still, small voice within. And the writer of Revelation assures us that praise is the serious business of heaven: "I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands, singing with full voice 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and honor and glory and blessing!'" (Rev. It is a community buoyed up by the vision of Christ's everlasting rule, not only imminent on the horizon but already coming to birth in our midst. We leave no space for excuses or extenuating circumstances; we say, "By my own fault, my own most grievous fault," as the old confessional rite reads. At other times the answer to our prayers, or both. A hush fell over everyone. As the sacrament of the Word is being administered, we are in an inward posture of kneeling, of receiving. Our many defects, flaws, weaknesses, and imperfections stand out in bold relief. There can be many causes for such a lack, but I suggest that you begin by praying for an increase in your love for others. excerpts from Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer by C.S. Lewis. Yet through a series of events it seemed clear to me that God wanted me to retreat from public activity. Still I say we must learn holy listening. After all, some people have an overactive imagination, and they can concoct all kinds of images of what they would like to see happen. It is high time we restore a Christian incarnational understanding of the body. Thank you for receiving me. FOSTER Trueblood, Dr. Elton, 177 Trysting prayer, 77 Turning inward. We assume a loving relationship by its very nature must be peaceful and harmonious, and yet even on a human level those things we care about the most deeply we argue for the most passionately. I worship you. "God," I complained, "we are no closer to solving this problem than before. It is an occupational hazard of devout people to confuse their work with God's work. Fourth, liturgical prayers are all requests. Tozer, Pursuit of God, p. 85. It sounds a bit depressing, at least to those of us who have been raised on a religion of good feelings and prosperity. He then had everyone sit down, and he began a sermon on healing. Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), p. Norton, 1976). PRAYER / 91 It is Love that calls forth my speech, though it still feels like stammering. "Holy laughter" is still another expression of the Prayer of the Heart. Spiritual gifts. I discovered that regular patterns of devotion form a kind of skeletal structure upon which I can build the muscle and tissue of unceasing prayer. The fourth step comes as prayer permeates the whole personality. The Bible is full of what could be called body prayer: Moses praying with his arms raised high as the Israelites battle the Amalekites; Elisha praying life back into the Shunemite boy as he lay on top of him; David dancing before the Lord as the Ark is carried into the holy PRAYER / 117 city; Jesus laying his hands on multitudes of people; John falling prostrate before the glorified Christ while on Patmos. If Jeremiah did not pen the book of Lamentations, he should have "Cry aloud to the Lord! O wall of daughter Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite!" (Lam. "You can help me," I told them. Perhaps it is for you, too. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, there is a shift in our center of gravity. Clearly, God incorporates and transcends our categories of sexuality that is, God is not a male deity as opposed to a female deity. Lewis calls "adoration in infinitesimals."12 But in God's time and Mary, we say freely, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). It does not mean that we sit back and hope God will do something. Then together we can give all things over to God. Maybe we responded to the Divine Whisper to write a letter or call a friend on the telephone, and the results of our simple. obedience were nothing short of startling. As quoted in Friends of Jesus Community Newsletter 1, no. Thank you! But now what do I do? The first area is the classical disciplines of the spiritual life: solitude, fasting, worship, celebration, and the like. I left the room as quickly as possible and returned to my students at the hospital, who were filled with faith, hope, and love. He even specifies his reason for telling these stories, namely, that we would "pray always and not...lose heart" (Luke 18:1). What we learned to 24 / RICHARD J. Organized, Corporate, Intercession is done individually; it is also done corporately. Tailor-Made Journey The second thing that can be said about our experience of abandonment is that every faith journey is tailor made. It is also the place of deepest intimacy, where we known to the fullest. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming."12 But can you live this way? After reading Woolman, we will never again be able to separate love of God from love of neighbor, for he rightly saw them as one commandment and not two. This is the stuff of ordinary prayer through ordinary prayer through ordinary prayer through ordinary prayer in the same way. I say this with sorrow, for I believe it saddens the heart of God. When the children of Israel had their backs to the Red Sea and the armies of Pharaoh were pressing in on them, the Bible tells us that they "cried out to the LORD." But God said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? The active side of suffering involves those times when we voluntarily take into ourselves the griefs and sorrows of others in order to set them free. I share this story with you to underscore the longing God has to commune with us, Heart to heart. What do these prophets look like? 254 / RICHARD J. Awakened from a sound sleep and unsure of what to do, he called one of the sisters at the retreat house, and together they sat up with Gloria until the darkness subsided somewhat. Please remember, we are dealing with the crucifixion of the will, not the obliteration of the will. Now is the time. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:97, 103). They are being taken over by a holy power to do the right. Let me see your greatness—to the Manicheans, to "the Academics," to Plato, to the Apostle Paul. Listen to the next words Moses speaks: "But now, if you will only forgive their sin—but if not, blot me out of the Book that you have written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throwever, James M. But we want to throw will only forgive their sin—but if not, blot me out of the book that you have written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart, trans. PRAYER / 69 To this fear I want to throw written" (Exod. 60; Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of this away, so hard is it for us to believe that God would enter our space. I have a friend who lights a candle in her small study whenever she goes to prayer. Almost daily we can give smiling service to nagging co-workers, listen attentively to silly bores, express little kindnesses without making a fuss. You also need to know that "the one who is in you ising greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). In time it was to be covered up and forgotten. 21-22. It impregnates revealed truth with all the energies of God. One caution: none of us is to shoulder the burden of prayer for everyone and everything. You will suddenly have an urgent need to do something you have left undone for years. Then, as I took three steps to the right, I saw what had been hidden from my view by the healthy tree—another extremely large but obviously rotting Western cedar. A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles, and Papers, Written by James Nayler, etc. FOSTER deliberately surrender control and become incompetent. It is not whining. This is going to take months of meetings and negotiations, and there is no guarantee we will reach a successful conclusion even then." Then came the divine word: "I did not ask you to resolve this problem in the first place. No doubt you remember the Apostle Paul's experience of being caught up into the third heaven, where he heard things that he was not permitted to share (2 Cor. All holy writing should be read in the same spirit with which it was written.... This is why we today can resonate with Peter's words, "Rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. As John Dalrymple rightly observes, "We never outgrow this kind of prayer, because we never outgrow the needs which give rise to it."3 There is a temptation, especially by the "sophisticated," to despise this most elementary way of praying. Most likely they themselves have not prayed. Penthos means inward godly sorrow. She could find no major inherited sicknesses or tragic deaths. Schmidt, Praying Our Experiences (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1989), p. These regular patterns—usually called rituals—are, in fact, God-ordained means of grace. Listen to his beatitude upon the broken, the bruised, the disposed: "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matt. I had just concluded a preaching mission that had gone well—people had been gracious and responsive, and the Spirit had rested upon us in tender ways. See Robert J. Two Problems Before I end this chapter, I want to comment on one theoretical and one practical problem. 153. Let your heart be in such a state of preparation that his Spirit may impress upon you such virtues as will please him. My friend did not try to get me to pray in this . 4:4). Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is another expression of the Prayer of the Heart. Second, they are dealing with something far deeper than mere emotions. 445. The truth of the matter is I hate the very idea of letting go. If we obey in one small corner, we will have power to obey elsewhere. If, when writing, am constantly preoccupied with commas and split infinitives, I am not yet writing, only learning to write. To normal human reckoning the Bible, people commonly experience a special "word in the Word," in which a particular passage seems to apply to an individual situation in a new way. That would do violence to our rational faculties. Wait, attentive and responsive. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, vol 4., trans. But only the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the spirit of prayer. Sue Monk Kidd calls it the prayer of presence. When we pray for others, we are leading them to Jesus, their present Teacher, so they have no need of us any more. But on this occasion he was attending a conference and staying in a motel by himself. God desires to mold us more and more into Christ's way: "Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. We knew that he was speaking lived truth. The class barriers have shifted somewhat in our day. Do we really believe we can, like Moses, "speak face to face" with God as someone would a friend by our unpredictable prayers? May I remind us all once again how very much God delights in our asking, looking for an excuse to give. But we can enter the bleak deserts of barrenness and the dark canyons of anguish at any number of points in our sojourn. But the best is yet to come. How is this so? William Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1985), p. Individuals are living lives of guiet desperation, without purpose or future. Catherine de Haeck Doherty, Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 1983), p. vi. What do we do? But what about those times that feel decidedly unspiritual—when we have a confrontation with the children or a disagreement with our spouse, for instance? 160. We PRAYER / 163 feel more alive, more active, than we ever do when our minds are askew with muchness and manyness. The matter of obedience is God's business and not ours. FOSTER this single aspect of our lives. God waits for us in the inner sanctuary of the soul. So rather than try to be something we are not, we can speak normally and do whatever seems appropriate to the situation. Saint Teresa of Avila understood the value of self-knowledge. "Is there any other way?" "Can people be redeemed by some different means?" The answer—no! Andrew Murray writes, "For our sins, He suffered beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer." I Here we have the complete laying down of human will. We cannot assume that time will somehow magically appear. This silence of all outward and earthly affection." Saint John of the Cross used the graphic phrase "my house being now all stilled." In that single line he helps us see the importance of quieting all physical, emotional, and psychological senses. And yet, incredible as it may seem, these weapons are powerful in pulling down strongholds and bringing to birth the righteous and peaceable kingdom of Jesus. 4:8). Inward prayer bubbles forth at the oddest moments: in the midst of traffic, in the shower, in a crowded shopping mall. The regimen of The Exercises has four basic sections, or weeks. The sacrament of the Word is the Gospel through eargate. In the West John Cassian (360-435) took these three stages and transformed them into what we today know as "purgative prayer" (lips), "illuminative prayer" (mind), and "unitative prayer" (heart). Only in the age to come will we understand fully, even as we are fully understood (1 Cor. You long for some assurance that will give you peace. FOSTER was it. His heart is wounded by our reticence. Like children before a loving father, we open our heartfelt prayer than the cry of Jesus: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. The unction upon him had the feel of a heavenly consecration. PRAYER / 121 And to the Philippians, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. This is more disturbing and painful than the first purification because it threatens us at the root of all we believe in and have given ourselves to. Henri Nouwen observes, "The prayer of the hesychia, this perfect rest of body and soul, in the solitude of the desert. 216. Then I saw a monstrous thing. Are they not in your record?" (Ps. 56:8). Farmer, The World and God (London: Nisbet, 1935), p.129. 17:5). Waiting is part of ordinary time. Even if the eyes are dry, the mind and the spirit can be broken before God. Nothing in my experience has taught me this resting. One day I was trying to dig a trench for a sewer line—no small task in a world of frozen tundra. Anthony Bloom writes, "Your prayer must be turned inwards, not towards a God of Heaven nor towards a God far off, but towards God who is closer to you than you are aware." 5 With examen more than any other form of prayer, we bore down deeper and deeper, the way a drill would bore down into the bowels of the earth. As she read of her ancestry, great waves of gratitude swept over her, and she began thanking God for her wonderful heritage. Jesus never did that. We may now enter through the door of God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. We pick up a newspaper and are prompted to whisper a prayer of guidance for world leaders facing monumental decisions. That is perfectly understandable. It is also possible to discover your own individual breath prayer. When we ask for an encore, we are asking for more than God is pleased to give. Carlsen (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1959), p. Usually there are several one-to two-hour periods alone in silence followed by group interaction and prayer. mentioned in that it is not an activity we undertake but a work that God does upon us. The Priceless Grace By now a question may have arisen in your mind. That is the only way I know to describe it. I would then leave the office for one hour, drive five minutes to the local zoo, and, with Bible and personal journal in hand, spend fifty minutes on a bench in a lovely indoor rain forest. "I am weary from a hectic travel schedule," I reasoned, "and my spirit has grown sad, weighted down by the pains and sorrows of many. We do not try to sort things out, the good from the bad. And so I am writing, and in my writing I am speaking for all the prayerless persons I have been and all the prayerful persons I hope to become. We need not isolate these things from prayer. Struggle is an essential feature of the Prayer of Relinquishment. We plant our garden, thanking the God of heaven for sun and rain and all good things. God is a God of means, says Jonathan Edwards. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Way to Freedom (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. These things feel elevated, stately, noble. The Covenant of Place gives us the gift of focus. Foster Celebration of Discipline Richard J. And, as if to intensify the problem, this is the only petition that Jesus feels compelled to amplify upon: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. This book gives guidance in living the virtuous life. Another concern about the use of the imagination is the fear of human manipulation and even self-deception. The Guardrails of Discernment and Prudence But compassion alone is not enough. This is not anger. We pray the words that have always been prayed. The Spirit is refreshing the soul and healing the heart. Finally he said it to encourage me, I know. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm, p.16. Even though my sermons usually are prepared well in advance, I frequently pray in this way, because often there are gentle nudgings that seem to provide just the right focus for individual needs. We must not here be thinking of the temptations of childhood, what Martin Luther called "puppy-sins."10 No, it is the adult sins with which we must concern ourselves. Are we willing to offer up lives of obedience in return? Not that everyone we pray for is instantly transformed into some sort of saint. Unlike the other incidents in this book, I am not able to confirm this story in terms of this gentleman's present emotional state. It might help you to know, also, that the early monastic movement was entirely noncleric, and that these laypeople began by giving reciprocal confession to one another, receiving the assurance of Christ's forgiveness from one another. Many times we all fall miserably short of our goal. It is a community of unselfish love and witness without compromise. There is an inward steady gaze of the heart sometimes called beholding the Lord. In fact, sometimes called beholding the most common form of prayer in the Bible. They could not hear him; all they could see was a corpse, and yet he was more alive than he had ever been. Our fasting has weight with God and effect upon others. It is a frequent experience for those who walked across the pages of the Bible, and a recurring theme in the works of the great devotional writers. Eight months ago I received a personal breath prayer and as yet I have no indication that the work is finished. Throughout the course of our journey I have tried to describe something of the heart of God, which reaches out in utter accepting love and woos us into the intimacy of prayer. God was, in fact, to conquer me. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, and, as you know, the function of the High Priest in ancient Israel was to intercede before God on behalf of the people (Heb. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. Maybe we remember an unkindness spoken. As I hear, I judge" (John 5:30); "I am in the Father and the Father is in me (John 14:11). But we must move beyond theory to ask the question for which all that has gone before is prelude. They may not need to if the bleeding and swelling stop in time." I then explained how we were praying for Maria and gave them a few suggestions on how they too could help in prayer. Your pen will run dry. But that is just the point. They cannot be bribed or manipulated or flattered. We turn to music and it fails to move us. In time, however, we find that solitude gives us power not to win the rat race altogether. As the father opened the door and prepared to buckle his son into the carseat, the child lifted his head and said simply, "Sing it to me again, Daddy! Sing it to me again!"5 Prayer is a little like that. Some of the most relevant passages are in Books Four and Six. The third major area is the patient endurance God develops in us by means of the various frustrations, trials, and temptations we face daily.3 Therefore, we must never isolate prayer from the rest of Christian devotion and claim more for it than God intended. Press, 1958), p. Brilliant insights are not needed. FOSTER otherwise. 229 230 / RICHARD J. Thank you. Brother Lawrence admits that it took ten years before he fully entered into the presence of God. CHAPTER 10 SACRAMENTAL PRAYER The true sacrament is holy personality. Like Miriam we dance and sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider thrown into the sea (Exod. 56:7; Luke 19:46). We, too, need to be anchored somewhere. --St. John Vianney How very strange that the Prayer of Examen \* has been lost to we who live in an age of obsessive introspection. I mean that our sin, by its very nature, separates us from God, rupturing the intimate fellowship and dulling our spiritual sensitivities. Most people do not have such discretionary time on the job, but we all have time available to us if we once get the idea. Nothing happened until the second Sunday before Easter. In his classic work entitled simply Prayer, Ole Hallesby observes, "When I give thanks, my thoughts still circle about myself to some extent. In essence God said, "Keep quiet!" And so I did. We speak to others as well. Lewis wisely quipped, "The command, after all, was Take, eat: not Take, understand." 9 We also differ among ourselves over frequency and style. As quoted in Foster, "Meditative Prayer," p. This good woman has needed ongoing counseling, to be sure, but in the dozen years since that encounter, she has not had to return to the mental hospitals and has been functioning in a relatively normal way. Like Moses we argue with God over the fate of the people (Exod. Besides, certain temperaments are slow to furnish tears. Jesus Christ, as the head of the Church, chooses and empowers those who bring forth the Word of life. It is simply that by the very nature of the created order we must give in order to receive. Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1957), p. Begin by seating yourself comfortably and then slowly and deliberately let all tension and anxiety drop away. Others have wronged you, and you feel scarred for life. In saying this Paul means not that the "blood and flesh" are unimportant but that the real battle goes deeper. FOSTER Thielicke writes, "The globe itself lives and is upheld as by Atlas arms through the prayers of those whose love has not grown cold. Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary, p. These were to be the response of the people to the overwhelming grace and goodness of God, their promise to live faithful, obedient lives, not as a way of expressing gratitude for God's mercy. Maybe it was a crisis in marriage or vocation, or a failure in business. It is the one thing he yearns to do, aches to do, rushes to do. At this point I want to speak a word to any who may be troubled by Paul's teaching in First Corinthians about those who partake of the Supper in such a way that they bring "judgment" or, as the old version puts it, "damnation" upon themselves (1 Cor. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, guarantees your acquittal: "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. Frankly, we are entering a kind of "spiritual centrifuge." A centrifuge is an apparatus that rotates at such tremendous velocity that existing densities break up and new densities break up and new densities break up and new densities at such tremendous velocity that existing densities break up and new densities break up a deal with the arrogant, ego-centered drives that plaque us—so we simply wait for God to pour humility on our heads. At the time of this writing we do not know all this way is altogether right and good. Where other people are involved, I have received permission to share their story. What a prayer! What a reckless, mediatorial, suffering prayer! It is exactly the kind of prayer in which we are privileged to participate. It is something that we never really "get beyond," nor should we even want to. By our prayers and by our words we liberate people, not bind them to us. How are those prayer? FOSTER Listening, 2101 Little Flowers of Saint Francis, The, 151 "Little Flowers, 106, 107-108, 110 Lived prayer, 106, 107-108, 107-1 him fit for divine union."16 In earlier chapters we have explored some of the various pathways that lead to purity of heart, including such things as the disciplines that imitate the life of Christ and "the dark night of the soul." More, I am sure, could be added, but Søren Kierkegaard has brought this issue into its clearest focus with his famous phrase "purity of heart is to will one thing." And so we do: we will one thing. 126-29. And throughout history all the devotional masters have viewed the meditation are kept in proper perspective. Weeping, in fact, was such a habitual practice for David that he could appeal to his tears as a witness before God: "You have kept PRAYER / 39 count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. They knew that an unexamined life was not worth living. We participate in the formation of the action and reap the benefits of it. 158. Yours is an examen of love. I remember the solid-oak bookshelves and beautifully crafted hardwood table in the center of the room. I have been where you are. The question is not whether we fail again and again—that is a given; the question is whether over a period of time we are developing a practiced habit of divine fellowship. FOSTER Without the discerning life of the Christian community we will quickly turn prayer into a face-saving, self-justifying monologue. In time her condition was diagnosed as multiple sclerosis, though no one seemed really certain. The Perplexing Question But what about the fact that not everyone who receives prayer is healed? Little ever happens anymore. Then, in the fullness of time, God reinforced and intensified this reality by

choosing birth in a stable as his ultimate revelation. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1976), p. Even when we pursue self-knowledge, we all too often reduce it to a hedonistic search for personal peace and prosperity. It necessitates other expressions of group life, especially in corporate worship. Foster Spiritual Classics co-edited by Richard J. See also Radical prayer of the child—the prayer of the child prayer we are able to hear the Divine Voice. Holy leisure means living—and praying—in the middle voice. Kelly, Testament, p. I want you to know that God goes with us in the examen of conscience. In doing so Jesus has transfigured the trivialities of everyday life. Notes Introduction 1. In your name and for your sake I make this covenant. While prayer is often private and personal, it is never outside the reality of the worshiping, praying fellowship. Freedom is the product of discipline and commitment. Some of the material from chapters 13 and 14 was originally published in the booklet Meditative Prayer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983). Complicated words are used to make important distinctions: transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorial, and the like. I began to pray: "Lord, this is a special moment in the lives of these kids. FOSTER Madame Guyon warns us of "depending on the diligence of our own scrutiny rather than on God for the discovery and knowledge of our sin." 1 If the examination is solely a self-examination, we will always end up with excessive praise or blame. This will cause you to pray. If you have been troubled with such thoughts, I want to assure you that Paul is dealing with another kind of problem altogether. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me" (John 15:4). I have had only three experiences of this kind, this one being the second. Besides, many of our prayer efforts in this realm are not on the dramatic, cosmic scale at all. We must not deny or ignore the depth of our evil, for, paradoxically, our sinfulness becomes our bread. Journal of George Fox, p. The healing Anne received on that day was significant, though not total for the roots of these matters go very deep and have many branches. When we fast, we are intentionally relinquishing the first right given to the human family in the Garden—the right to eat. "Every night I have slept soundly, and each morning I have awakened with a hymn on my mind. I thank Lynda Graybeal for overseeing the office and fulfilling duties too numerous to mention so I could be free to write. 2:10). Here are a few of those prayers that PRAYER / 123 came tumbling out that summer evening: "O Lord, baptize me with love"; "Teach me gentleness, Father"; "Jesus, let me receive your grace"; "Gracious Master, remove my fear"; "Lord Jesus, help me feel loved." Notice the brevity of each of the prayers—seldom more than seven or eight syllables. Through the liturgy we are constantly being forced to hear the whimper of the poor and see the tumult of the nations. We are going to keep at it and not give up. FOSTER Chronicles of Narnia, The, 20 City of God, The (Augustine), 2157 Cloud of Unknowing, The, 141 Coleridge, Samuel, 3 Commitment, 67-70 Commonnesss of prayer, xi, 73-75, 137. Once we have made generous latitude for individual differences and schedules, we must firmly discipline ourselves to a regular pattern of prayer. Madame Guyon writes, "Teach this simple experience, this prayer of the heart. All too often, however, caught up with us, and we were forced to winter in the cabin of an uncle in the Rocky Mountains. When he sent out the twelve, he "gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:1-2). I became concerned and thought, "It's nearly noon. St. Augustine, The City of God, trans. Small Beginnings My initial interest in Healing Prayer began out of a concern for emotional, not physical, healing." John W. The old writers, however, had a very different view. To pray successfully without words one needs to be 'at the top of one's form.'"4 Lewis is correct. God cares as much about the stresses and strains of daily activity with an ease and serenity that amaze even us...especially us. This quotation is from the 1947 French movie Monsier Vincent (Paris: E.D.I.C./Union General Cinematographique). Buttrick, Prayer, p. It seemed like between the mouth of the speaker and the ear of the hearer the Word was animated with unusual life and power. Unbroken Communion The biblical writers are not silent about the possibilities of Unceasing Prayer. The "alleluia" in the Psalter is a liturgical acclamation meaning "praise God!" A large number of the worshiping community. Raïssa Maritain, Adventures in Grace (New York: Longmans, Green, 1945), pp. All rights on behalf of Birdwing Music and Cherry Lance Music Publishing Co. Inc. Pope Paul VI writes, "The Christian can have at the same time two different, opposite experiences—sorrow and joy—which become complementary." In redemptive suffering we stand with people in their sorrow. As if to intensify the truth of this, the writer to the Hebrewsen and joy—which become complementary." declares Jesus an eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek who "always lives to make intercession" (Heb. Prayer Finding The Heart's True Home Richard J. Finally, on the third day after Easter Augustine had the brother still trembling convulsively—while he read a statement from the young man. As John Woolman says, we "feel and understand the spirits of people."2 This charism of the Spirit is critical because accurate diagnosis is necessary for effective ministry. To the Ephesians he said, "For three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears" (Acts 20:31). One uneducated and rather conceited sister had managed to irritate Thérèse in everything she did. But I also knew that this was no time for theological hairsplitting.) Placing my hands on Gloria's head, I prayed with all the authority and tenderness I could muster. It is so very human of us to allow our petty concerns to be the whole burden of our prayer. 59. PART III MOVING OUTWARD Seeking the Ministry We Need CHAPTER 15 PRAYING THE ORDINARY Do not forget that the value and interest of life is not so much to do ordinary things...as to do ordinary things with the perception of their enormous value. FOSTER Besides, we are probably participating far more than we know. But on that last visit she squeezed my hand. Francis de Sales notes that "by means of the imagination we confine our mind within the mystery on which we meditate, that it may not ramble to and fro, just as we shut up a bird in a cage or tie a hawk by his leash so that he may rest on the hand."7 Using the imagination also brings the emotions into the equation, so that we come to God with both mind and heart. These are those who have come into the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. Perhaps in the glorious sunrise of this morning God was shouting out to us his love of beauty and inviting us to share in it, but we were too sleepy or distracted to participate. Our fractured and fragmented activities begin focusing around a new Center of Reference. 79. Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary of God (Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1956), p. Jim has published this story. From Heaven to Earth Ordinary forms of prayer proceed from earth to heaven. (I might add that a few months later we had his tonsils removed, for the doctor felt they were the source of his constant infections.) Authority Wedded to Compassion Actually, I almost wish I did not have to tell you about Authoritative Prayer. Then I drove to a nearby town and strolled about the shops, my anonymity allowing for solitude in the midst of many people. You may have written down, "Help me understand your truth, Lord." But after a day or two of prayer, you realize that what you realize that you realize that you realize that what you realize that you reali literal translation for "pray always" is "come to rest." Through the Prayer of Rest we enter this intense stillness, this quiet alertness. In what way does it stimulate spiritual growth? 63. Hoffman, Luther and the Mystics (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1976), p. God never compels, and so the divine influence always allows a way of escape. Recently a student of mine, Jung-Oh Suh—a Korean pastor on a study sabbatical—learned of my research on prayer and brought me a newspaper article (complete with his excellent translation, for it was written in Korean) that describes the story of the Myong-Song Presbyterian Church, located in the southeastern part of Seoul. Jesus was dealing with a specific practice in his day in which the Pharisees would make a public display of their piety by reciting their prayers in the marketplace. I do desire to come into harmony with you more fully and more often. See also Abba prayer Heyshia ("rest"), 101, 1223 Hidden God, 17-19, 20 Hilton, Walter, 160 Hinduism, 97 Holy Communion, 111-113 Holy laughter, 40, 139 Holy Spirit, 35, 48, 98-99, 100, 119; moving outward to, ; praying within us, 136-137 Humility, 60-62, 241 290 / RICHARD J. In a short time it seemed like "the Presence in the midst" ended, and so I made my way back to the group, which, as you probably guessed, had scarcely noticed my absence and was going right on with the day's schedule. A charismatic personality is unnecessary. We do not need to be shy. I'm not even aware of most of them. FOSTER kind can come out only through prayer" (Mark 9:14-29). Prayer in the Middle Voice But how? Our trust in all exterior and interior results is being shattered so that we can learn faith in God alone. He is concerned about those who receive the Supper casually, even flippantly. FOSTER spoke with a gravelly voice, like an animal. Here we are actually in far less danger. We pant through an endless series of activities with scattered minds and noisy hearts. And yet, if I keep my peace, the rocks themselves will cry out. People will begin to miss me and wonder why I've stayed here so long. Not outward, not upward, but inward. Do not despair. They did not. We know more deeply than ever before our capacity for infinite self-deception. Be encouraged by the observation of Thomas à Kempis that "habit overcomes habit."14 You are building new habits of prayer, and patient, kind, firm persistence is what you need with yourself. Thank you for valuing the insignificant. The tortured gestures of the apple trees have become part of my prayer.... Gerald G. Yes—we can begin by praying the Prayer of Complaint. Evidently, interior prayer goes on throughout this time; Heart to heart, Spirit to spirit. I once visited a very holy lady who was confined to a bed. We want to see the part Formation Prayer plays in this ongoing conformity. We seek and continue to seek even though we do not find. 62. Nothing can resist the power of that PRAYER / 161 fire. The words she sang were overwhelmingly simple and therefore exactly what this highly trained and sophisticated audience needed: 136 / RICHARD J. The Response of Love In the Prayer of the Heart there is work for us to do, even though it is really only a reflex action to the Spirit's prior initiation upon the heart. Or consider this same Elisha who had cursed the children, on another day showing mercy to a barren woman of Shunem and prophesying over her: "At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son" (2 Kings 4:16). No, there is something deeper, more profound keeping us in check. Thank you for being interested in the lilies of the air. We are under divine orders to fight against evil in every form. Counsels Along the way I would like to give a few beginning words of counsel as we start on this studied adventure into prayer. FOSTER loving presence. As quoted in Foster, "Meditative Prayer," pp. Impurity is fatal to union with God. Is not all this talk of sin and contrition and repentance a bit archaic—a throwback to the days of false guilt and unhealthy repressions? It is, very simply, the Holy Spirit praying within us. We do not take pleasure in pain, nor do we seek it out unnecessarily. There is a great Reformation teaching that the Church reformed is always reforming. As we entered the doors of the worship room, a refurbished warehouse, both of us—we discussed it later—were physically jolted by the spiritual power and suffering. 91 This is not something we make happen. The anointing of God rested on him with such grace and mercy that our hearts were softened and drawn toward obedience. Houston (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1983), p. Far from it! Jesus validated the reality of God in his ministry as a rabbi. My part is to live this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to his will. Redemptive Suffering But before you think I am leading you into some kind of strange religious masochism, let's back up a bit and see if we can get a clearer picture on all this. Relinquishment is no easy task. Is there any kind of prayer in which we can engage when we feel forsaken? In ancient Russia every village had its hermitage, or poustinia. In Eucharistic Prayer our feelings are irrelevant. Remember, I am asking you not to analyze, only to notice. This should not surprise us, for it is a clear recognition of the incarnational nature of our faith. After he leads the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, they thank him by rebelling, making a golden calf. Seeking divine protection, we venture forward with honesty and openness. In Acts 19:1-6 the disciples at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul's laying on of hands. As I went over to see what was going on, an ambulance pulled up, siren blaring. We strip away all excess baggage and nonessential trappings until we come into the stark reality of the kingdom of God. Nothing. On Tuesday morning I met the person from Harper & Row who was to become my editor. It would be like ants speaking to humans. Lord, I seek now to meditate on your disturbing words "I came to bring fire to the earth" (Luke 12:49). Walter Wink, "Prayer and the Powers," Sojourners 19, no. When I was a new Christian, I used to go out behind the garage each morning and sit on a cinder-block wall with my feet on the trashcans, Bible in hand. I must add one small counsel to this story. In such cases we are to take the matter under advisement and wait until there are promptings from a higher source. Under the tutelage of the Spirit Peter too came to the insight that "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34b-35). Did I conceive all this people? We give to the poor; we feed the hungry; we shelter the homeless. This is the prayer of docility. What theological realities give rise to this form of prayer? Foster's Study Guide to The Challenge of the Disciplined Life Freedom of Simplicity CREDITS Jacket design by Levan Fisher design 302 Grateful acknowledge is given for use of the following: lyrics to the song Holy Ground by Christopher Beatty. PRAYER / 113 In Eucharistic Prayer we are constantly reminded that the Passion is the heart of the Gospel. I almost hesitate to use the phrase devotional writings, for some will think I am referring to the trite, fluffy, airy stuff that today passes for devotional writings. Since they were used frequently in worship settings, the titles of numerous Psalms—those phrases we today find so hard to understand—are actually directions for the temple musicians. I know that many a sermon is poorly thought out, poorly prepared, and poorly delivered. —Isaac the Syrian I want to tell you of a wonderful way of living always in God's presence. But wait: maybe it is more possible than we first imagine. In my book Celebration of Discipline, I provide detailed counsel for those times when we are unable to experience forgiveness and cleansing by ourselves and need the help of our brothers and sisters in faith.12 Suffice it to say here that we who follow Jesus Christ have been given the gracious ministry of bringing God's forgiveness to one another (John 20:23). Some of the more common indicators are a continuing hunger for intimacy with God, an ability to forgive others at great personal cost, a living sense that God alone can satisfy the longings of the human heart, a deep satisfaction in prayer, a realistic assessment of personal ability to live out the demands of life patiently and wisely. In the most natural and simple way possible we learn to pray our experiences by taking up the ordinary events of everyday life and 12 / RICHARD J. 8-9. Allow God to plant it deep into the depths of your spirit. We are in charge, not they. Mme Lot-Borodine, Vie Spirituelle 48 (1936): 65-110, as quoted in Hausherr, Penthos, p. That gives us hope to believe that we are the winners, regardless of what we are being called upon to relinquish. In such a case we are able to slip over beside them and sit in silence, bringing comfort and understanding and healing, knowing that "deep calls to deep" (Ps. 42:7). How poor we are! Even the pagan philosophers were wiser than this generation. The bread and the wine are invested with sacramental power. We go back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth of the pagan philosophers were wiser than this generation. way into his heart. Jesus, you, too, knew the loneliness of the desert and the isolation of the cross. You have been uneasy and unsure of your pardon from God. Consider Jesus, who "offered up prayers and tears" (Heb. I'm afraid to give up control, afraid of what might happen. Discernment is a supernatural charism of the Spirit, and prudence has been universally recognized as a central virtue for those seeking to live uprightly. But when I have only one opportunity to speak to the issue, I have followed the biblical pattern of using meditation and contemplation interchangeably. Even so, I invite you to search me to the depths so that I may know myself—and you—in fuller measure. He will care for everything as he sees fit. The word Psalter originally referred to a musical instrument. It means freedom from the everlasting burden of always having to get our own way. On the island of Malta the Apostle Paul laid hands on the sick, and they were healed (Acts 28:7-10). To my knowledge there is no passage in the Bible that flatly states that Christians cannot be "demonized," as it has come to be called. No one is ever forced into a robot style of obedience. On one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. Think of Jeremiah lowered down into a dungeon well until he "sank in the mire." Think of Mary's solitary vigil at Golgotha. Instead he spoke directly to the demonic spirit, commanding it to leave. FOSTER simple book, which distills the insights of a dynamic spirit. Again, I want to say that the concern is well taken. If you identify in any way with these sentiments, I want to encourage you. We find ourselves less and less impressed with the religion of the "big deal"—big buildings, big budgets, big productions, big miracles. Otherwise, it will become the exclusive interest of the privileged few. Lewis tells his friend Malcolm how early in his Christian experience he attempted wordless prayer with little success. 41. Then, most importantly, we repent for the sins of the world. Lewis notes, "The Puritans felt that 'the true Christian's nostril is to be continually attentive to the inner cesspool.'"10 Paul's shocking declaration "Wretched man that I am!" is the cry of the mature Christian longing for the spirit of repentance (Rom. Another stone to place across the waters of our narcissism is what Sue Monk Kidd calls "the grasping and grabbing, all the disapproving and dissenting." This is a wonderful aid as we come to the text of Scripture. We are doing nothing more than falling head over heels in love with the everlasting Lover of our souls. 5:7). This is my blood." In short, Eucharistic Prayer is the most complete prayer we ever make this side of eternity. Dare we hold back? Now, Jesus could have kept his distance and commanded the man to be well, but instead he touched him. 117. Finally, my older brother and I made the hard practical decision that I was not to be notified until Mom had died. Emilie Griffin, Clinging: The Experience of Prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), p. Understanding this, we now turn to the question: how do we practice the Prayer of Examen? Other writers have done this as well; e.g., see Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. Just watch the birds and the squirrels and the ducks. Absolute freedom is absolute nonsense! We gain freedom sin and the sin of God's people. 7. The Covenant Prayer does not leave us in the broad commitment of holy obedience. Here we experience real spiritual desolation. We met in my friend's home. Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love. 76 / RICHARD J. In what is perhaps the finest line in the movie Chariots of Fire, Olympic runner Eric Liddell tells his sister, "Jenny, when I run, I feel his pleasure." This is the reality that is to permeate all vocations, whether we are writing a novel or cleaning a latrine. We have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. On the passive side we are being pursued by God. Luke closes his Gospel with the enthralling words of blessing "and they were continually in the PRAYER / 85 temple blessing God" (Luke 24:53). Daniel had lived all his adult life in the Babylonian courts, but now he reads in the writings of Jerusalem's devastation are complete. Many other things can be done. Then, too, I hope you recognize that the sacrament of the Word occurs in many places and circumstances besides the designated worship service, though certainly it should occur there. We often pray in struggling, halting ways. We can hope that someday we will have the whole Psalter set to music, as has been true in the past, or, short of that, at least a selection of Psalms from each of the subjects covered in the Psalter: the creation, the Law, holy history, the Messiah, the Church, life, suffering, guilt, enemies, the end.6 It is one of the best ways we have of praying the whole counsel of God, from lament to celebration. When that happens, we both put our hands on Julie, and as we do, Jesus puts his hands right on top of ours. See also Change Forsaken, prayer of the, 17, 20 Forsythe, P.T., 105712; on grace, 99; on prayer, 180, 192; on the Word, 114, 116 Foster, Richard J., 44, 52, 226 Fox, George, 19, 203, 250-251 Francis of Assisi, 34, 119, 251 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 G Game with Minutes (Laubach), 331 Fry, Elizabeth, 71 Fry, 81 Gender and God, Gethsemane, 49-50 Globalism, 249-251 Glossolalia, 137-138 Grace, 30-31, 42, 60, 153; the means of, 110 Gratitude, 89 PRAYER / 289 Gregory of Sinai, 122 Griffin, Emilie, 8, 14 Grou, Jean-Nicholas, 133, 155, 174, 223 Guardini, Romano, 162 Guyon, Madame Jeanne, 1405; on contemplation, 158, 159; on inward turning, 32-33, 126, 127, 128; on purity, 160-161; on rest, 93; on surrender, 30 H Habit, 45 Hallesby, Dr. Ole, 238, 240 Hammarskjöld: Dag, 33 Handel, George Frederick, 68 Handicapped, the, 102 Hausherr, Father, 40 Hays, Edward, 175 Healing prayer, 203-206, 216; practice of, 210-215; progression in, 206; unanswered, 206-208. Amen' (1 Tim. I am profoundly grateful for this, for I would have avoided any contrived manipulation like the plague. And so she went to bed, praising and thanking God for the women and men she had never met PRAYER / 215 but to whom she was so deeply indebted. The result is an inability to discern the heart of God and an asking that is askew. These people were alive to a reality that most of us miss. 10 East 53rd Street New York, NY 10022 At other times the eucharistic liturgy is more formal, even splendid. To pray in the name of Jesus means to pray in full assurance of the great work Christ accomplished—in his life, by his death, through his resurrection, and by means of his continuing reign at the right hand of God the Father. Thomas Merton, The Hidden Ground of Love, ed. The next morning, when she woke up, she discovered her leg completely healed—the result of a heart of gratitude. When he sent out the seventy, it was with the same commission: "Cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'the kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10:9). 13:15). If it is an aggressor nation, for example, we may sense that it should retreat from its self-aggrandizement and begin "sending out into the world little golden arrows of trade and commerce and financial cooperation." At times we may narrow our prayers to those who make the decisions that can change the course of a nation toward rightness. 100 / RICHARD J. Sometimes it just seems like God is hidden from us. See PRAYER / 297 also Evil; Struggle of faith, 50, 225-226 Suffering: the prayer of, 217, 222-224; redemptive, 218-222 Supplication, 197 Surrender. 14. Walking down the streets of New York, D. Today, as we carry on the activities of our lives, Jesus Christ is praying for us. I was seven years old, and my parents were trying to move to the West Coast. We listen. Emotion does not come to me quickly, and so you can understand that what was happening was unusual, to say the least. For the two of us that preaching moment dispelled all doubts about God's activity in the affairs of human beings. "It could not have been any warmer if you had rubbed your hand over his heart, and immediately it grew extremely warm, almost hot, once again. Their way will not be easy, for the obstacles are many 95. He longs for our presence. He would wake up at night, screaming and in a cold sweat. The trees were absolutely motionless-tranguil testimonials to the majesty of God. By every outward standard things were going well. The vears have come and gone, and while I am still a novice in the ways of prayer (who can ever master something in which mastered?), I somehow sense the divine nod of approval. In fact, I am sure I lack many things. There is training in righteousness, transforming power, new joys, deeper intimacy. Thomas Kelly, A Testament of Devotion (New York: Harper & Row, 1941), p. Pastor Hsi of China was so concerned to see his deep depression and mental torment that he "called for a fast of three days and nights in his household, and gave himself to prayer. At least, that is what I want right now. There is crucifixion. Besides, it sounds unbelievably difficult. 66. I began to pray for small things like earaches, and headaches, and colds—whatever needs arose among my family and friends. It could be almost any quiet place in the home, which, when being used as a hermitage, remains off limits to the rest of the family. 107. It does not mean groveling or finding the worst possible things to say about ourselves. It is even more than a neutral psychological relaxing. Schoolteachers can use the ringing of the bell to remind them to lift their breath prayer into the arms of the Father. It felt like I was being invited to join, in my feeble way, into the ceaseless paean of praise that Jesus prayed in this way and urged his followers to do likewise. I asked if she would consider singing it in chapel the next day -the last session of the series. In utter devotion and total simplicity we promise to obey the voice of the true Shepherd. This is not optional; it is a sacred obligation—and a precious privilege—of all who take up the yoke of Christ. I explained that this song—which had been composed only the day before—was a prayer, but a prayer in reverse. There is stillness, to be sure, but it is a listening stillness. She needed to use a brace in order to walk. That is as it should be, for laughter is, after all, a communal experience. But I will keep on praying and asking and waiting because I have nowhere else to go. It may encourage us to know that we have a Savior who, in the darkness of Gethsemane, shouldered the weight of unanswered prayer and who, in his moment of greatest agony, shared our confused question: "Why?" The Paternoster For sheer power and majesty, no prayer can equal the Paternoster, the "Our Father" (Matt. His "we are more than conquerors" comes on the other side of hardship and distress and persecution and famine and nakedness and peril and sword (Rom. It is the place where we dump our garbage. Paul assures us that it is "Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us" (Rom. S. Show me the pathway into their pain. In his day Saint Benedict saw so many roving prophets without any kind of accountability that he made the vow of stability a central feature of his Rule. In one significant passage Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, if you say will come to pass, it will be done for you" (Mark 11:23). "Humility," writes Anthony Bloom, "is the situation of the earth." In one sense humility is nothing more than staying close to the earth. The Psalms are rich with sacramental rites and temple liturgies. Teach the prayer of God's Spirit, not of man's invention."8 The first way of coming into the Prayer of the Heart is by simple love. Creasy (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. A woman whom I shall call Anne once came to my wife, Carolynn, for prayer counseling. Normally parents were exceptional in this regard and prayed with unusual faith. Contemplative Prayer begins in love of God. We ask for weeping, lamenting hearts. I cannot possibly remember everything that is happening to me here? Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, ed. Ours is to be a symphonic piety in which all the activities of work and play and family and worship and sex and sleep are the holy habitats of the eternal. This is an argument from silence, of course, but when it is coupled with passages that seem to suggest demonic influence upon believing peoples, then we can make a fairly strong case for the possibility of the demonization of Christians. To be effective lovers. My soul was then unusually carried forth in love to God and had a lively sense of God's love to me."3 Recently I experienced a special grace of the Soft rain of tears. The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church, Together with the Psalter and Psalms of David: According to the Use of the Episcopal Church (New York: Seabury, 1979), pp. Forgiveness does not mean that we will "Simon son of John, do you love me?" (John 21). Pure love is being birthed. But the real question for us in the modern world is: how do we experience a contrite heart? Saints throughout the ages have witnessed to this reality they often call "divine union." Madame Guyon declares that all of our prayers and all of our meditations are "merely preparations" for this deeper work: "They are not the early afternoon was free, and optional readings were scheduled for the late afternoon was free, and optional readings were either Contemplative Prayer is the one discipline that can free us from our addiction to words. The disciples must have been stunned by the response to their request to be instructed about prayer, for Jesus says simply, "When you pray say: 'Father...'" (Luke 11:2). Instead they focus on much more mundane—though equally important—matters. While union is entirely a work of God upon the heart, there are two vital preparations from our side of the equation: love of God and purity of heart. The frustrated father tried everything to quiet his son, but nothing seemed to help. You understand, I did not want to be a hypocrite. Her beautiful soprano voice was crystal clear, and we were all melted into worship That elementary teaching opened up a whole new world to me. Finis Perhaps you have noticed that we have come full circle. They are the ones people seek out when needing help or guidance. Archbishop Anthony Bloom tells of his father, who would put a note on his door saying, "Don't go to the trouble of knocking. Even more, through the power of Christ we release within people the spirit of forgiveness and compassion. I have fifteen minutes during which I can do not know and appropriate. Frankly, there is much that we do not know and much that we cannot do. Perhaps a past act of injustice comes to mind. There was, however, a response-a clear, unadorned, frank response-a clear, unadorned, frank response-"I know, I made it." I blurted out, "Thank you, Lord!" Again, there was a response, "You're welcome." I stopped dead in my tracks. 139. A New Song in an Ancient Way The Psalms have always been at one and the same time both hymn book and prayerbook for the Church. Here it seems as if we are being acted upon more than participating in. Quietly the father continued singing off key and making up words 4 / RICHARD J. Our prayers are shot through with plenty of pride, conceit, vanity, pretentiousness, haughtiness, and general all-around egocentricity God listens in compassion and love, just like we do when our children come to us. On our first morning there I got up before the sun, though not before the sun, though not before the sun if our requests were granted. I have been taught how to be in control. It is, in short, to seek out the menial job, to welcome unjust criticisms, to befriend those who annoy us, to help those who are ungrateful. Petitionary Prayer 1. The Greek word itself means "trials" or "trying circumstances," and the only time God tries us PRAYER / 189 is when there is something in our hearts that needs revealing. But Authoritative Prayer moves in exactly the opposite direction. 5. The desert mothers and fathers spoke of the sin of "spiritual greed," that is, wanting more of God than can properly be digested. Let all within you listen to him. Thank you for caring about me. 49. A Rite-Riddled Book What I did not know at the time of my little experiment, and what I imagine you already know, is that the Bible is full of rituals, liturgies, and ceremonies of all kinds. In the Lord's Prayer we are asking God to remove them from our hearts so that he will never have to put us to the test. "I have been crucified with Christ," he joyfully announces. Intercession is a way of loving others. 7.5, PG 49:334, as quoted in Heusherr, Penthos, pp. The second half of this message had to do with some deep trials we would go through that would result in our being catapulted into a new realm of effective ministry. She will never forget this violation of respect. François Fénelon says, "Be silent, and listen to God. 15. This is the step of assurance. The two of them were leaning out of a window, looking at a beautifully manicured garden and discussing the goodness of life in the kingdom of God. Kilby (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1969), p. The ancient Hebrews, in particular, saw persons as a unity, and for them it would be thankful that God does not always present himself whenever we wish, because we might not be able to endure such a meeting. We can know this reality of rest, and trust, and serenity, and firmness of life orientation. We simply are not yet prepared for what we have a closer fellowship and sharing with each other if we were to resist the wrong emphases of our culture and be faithful to God's call to share our lives with the poor and powerless." 9 From firsthand knowledge I can say to you that their witness is indeed remarkable on many levels. It is for our healing, for our healing, for our healing, for our healing, for our healing and your frailties. those who have no jobs, the unemployed and the retired? The final goal is to become friends with God: "We regard falling from God's friendship as the only thing worthy of honor and desire. Their task is to help people see the footprints PRAYER / 253 of God in their lives and, now and again, to urge them to move in directions that they might not go otherwise. 64 / RICHARD J. The New Testament opens with the frequent, almost monotonous call of John the Baptist to "repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." The refrain is taken up by Peter at Pentecost, and finally our Bible closes with Jesus' call to the seven churches to repent and turn into God's way. This is especially true with Simple Prayer. We must never be weary in waiting for God's help." 5 This is an important teaching to hear, for we live in a generation that eschews commitment. Or their confessional witness to Christ: "He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory" (1 Tim. PRAYER / 201 God will make it clear who and what are to be our prayer concerns, and the other situation as well as a detailing of the biblical foundation for meditation, see chapter 2 of Celebration of Discipline. Healing Prayer 1. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. I really do want a fixed habit of prayer. One final note of encouragement about Contemplative Prayer. had come to Kotzebue on the adventure of helping to "build the first high school above the Arctic Circle," but the work itself was far from an adventure. I mean, what are we actually talking about? Richard Sibbes writes, "What cannot prayer do when the people of God have their hearts quickened, and raised to pray? What have I done to make you hide from me? Be both firm and friendly with yourself. Let me describe for you some of the freedoms of this more structured way of prayer. By our praying and by our living we sabotage all class and rank and status distinctions. Ours is an open, not a closed universe. Countless people, you see, pray far more than they know. In the name and for the sake of Jesus. Publishers wanted me to write for them. It was, of course, also a journey into Jim's feelings and fears and doubts, as the Spirit in healing love and gentle compassion touched the broken memories of his past. "The next session will begin soon," I reasoned. FOSTER faith in me, and I murmured to myself, "No! Now is not the time to counsel acceptance of his disability. Francis MacNutt, Healing (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 1974), p. Christian community is a gift of God created by the power of the Spirit and based upon our forgiveness in Jesus Christ. John Beevers (New York: Image, 1989). FOSTER is caused by supernatural activity, nor should we be so taken in by the naturalistic assumptions of modern society that we fail to see the markings of the transcendent. Unaided human love loves others for its own sake, while agape loves others for its own sake, while agape loves others for its own sake. I began this book with the words of Saint Augustine: "True, whole prayer is nothing but love." And here we are back to love again. It means tranquility of mind, heart, and spirit. The Korean churches are well known for their early morning prayer meetings, but even so this story is unusual. FOSTER Each of the four weeks is accompanied by a generous supply of meditation exercises, often taken from the Gospels. This is prayer, all right, but it is the prayer of command. These three entreaties can be gathered up into three words: give, forgive, and deliver. These are the ones who can envision a new future, a future of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 264. The stillness, however, was quickly interrupted by the homeowner's cat scratching at the screen door, seeking entrance. God will guide you and me into those forms of body prayer that are the most needful for us and that bring the most honor to him. This is an approach that seeks to provide both nurture and accountability. The service flowed well, and when I finished preaching, I shared very simply that, as best I could discern, God wanted to warm the hearts of various ones in the room and so we should wait for him to touch us. We are depriving ourselves for the sake of a greater good. These questions are part of a larger program of spiritual formation. Some celebrate often and simply. God was so close and so amazingly lovely that I felt like melting all over with a strange blissful contentment." In 1930 on the tiny Philippine island of Mindanao he writes, "This sense of cooperation with God in little things is what so astonishes me, for I never have felt it this way before.... As priests, appointed and anointed by God, we have the honor of going before the Most High on behalf of others. 65, 57. The problem is that you are listening to someone who is living on the fluff side of faith, someone who has not been baptized into the sacrament of suffering. He calls the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist "symbols," "images," and "mysteries."8 It is his way of saying, "Christ is truly present among us, and his life is truly imparted to us, but how it all works is a holy mystery." It is here that our analysis gives way to doxology. The word hesychastic or hesychast comes from the Greek word hesychia, which means tranquility or peace. Anderson, The Book of Psalms, vol. I knew that I must not use God for my own ends. It...gradually falls PRAYER / 33 toward its proper center, which is God. Finally, Jesus took over the situation. Graybeal A Spiritual Formation Workbook by James Bryan Smith with Lynda L. "I was just wondering what God wanted to say to us through the cat." Now, as far as I know, we never got any "message" from the cat as a possible messenger. For example, the impurity of dirt simply cannot be united with the purity of gold These are those who have seen this living stone—the very stone that the builders rejected—become the head of the corner, and they themselves have experienced this charism of the Spirit in some measure from the first century to the present. Lawrence, Practice of the Presence (Doubleday ed.), p. The joy of the Spirit seems to simply well up within a person until there is a bursting forth into high, holy, hilarious laughter. PRAYER / 23 Most surprising of all, our very dryness produces the habit of prayer in us. prayer with the saints. Further, we are always in danger of rationalizing and manipulating our experiences so that we hear only what we want to hear. For too long we have been in a far country of roise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. In this context it might make more sense to order a prayer life around a weekly pattern. We must not rush too quickly here to solve this problem with glib talk about God answering with "yes, no, or wait" and the like. When we tie music to prayer, we have a powerful combination. The signature written across his life was the prayer "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Luke 10:21). Evidently the tears did what the words could not, for she left substantially healed. Repenting on Behalf of others, especially our enemies, forgiving them and setting them free. The love of the Father is like a sudden rain shower that will pour forth when you least expect it, catching you up into wonder and praise and unspeakable speech. You long to burn the eternal flame 122 / RICHARD J. It dares to believe that things can be different. We might just as well get used to the idea that, sooner or later, we, too, will know what it means to feel forsaken by God. In all that they do, they prosper." For Jesus' sake. If we ever want to know the degree to which we are enslaved by the passion to possess, all we have to do is observe the difficulty we have maintaining a Sabbath rhythm. Early into that experiment he writes, "God, this going in search of Your vocabulary promises to open a 34 / RICHARD J. Copyright © 1964, 1963 by the Estate of C.S. Lewis and/or C.S. Lewis. To be sure, the self-sufficiency of God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God is a precious doctrine, but we should always remember the words of Saint Augustine: "God thirsts to be thirsted after." Our God thirsts to is the desert. But what is "regular"? —John Wesley Covenant Prayer is a profound interior heart call to a God-intoxicated life. Try to imagine what our prayer experience would do something—send the cat away, magically open the door, and other more drastic prayers that I shall not mention, since you may have a fondness for cats. 5 and 19). Any faith that makes the blessedness of people dependent upon anyone or anything other than God himself is, to that extent, a false faith. They have been my teachers. And...and... I understand your concerns and your questions. The epistles in the New Testament contain several of the early hymns and confessional statements that undoubtedly were used in the vibrant worship of the pristine Christian community. 5:8). Together they help us exegete the meaning of adoration. "Do not let God speak to us, or we will die," pleaded the children of Israel (Exod. I know that many of our petitions seem immature and selfabsorbed. Henri Nouwen once pointed to a lovely picture hanging in his apartment and said to me, "That is lectio divina." It depicted a woman with an open Bible in her lap, but her eyes were lifted upward. Weak in body, but strong in faith, he laid hold on the promises of God."14 His subsequent prayer for her was completely successful, restoring her to full health. We bind the spirit of anger and jealousy and gossip and release the spirit of forgiveness and love and faith. But I could PRAYER / 221 speak only a few words, for I felt a deep sorrow welling up within me for her emotional pain. She said to a group of us, "When you are first learning to pray for healing, do not start with the most difficult cases...like cancer or arthritis. See also Ordinary, the Lord's Prayer, 34, 118, 184-90 Lot-Borodine, Madame, 41 Love: Divine, 133, 254, 254-55; ours for God, 3, 13, 140, 160, 195 Luke the Apostle, 106, 143 Luther, Martin, 34, 157, 225, 247; on evil, 189, 190; on God's word, 114; on the Psalter, 110-111; on repentance, 42 M MacDonald, George, 222 MacNutt, Francis, 212 Markings (Hammarskjöld), 33 Marshall, Catherine, 50 Mary of Jesus, 217 Mary Magdelene, 148 Mary, Mother of God, 18, 24, 50, 145 Matheson, George, 70 Maximus, 112 Meditation: Christian, 145-147; prayer as, 111, 143-1452. 179 180 / RICHARD J. Another caution. He was not praying in Jesus' name, and Peter, recognizing this, rebuked Simon for it. FOSTER A Loving Attentiveness to God What is it, this experience Richard Baxter referred to as "the soulrapturing exercise of heavenly contemplation"? PRAYER / 159 Besides, our feelings can be disciplined and sanctified by God just as fully as our reason and our imagination can be. Paul writes, "Our struggle is not against the rulers, against the rulers, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. And the darkness left. They were declaring Christ's victory in an evil world, a victory that moves us forward, but not without setbacks. "Why me?" we cry out, "why me?" for frustration and tears and anger are also the language of Simple Prayer. PRAYER / 31 In attempting to explain to us the value of self-knowledge, Teresa adds something that sounds to us quite strange. This is not suppressing our inner turmoil but letting go of it. Long before anyone knew that body language reveals our innermost feelings, Baxter was urging people to meet God in such an uninhibited way that their deepest feelings could burst forth. And I am happy...happy for the first time in twenty-eight years." His wife concurred that it was so. "Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete" (John 16:24). Sitting beside him with my hand on his shoulder, I invited the Lord Jesus to go back those twenty-eight years and walk through that day with this good man. These things I pray for the sake of him who loved me and gave himself for me. This is the Prayer of Rest. Perhaps you are wondering, "Isn't it possible to be a bit more broad-minded and accept all sincere prayers in whosoever's name and by whatever authority?" Well, first of all, it is not my business or yours to accept or reject anyone's prayer. Each day in a new and living way the brooding Spirit of God teaches us. As our sufferings are his, so his sufferings are his, so his sufferings are his, so his sufferings are bis, so his sufferings are his, so his sufferings are bis, so hi prayers. Nouwen, The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry (New York: Seabury, 1981), p. Peterson, Contemplative Pastor, p. Saint Teresa of Avila says, "As I could not make reflection with my understanding I contrived to picture Christ within me. In solitude we voluntarily abstain from our normal patterns of activity and interaction with people for a time in order to discover that our strength and well-being come from God alone. Almost every page of the Psalter is wet with the tears of the singers. "Let me to thy bosom fly." 4 One day a friend of mine was walking through a shopping mall with his two-year-old son. Martin Luther says that the Sela calls for "a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers."7 We are helped further by the Hebrew poetic structure of parallelism—repeating the same idea in slightly different words—which invites us to sing reflectively. In our prayers and in our actions we stand firm against racism, sexism, nationalism, ageism, and every other "ism" that separates and splits and divides. For months we were not sure she recognized any of us when we visited, since all speech and physical response was mute. The script writers, Jean-Bernard Luc and Jean Anouilh, put these words into the mouth of Saint Vincent, and, although this is undoubtedly poetic license, the idea is certainly consistent with his life and spirit. He did not wait until his baptism in the Jordan to discover God. Laubach declares, "The task to which You can accomplish it if I can keep my 126 / RICHARD J. In silencio, therefore, we still every motion that is not rooted in God. This is a wonderful grace. PRAYER / 267 16. And, most important, did you experience God in your reading?" The brother assigned Jim the same text for that entire day, urging him to read it as much with his head. It is not just the things that we do, though those by themselves are enough. One evening some years ago I was out jogging, when a dozen or more breath prayers poured forth from my lips. "I'm so glad you're my boy. Burtness (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1974), p. 10; Frank C. God tells me, for example, to act lovingly toward my neighbor, perhaps inviting him over for dinner. What if the only things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important talk about were the weighty matters, the important talk about were the weighty matters, the important talk about were talk about talk about were talk about talk a the profound issues? When we move from petition to intercession we are shifting our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs and concerns of others. He provided wine for those who were celebrating, food for those who were celebrating, food for those who were celebrating, food for those who were celebrating our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs and concerns of others. with a man who had lived in constant fear and bitterness for twenty-eight years. Jeremiah is known as the "weeping prophet," and the reputation is well deserved. All rights reserved. Breathed longings of wonder and adoration seem always underneath and in the background of everything—a little like a tune that we suddenly realize we have been humming all day long. Our duplicity, our lust, our narcissism, our sloth—all are laid on the altar of sacrifice. PRAYER / 245 Then I was given instruction that I assume was one of the primary reasons for the encounter. Gently, we become more focused and simplified. Moulton, ed., The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman, in A Library of Protestant Thought (New York: Oxford Univ. Our God, who is faithful and just—and also full of mercy—will forgive and will cleanse (1 John 1:9). Nearly every aspect of prayer is caught up in the eucharistic feast: examination, repentance, petition, forgiveness, contemplation, thanksgiving, celebration, and more. As quoted in Merton, Contemplative Prayer, p. However, in time you will find that love language of Jean-Pierre de Caussade. I waited in silence. We are not asking God to do something; rather, we are using the authority of God to command something done. We are taught to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." It is a conditional request. Understandable Concerns This approach to prayer may raise concerns in your mind. When we contemplate the passion of Christ, we are continually asking for the grace to die to the attachments of this world. He reconciled us to God restoring the infinitely valuable personal relationship that had been shattered by sin. Not all Psalms are hymns or prayers, but the designation is still justified, for they all serve to glorify God, which is the goal of hymns, and to lead us into the will and way of God, which is the goal of prayers, but the designation is still justified, for they all serve to glorify God, which is the goal of hymns, and to lead us into the will and way of God, which is the goal of hymns, and to lead us into the will and way of God, which is the goal of hymns, and to lead us into the will and way of God, which is the goal of hymns, and to lead us into the will and way of God, which is the goal of hymns or prayers, but the designation is still justified. but only continued it. "O love that will not let me go," confesses the hymn writer George Matheson.3 We are responding in the only way we can to the invading, urging, inviting, persuading call of Eternal Love. In this regard Alexander Whyte speaks of "the divine offices and the splendid services of the Christian imagination." 5 Perhaps some rare individuals can experience God through abstract meditation alone, but most of us need to be more deeply rooted in the senses. Over the next few days allow God to adjust your breath prayer ever so slightly. Bill sat pensive, uttering not a word. Do not worry; a time will come when there will well up within you both a yearning and a readiness to "read the text of the universe in the original."5 I also want to give a word of precaution. We are to set aside all tendencies toward arrogance and with humble hearts receive the word addressed to us. It is here that we face a serious dilemma. 277. Lewis notes, "Every war, every 182 / RICHARD J. Do not hesitate because you feel unworthy; this Meal 114 / RICHARD J. Numerous other groups have attempted similar ventures. This, however, was not good news to me. It sometimes helps for various households to gather for periodic meals and activities. I sometimes discovered her up at 5:00 A.M., trying to vacuum the floor. I once prayed for a young woman whose father was a pastor. Even though I did not know it at the time, I was attempting in my small and unsophisticated way to do what the great artisans in the Middle Ages did when they carved the backside of a piece of art, knowing that God alone would see it. Finally, hold up to him your enemies, your desire for retaliation. The climb is steep, the rocks are sharp, and the trail passes by precarious ridges. All I could think of was, 'The devil is trying to destroy me!'" She staggered down the hall and pounded on the door of the room occupied by the priest overseeing the retreat. Saint Jerome reminds us that we are "never less alone than when alone."11 I invite you into this communion of solitude. Can you see how our very sense of the absence of God is, therefore, an unsuspected grace? David Swenson and Lillian Swenson (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1946), p. 141. You may know the old adage "the one who sings prays twice." In considering other prayerbooks Martin Luther remarks, "Ah, there is not the juice, the strength, the passion, the fire which I find in the Psalter."5 PRAYER / 111 We can be glad for the many new efforts today to put various Psalms to music, some of them quite successful. We are to emulate the faithful described in the Psalter whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2). Then, when you are outside of his nearness for any length of time, this ache will begin again in you and will draw you back to his loving presence. I have found that I cannot make the flow of heavenly life happen, but I can stop it. Romano Guardini notes, "When we try to sleep, cares or desires assail us with a force that they do not possess during the day." We must not be discouraged at this. The Holy Spirit of God, the third member of the Trinity, himself accompanies us in our prayers. Large things and small things, spiritual things and small things and material things. prayer. Therefore our prayers are hindered. Just as we long for our own children to share with us the petty details of their day at school, so God longs to hear from us the smallest matters of our lives. Sickness is an enemy, and we are to fight against it. They are unrecognized conquests over selfishness. CHAPTER 4 THE PRAYER OF TEARS Tears are like blood in the wounds of the soul. Saint Augustine was that way. I certainly am a stubborn creature. Augustine, City of God, Bk. XXII.8, p. In some mysterious way, through shedding his blood Jesus took into himself all the evil and all the hostility of all the evil and all the hostility of all the ages and redeemed it. So it is fully in order that he invites us to pray for daily bread. Anne's outward problem of depression was easy enough to see. FOSTER "This is beautiful!" Now, I was not in the least trying to be religious in this; I was simply taking in the wonder of light and trees and ocean and mist. We bless the broken bits of virtue these leaders already display and ask that they, like the loaves and the fishes, will be multiplied and used for good. It is the entering into this interior communion that contemplatives mean when they speak of feeling. Chitty (Oxford, England: SLG, 1979), p. I reject the distorted concepts and ideas that make sin plausible and desirable. I had become a Christian by this time, and one of my earliest prayers was for her healing. Jesus' experience on the cross was, of course, utterly unique and unrepeatable, for he was taking into himself the sin of the world. It is also true that some of the deepest experiences of alienation and separation from God have come to those who have traveled far into the interior realms of faith. Nothing is wrong with us. The beauty and precision of the worship service can supersede heartfelt yearning for God. "I know they thought I was mentally ill," Gloria confided to me. 127-28. Think of Joseph and his exile. James Walsh, ed., The Prayer of Docility A third form of passive Formation Prayer is what Evelyn Underhill calls "the prayer of docility."12 It is the experience of being "completely supple, completely transparent, completely transparent, completely transparent, completely abandoned in the hands of God."13 Let me try to explain it by analogy. This is the step of gratitude. "Our lover," she writes, "desires that our soul should cling to him with all its might, and that we should ever hold fast to his goodness." We today, who so easily gravitate to a passionless religion, need to hear her words of passion and zeal: "In his love he wraps and holds us. All day Jim tried doing what his spiritual director had instructed, but he failed repeatedly. 46. John Calvin writes, "We must repeat the same supplications not twice or three times only, but as often as we have need, a hundred and a thousand times.... We will either give it up or turn it into a little system that maintains the form of godliness but denies the power of it—which is the same thing as giving it up. No, we develop intimacy by regular association. 58. Three Classical Practices There are three well-established practices designed to lead us into the Prayer of Rest. 6:1-6). In fact, we begin to wonder if there is a God to answer. Vain wait! Benedict has done a great service by showing us that there is spiritual work we can undertake in this realm. He did not know. PRAYER / 3 This is wonderfully good news. Nor are we drawn toward praise and adulation. 1. Another way of Praying the Ordinary is by praying throughout the ordinary experiences of life. God withholds his gifts from us for our good. That, of course, does not mean that "crude" and "spiritual" are necessarily bedfellows, but it should warn us loud and clear of the idolatry of sophistication. I want to thank my former parishioners and students, who helped me test these ideas over many vears in both theory and practice. 32:32). Hands were laid on the Levites for empowerment to exercise their office (Num. Our decisions become increasingly bathed in a loving rationality. But quickly I saw that the danger of superficiality is clearly as perilous as the danger of superficiality is clearly as perilous. rationalizations. The person was Agnes Sanford, and she has written about this way of praying in her many books, especially The Healing Light (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1972), chap. We are urged repeatedly in the Gospels and elsewhere to pray in this way. But there is also prayer that God uses to invade enemy territory and establish his kingdom. Jesus body broken. We are seeking to think God's thoughts after him, to delight in his presence, to desire his truth and his way. Paul probably had in mind here a gifting and commissioning into leadership, somewhat akin to our concept of ordination. M. What Moses and Aaron and Hur did on that day is the work all of us are called upon to undertake. It is such a complete prayer that it seems to reach all peoples at all times in all places. I was admiring one giant Western cedar especially. The doors were left open in hopes of a breeze. The words were, 'John Woolman is dead.'" Woolman was very puzzled over these words and sought to "get so deep that I might understand this mystery." Finally he "felt divine power prepare my mouth," and he declared, "I am crucified with Christ." "Then the mystery was opened, and I perceived...that the language John Woolman is dead meant no more than the death of my own will." -strong language. At each of the hours of prayer a hymn, the Tephilla, was chanted. Besides, obedience is really not as burdensome as it seems at first blush. But, as I said earlier, the very thing we release is sometimes returned to us. But under the searchlight of the great Physician we can expect only good always. Others have found such a practice extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, and they experience considerable guilt over the omission. It was no simple choice or quick fix. Unsolved problems are Your language, for in them You are our schoolmaster training us."13 While I encourage the discipline of journal keeping as a means of spiritual growth, I do not want to elevate it out of proper perspective. This way of prayer we learn only in the school of suffering. 858. We have so much to learn, so far to go. Often sadnesses and sorrows that have long bowed a person low are healed instantaneously. It was about 4:00 A.M., and I had been pacing the floor, holding his ear against my shoulder, hoping against hope that the pain would subside enough that he would stop the heartbreaking whimpering and fall asleep. If forgiving is so important, we really need to ask the question: what is forgiveness? The Psalmist declares, "Yahweh, you examine me and know me" (Ps. 139:1, JB). The quintessential image here is of clay in the hands of a potter—soft, pliable, malleable. But the desire to meditate, and the grace to begin meditating, should be taken as an implicit promise of further graces."17 The desire has been given to you, I know; otherwise, you would not be reading these words. Precious Savior, why do I fear your scrutiny? I do not mean to turn inward in hopes of finding within ourselves some special inner strength or an inner savior who will deliver us. Like Jack's beanstalk, our obligations seem to grow overnight. Holy prayers are needed in order to dream new dreams and see new visions. This is self-focused prayer in the sense that we are asking something to be done in us or to us. It beckons us up the alpine pathway of holy obedience. We can kneel in silent wonder and adoration. Of its seven perfectly crafted requests, three relate to personal petition. And yet, as best he could, this father began sharing his heart. Palmer (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. God the Spirit is interpreting our sighs and groans before the throne of heaven. And so we listen, really listen. Fifth, Authoritative Prayer is not a substitute for disciplined habits of living I cannot witness that I have entered fully into this life of perpetual communion with the Father, but I have caught enough glimpses that I know it to be the best, the fullest way of living. This prayerful reading, as we might call it, edifies us and strengthens us. 204. In solitude, however, we die not only to others but also to ourselves. We simply and unpretentiously share our concerns and make our petitions. This can be done both before they go to sleep and again after they are asleep. I resist every force that would seek to distract me from my center in God. It is God's desire to bring people off of addictions to drugs, sex, money, status. He promised to be their God, to protect them, to guide them, to bless them. Why would God take us through such a roller-coaster process? And in this posture we pour out our heart to the God who is greater than loss of her child. It is triumphant. Through faith, self-knowledge leads us to a self-acceptance and a self-love that draw their life from God's acceptance and love. An apprentice electrician is not allowed to do the tasks of a journeyman because he is not ready for those tasks, and for him to undertake them could, in fact, be dangerous. Question: what are we to do? Father Lazarus (London: John M. You see, six months earlier, while on a week-long silent retreat, Gloria, suddenly and unexpectedly, experienced acute stomach pains. This is an expression of Christian community, but it is not intended to stand alone. No manipulation, no control: perfect freedom, perfect liberty. The book is peppered throughout with pithy sayings that can be lived with for days with genuine profit. 86. You might turn next to the Confessions of Saint Augustine. Struggle is consistent with love, for it is an expression of our caring. Any supposed solutions that I or anyone else gives are only partial and will not make the problem go away. Actually, it wasn't so bad, because Mom always cheered us on, and complaint did not seem to be in her vocabulary. In order to give practical expression to my experience of solitude, I have scheduled into my calendar four private retreats, following the seasons of the year—winter, spring, summer, fall. Then I begin to work. Second, learn the prayer of surrender. And while this "practice of the presence of God" is strenuous, everything else ceases to be so. In addition, I want you to know that to be faced with the "withering winds of God's Spirit, or that you have committed some horrendous offense against heaven, or that there is something wrong with you, or anything. Chapter 6. (It had not occurred to me until that precise moment.) God's desire to warm the hearts of his people was for the congregation, to be sure, but it was most specifically for this good pastor. To be sure, at first we thought solitude was a way to recharge our batteries in order to enter life's many competitions with new vigor and strength. I am distracted! I am stubborn! I am self-centered! In your mercy, Jesus, bring my "want-er" more in line with my "need-er" so that I can come to want what I need. As God grows your capacity to care, you will very naturally begin working for the good of your neighbors, your friends, even your enemies. We struggle to express our heart and are painfully aware of how far the expression is PRAYER / 137 from the reality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "Just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. In such cases, and many others like them, it is God's grace and mercy that prevent our prayers from being answered. At first no one knew what was wrong-Mom just had difficulty walking. See Relinquishment Swanson, Kenneth, 207 Symeon, 45 Syntax of prayer, 3 T Taylor, Jeremy, 143 Tears: the mystery of, 41; the prayer of, 37-39, 42-43, 46 Teen years, 176-177 Ten Commandments, 28, 34 Teresa of Avila, 10, 152; on humility, 61; on self-knowledge, 30-31 Tertullian, 225 Testament of Devotion, A (Kelly), 124 Tevye's prayers, 12 Thanksgiving, 83-84 Theodore the Studite, 45 Thérèse of Lisieux, 62-63, 158 Thielicke, Helmut, 187, 249-250 Three Hermits, The (Tolstoy), 81 Time: covenant of, 72-75; the "game with minutes," 126; ordinary, 174 Tolstoy, Leo, 81 Toyohiko Kagawa, 152 Tozer, A.W., 54, 71 Trinity, the Holy, 3, 98-100 298 / RICHARD J. When we do this, we will discover something of inestimable value. The process continued following the service. But the practical effect of all this internal soul-searching was to completely paralyze my ability to pray. As we stood there, God was warming his heart, and the physical manifestation of heat was a gracious indication to us of a much deeper work of healing love and grace-filled mercy that was going on inside. Everyone began sharing how distracting the cat had been to their ability to focus on God. FOSTER care your future, your hopes, your dreams. Whatever the specific shape of our life together, it is of utmost importance that we pray in community. How the shepherds must have wondered at the twofold sign by which they were to identify the Messiah—swaddling cloths and a manger. It is my hope that each one will play a part in helping us accept this divine invitation to freely give even as we have freely received. The old adage that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" has a lot of truth in it. FOSTER God. PRAYER / 99 When we stumble over our words, the Spirit straightens out the syntax. What a thrill to add to the prayers of the saints throughout the ages our "own little twitter," as C. So it is

in the life of the spirit. The theoretical issue has to do with whether or not Unceasing Prayer falls under the umbrella of the 128 / RICHARD J. How do they Pray the Ordinary?" you may ask. The easiest way to begin magnifying God is to use the Psalter. All of a sudden I was struck by the notion that I should speak directly to the pain. I might add that while we adults struggle with this idea of the laying on of hands, children have no difficulty with it. We can turn back to the pages of our personal history with God as often as we like and see the issues we have struggled with and the progress we have struggled with and the progress we have made. 47, 51, 55 Repentance, 41-42. In the longer ending of Mark's Gospel ordinary believers are encouraged in this ministry (Mark 16:18). Besides, does the Bible not warn against the vain imaginations of the wicked (Rom.1:21)? Here was my experiment: I would seek to live in continuous communion with God for three months without any outward "props" whatever—no Bible, no liturgy, no Eucharist, no preaching, no worship services, 105 106 / RICHARD J. We are offering up to the throne of grace the very words that have been prayed by followers of the Way for many generations. He has written his law not on tablets of stone but on the fleshy tablets of stablets of stone but on the fleshy tablets of ston Jesus dismissed their speculations as irrelevant (John 9:1-12). PART I MOVING INWARD Seeking the Transformation We heed CHAPTER 1 SIMPLE PRAYER Pray as you can, not as you ca will fall down—we get up and seek to obey again. It is not an easy combination to come by, but when it occurs, "extraordinary prayer" is not too strong a description. In addition, we hear the voice of the true Shepherd calling us to go to all peoples with the liberating message of life in Christ. That is what grace means, and not only are we saved by grace, we live by it as well. Shall I go on enumerating the values of redemptive suffering, ticking them off like items on a grocery list? This is not the case today, so in the text of this book I have used the name Juliana to more clearly identify her. Relinquishment brings to us a priceless treasure: the crucifixion of the will. On the paper was written this prayer: "O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. She grew slowly worse. Everyone trembles when Father Ferapont comes into the room. There is good reason for concern, for the imagination, like all our faculties, has participated in the fall. Blessed Savior, I am not good at resting in the hollow of your hand. Many of the Puritan leaders in the seventeenth century had similar convictions. When the winter snows came, we "joined" Admiral Byrd on many a frozen expedition. The latter goal is the more imperative. Darkness is a definite experience of prayer. PRAYER / 209 The laying on of hands in itself does not heal the sick—it is Christ who heals the sick. So it is with us. 14:17). This is not misery for misery's sake. "Solitude," writes Louis Bouyer, "serves to crack open and burst apart the shell of our superficial securities." 10 In experiences of solitude we gently press into the Holy of Holies, where we are sifted in the stillness. Our sense of God's absence does not come to us in any preset timetable Yes, indeed! I commend to you the prayer of John Donne: "Batter my heart, three-personed God."11 This is the first line of a sonnet in which Donne is describing how the goodness and gentleness of God failed to move him to repentance. Catherine Marshall, Beyond Our Selves (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. Changed, not like a tornado changes things, but like a grain of sand in an oyster changes things. (Be assured that we are able to do this only because of the supreme act of forgiveness at Golgotha, which once and for all broke the back of the cycle of retaliation.) When we do, when we forgive, it unleashes a flood of forgiving graces from heaven and among human beings. All of the time we are examining our lives and breathing prayers of acceptance and application. Rather than trying to pray in some fanciful isolation that you will never find, discover God in your times with your baby. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer If we truly love people, we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to prayer I PRAYER / 175 enjoy being around them because they draw the best out in me without any manipulation whatsoever. See Nature Crucifixion: power of the, 220; of the will, 53-55. While we are all equally precious in the eyes of God, we are not all equally precious in the eyes of God, we are not all equally ready to listen to "God's speech in his wondrous, terrible, gentle, loving, allembracing silence." A baby is given milk rather than steak because steak will do the baby no good. This is the Covenant of Holy Obedience. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Samuel Coleridge declares, "He prayeth well," 1 Coleridge, of course, got this idea from the Bible, for its pages breather the language of divine love. We are simply glad that they do come—mixed motives and all. Union with God does not mean the loss of our individuality. This book contains her mature reflections upon sixteen visions that were given to her on May 8, 1373. I really want to be in control. Chapter 8. Eighteen years later, as he begins his public ministry, Jesus rises out of the baptismal waters to the heavenly words "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22b). These are precious persons for whom Christ died, and we are to show them the greatest courtesy and respect at all times. He did not talk to God at all. There is great confusion on this matter today, and therefore we must first understand what forgiveness is not. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm, pp. They actually believed that their prayer work could make a difference in Maria's condition. But we also must "enter in," which sounds active. For Jesus' sake. So much about my mother was uneventful and ordinary. Please, stop that noise—oil the belt, blow up the motor—do something, anything!" Nothing happened, and a minor crisis of faith joined forces with my frustration. Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest (London: Epworth, 1962), pp. And we do not condemn ourselves unduly when we stub our toe or play a wrong note, do we? Rather, I am free to enter into the depth of my need as well as the reality that God's resources are deeper still. But what I have come to see is that God is big enough to receive us with all our mixture. We are a pilgrim people on a journey of faith. Our spirit is on tiptoe—alert and listening. Times of seeming desertion and absence and abandonment appear to be universal among those who have walked this path of faith before us. But since God is with us in the search, we are listening more than we are defending. Forsyth observes, "Petitions that are less than pure can only be purified by petition." 2 Besides, Jesus keeps drawing us into the most basic relationship of child and parent, to asking and receiving. We do not yet know exactly what forms these new gatherings will take in our day. It is this frailty, this unguarded accessibility that is at the heart of the prayer of docility. But as Joseph Schmidt notes, "They are dangers on the right road. The Church gathered must become the Church gathered must become the Church gathered for it. ... Every hope evaporates the moment we reach for it. Watch, do not evaluate, watch. How can God tempt us or lead us into temptation? Now watch his mother place her hand over her child's and guide it on the page, making big beautiful letters. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. Foster's Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline Celebrating the Disciplines: A Journal Workbook to Accompany Celebration of Discipline The Challenge of the Disciplined Life Richard J. He commanded the lepers, "Be clean." He touched blind eyes, saying, "Be opened." To deaf ears he said the same: "Be opened." To the paralytic, he ordered, "Get up." At the grave of his friend Lazarus he commanded, "Come forth." To demonic spirits he ordered, "Come out." Not only did Jesus exercise the prayer of command; he also delegated this same authority to others. In fact, I value labor as a reflection of the image of God within us so much that my personal conviction is that part of the bliss of heaven will be joyous, creative, productive work. Following one afternoon session, Gloria asked for an appointment, and so we stepped into a lovely library room, where we could be uninterrupted. CHAPTER 5 THE PRAYER OF RELINQUISHMENT The Spirit teaches me to yield my will entirely to the will of the Father. This is the unrepeatable, supreme act of redemption, and in this we cannot in any way be Christ's companions. God so accommodates, so enfleshes himself into our world, that he uses the images we know and understand to teach us about the unseen world of which we know so little and find so difficult to understand. Radcliffe, Making Prayer Real (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952), p. In fact, in the Eastern Orthodox tradition the Eucharist is officially designated as one of the "holy mysteries." As C. "You will have to lead me, because I don't know what I am PRAYER / 95 supposed to do," I responded. With much ado I made my way up this elongated granite thumb, and for some time I simply reveled in the glory of the canyon above me and the surging waters below. 67; Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary, pp. That is a wholly different matter. We do not weaken our request with ifs, ands, or buts. Nouwen, Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy in Christian Perspective (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), p. Then we could debate all the theories in a properly detached fashion. The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, trans. Christ is before us; Christ beyond my own experience. Using any of the synoptic Gospels, go with Jesus into the Garden. --William Cary "Prayer changes things," people say. He was delighted to help, and I was delighted to help and a radical way of praying. This seems to be all I need think about." Several years later and on another continent he prays, "GOD, this attempt to keep my will bent toward Your will is integrating me. Jim felt he would go deaf from the silence. "We may have to operate." Maria's parents arrived about midnight, and I updated them on her condition. God refused to jump when I said, "Jump!" Neither by theological acumen nor by religious technique could I conquer God. 55:8-11). One of the steps of humility is "enduring with patience the injuries and afflictions we face." Another is "to be content in all things." In each case the point of the teaching is its triviality. Far too often, though, we pray as if we are disembodied spirits. As God builds stamina and grit into our spirituality, we today must learn to burn the eternal flame of prayer on the altar of devotion. Sometimes we refuse to see medicine as one way God heals. Gracie (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1986), p. These times and many more like them are lived prayer. This particular morning the guidance was quite specific: "Tell them that I want to warm their hearts." \* The Prayer of the Heart is often called "abba prayer." I know that many find abba language painful because they have been inexpressibly hurt by their own human fathers. The Perplexity of Unanswered Prayer We now come to what has to be one of the most troubling issues of Petitionary Prayer namely, unanswered prayer. Hard as it may be for us to imagine, God is in everlasting communion with himself through our stumbling, bumbling prayers. Not that there is anything wrong with acts of devotion, but they are no longer what fascinate us. Elton Trueblood calls "the common ventures of life"—birth, marriage, work, death.8 Jesus, in his life and in his teaching, gave sacramental significance to these ordinary experiences of daily life. It is to this concern that we now turn. Please understand, I was not trying to hear from God; I was trying to get out of doing the teaching session! Four days later she called and said, "Twelve people have approached me about this since I have been home!" I was trapped. At the other end of the spectrum is our tendency for self-flagellation. How much more fitting to come in absolute silence before the Holy One of eternity than to rush into his presence with hearts and minds askew and tongues full of words. When we see him and the love in his eyes, we start thinking more about his love than about how sick Julie is. Wm. Pauch (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), p. 66:13). The Most Complete Prayer At the heart of all Christian prayer is the celebration of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion. Barrenness of soul sometimes comes to us for this very purpose. Actually the answer is the celebration of the answer that is difficult to articulate. Helmut Thielicke, a German pastor who endured the darkest days of the Nazi Third Reich, says, "One should never mention the words 'forgive' and 'forget' in the same breath." 9 No, we remember, but in forgiving we no longer use the memory against others. For further ideas on the practice of Solitude, see chapter 7 of Foster, Celebration of Discipline. It is actually possible today for people to go to church services week in and week out for years without having a single experience of spiritual examen. Even now, many years later, I remember well my experiment with "religionless Christianity"—a popular notion of the times that had been inspired by the prison writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He is the hound of heaven baying relentlessly upon our track. We know, even as we are known. In reality we are moving with the mind into the heart. Steere, Prayer and Worship (New York: Edward W. Without this outward structure, my internal heart yearnings for God simply do not hold together. Men and women of intellect far superior to mine have explored these issues in elaborate volumes. FOSTER "Warm their hearts? He welcomes us there, where we can experience, in the works of Madame Guyon, a "continuous inner abiding." 15 And here is the joy: the results are always in excess of the work put in. "Please, Lord," I asked, "draw out the hate and the sorrow and set him free." Almost as an afterthought I asked for peaceful sleep to be one of the evidences of this healing work, for he had not slept well for all those years. The Prayer of Examen 1. FOSTER enter into the presence of the Holy in unmediated communion. 313. I adore you. At other times I write out my own prayers and pray them as a daily private ritual of heart preparation. The end result of the Prayer of Relinquishment brings us into this soul-satisfying rest. Give us this day our daily bread. FOSTER Chapter 1. Is God good and intent upon our goodness, or is God cruel, sadistic, and a tyrant? We do not have to be bright, or pure, or filled with faith, or anything. We can so easily "heap up empty phrases," as the Bible says, without the slightest drawings toward "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Matt. Once in the house I held her in my arms and said firmly, "Honey, I want you to know that you are more important to me than this book project." God either for us or for all saints."2 By ourselves we have no entrée to the court of heaven. You were always alert and alive. Most certainly this is an internal hearing, but it is also an experience distinct from that of having a nice idea pop into one's head. In addition I express gratitude to Kandace Hawkinson of Harper San Francisco for her editorial skill and warm encouragement. Communion with him isn't something you institute. For a city boy to be suddenly plopped down into a paradise is too mild a term. 89-90. At times I share the feeling. The waiting itself becomes prayer as we give our waiting to God. How stirred he was by her simple devotion! Think of the woman who in outlandish waste anointed Jesus' head with costly perfume. We open even greater spiritual resources when we are given the grace and forgiving power to repent in the name of our enemies. 220 / RICHARD J. It is the notion—almost universal among us modern high achievers—that we have to have everything "just right" in order to pray. How could anything of importance happen without us there? Lewis, Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1964), p. 4:13). This is purity of heart. Do not rush or change 124 / RICHARD J. Obey immediately. From every human viewpoint at times it looks like we have fallen over the precipice to our death. 6:13-18). Jesus' prayer struggle—replete with bloody sweat—lasted long into the night. 1, 8-9. When she became bedfast, we set up a hospital bed in the living room. If I were to die today? One winter I scheduled a three o'clock appointment into my datebook for each working day. Augustine was still in the vestibule, ready for the processional, when the young man fell down as if dead. In Hosea God describes himself as a Father who takes his children into his arms, who leads them with "cords of compassion" and with "bands of love," and who bends down to feed them (Hos. It is the fear that we will make Jesus "the prisoner of the Tabernacle," as the old pietists used to say. It is far easier to pray with clarity regarding matters that have no direct impact upon us than regarding our infected toe. Joseph F. We have been trained throughout our lives to distrust our feelings, and the very idea that we could gain some knowledge of truth and reality by way of the feelings seems ludicrous. Contemplative Prayer 1. The phrase "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" has caused considerable debate. It was reported of the French actress Eve La Vallière that after her conversion, her eyes were constantly irritated from perpetual weeping. 4 A Litany of Tears Certainly the men and women who march across the pages of Scripture were well acquainted with the grace of tears. Over the centuries, however, devotional writers have often distinguished the two in the following way: while meditation focuses primarily on a rumination upon Scripture, God, his works, the creation, and other significant devotional writings, contemplation consists 270 / RICHARD J. We go to the person without hesitation and ask forgiveness. Wherever we find evil forces at work, we firmly demand that they leave. As her condition worsened, we three brothers took over the duties of daily life. Relationships of this kind can never be manipulated or forced. But this stress upon the feelings disturbs us. Here is the prayer that Luther used: "Shield us, Lord, with thy right arm. FOSTER churches become houses of prayer. Joseph Dalby (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1982), p.18. Amen." What am I doing? Julian of Norwich, Enfolded in Love, pp. Pursuing and Being Pursued There are both active and passive sides to Formation Prayer. This is the step of discernment. It consisted of a number of benedictions—eighteen by the end of the first century. It brings joy to the heart of God when we grip that pierced hand and say simply and profoundly, "Thank you, bless you, praise you!" Obstacles to Adoration C. Comments like "She is just so wise"; "I don't know how he knew, but he said exactly what I needed to hear"; "Every time I visit with her I feel like I understand things so much better." When you discover such people, find ways to be around them and learn from them. See Edward Hays, Prayers for the Domestic Church (Easton, KS: Forest of Peace Books, 1989). In Genesis 48:14-16 Jacob laid his hands on the heads of Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "The angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys." When the people brought children to Jesus, it was so he would lay hands on them and bless them (Mark 10:13-16). One model of Christian community that shows tremendous potential for the future is small group spiritual formation. The deep of my profound misery calls to the deep of Your infinite mercy." 6 GOD, WHERE ARE YOU!? What role does it play in producing in us the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. When it is possible and appropriate, it helps to go directly to the person for whom we are drawn to pray. She loved my father well, and she loved us kids well. PRAYER / 115 Having said this, I want to underscore the preaching of the Word as one of the central, God-ordained means of grace into our lives. We have become so accustomed to this way of living that we fail to see the contradiction in it. 1:17). The air becomes charged with expectancy. While a thousand frustrations seek to distract us, we remain focused and attentive. See also Commonnesss of prayer; Lived prayer Organized prayer to God. 12:1-5). 5:11-12). In this chapter we shall focus our attention on this most basic approach to Meditative Prayer. 2 The reason for doing this is simple. There is also a good chapter on Thérèse in Gloria Hutchinson, Six Ways to Pray from Six Great Saints (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1982). FOSTER Yet right in the midst of all this self-serving prayer are some of the most noble and sublime utterances of the human spirit. 98. Douglas W. FOSTER have not asked for anything in my name," says Jesus. Jesus experienced the intimacy of Father God not only in the ecstasy of transfiguration but also in the agony of Gethsemane: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36). The Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in. According to the book of Acts, there are three principal ways by which the baptism in the Holy Spirit was received: through the ministry of the Word (Acts 1:4-5, 5:32), through th please, do not give them to me—do not lead me into temptation. Members of the Julian Shrine (New York: Seabury, 1980), p. It was for one summer only, and I have never tried to repeat the experience, but it was one way of experiencing the examen of consciousness. If you are creating a tune for a Psalm, you will want to actually put a musical interlude here so people can ruminate briefly on what they are singing. With the Psalmist we cry out, "I call all day, my God, but you never answer" (Ps. 22:2). 5:4); "Blessed are you who weep" (Luke 6:21). But where would we be if God had not committed himself to blessing the world through the offspring of Abraham? We worship. We are visiting with friends in a school corridor or a shopping mall, and their words prompt us to lapse into prayers become the groanings of a struggling faith. He invites us into the bedroom of his rest, where new peace is found and where we can be naked and vulnerable and free. However, over time we experience more and more an inward attentiveness to the Divine Whisper throughout all life's motions—balancing the checkbook, vacuuming the floor, visiting with neighbors or business associates. It most 112 / RICHARD J. I magnify you, Lord. "This is why God sends a fire to the earth," writes Madame Guyon, "to destroy all that is impure in you. Consider, for example, his startling statement found in Mark 11:24: "I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." The gloriousness of the promise is tempered by the empirical data of our personal prayer lives. Perhaps we are waging an interior battle over anger, or lust, or pride, or greed, or ambition. This is the kind of prayer that is under consideration here. FOSTER speaking above the roar of the ocean with pebbles in his mouth. Saint Ammonas, a disciple of Abba Anthony, writes, "Fear produces tears, and tears joy. 81. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm, p. Again, at the Mount of Transfiguration, the voice coming out of the cloud declares, "This PRAYER / 135 is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" (Mark 9:7). He was always appropriate to the situation in which he found himself. But the Jesus Prayer is only one example. See also Ordinary, the; Unceasing prayer Common ventures of life, 177 Communion. It was then that the wisdom behind the jogging shoes became evident: "You're trying too hard, Jim. It is only a part—albeit an important part—of a much larger whole. Besides, I have no desire to unsettle the convictions of any person, irrespective of the tradition by which he or she is able to enter fully into the Communion service. "For God alone my soul waits in silence," declares the Psalmist (Ps. 62:1). 70 RICHARD J. It was not absence of something so her tightfisted efforts to enter God's presence and, by doing so, discovered God's presence already there. See also Authority, prayer of Learning the Vocabulary of God (Laubach), 33 Lectio divine (divine reading), 149-150 Letters by a Modern Mystic (Laubach), 124 Letters to Malcolm (Lewis), 4 Lewis, C. He is pleased at our asking. I prayed over him for fifteen minutes or more, mostly in silence, but interspersed with a few words now and again. I exclaimed out loud, 243 244 / RICHARD J. We are all acquainted with the unredemptive negative variety-suffering that is utterly cruel and completely meaningless. When we find ourselves saying, "Not 'please,' but 'thank you,'" as Annie Dillard notes in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.10 We are now ready for a stepping-stone that we could never have managed in the beginning: magnifying God. The intelligent people we value; the ignorant we don't. Meditatively pray through Philippians, chapter 2, which describes the kenosis, the self-emptying of Christ, who was in the form of God but who voluntarily took on the form of a servant and became obedient-to the point of death. Derwas J. 122. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. The Prayer of Complaint This brings us to the issue of what we do during these times of abandonment. 20:7, JB). In Eucharistic Prayer we all come to the table on the same level: the articulate and the wise have no advantage over the illiterate and the immature. From A. 3:16b) There are indications that, as we approach the twenty-first century, the greatest prayer movement in living memory is already under way. I was concerned about where such notions might lead. FOSTER Fourth, while we deal firmly and decisively with evil, we always remain gentle and compassionate with the individual. 110-11. Paul cautions about ple indiscriminately because it might bring them into things for which they are not ready (1 Tim. CHAPTER 17. 1 of A History of Christian Spirituality (New York: Seabury, 1982), p. Cease not, wet eyes, His mercies to entreat; To cry for vengeance Sin doth never cease. Aiding and abetting the sexual violence and 240 / RICHARD We can weep, laugh, sing, shout. We must have both "explicit agreement" and "visible union" for this kind of prayer to go forward. As we come to clearness about what is needed, we invite God's healing to come. 222 / RICHARD J. The Spirit took Jim down deep into Mary's feelings, of course, have written about this extensively in Celebration of Discipline. In the Upper Room discourse recorded in John's Gospel, Jesus made it unmistakably clear to his disciples that his going to the Father would catapult them into a new dimension of prayer. We come with empty hands as well as open hands. The guilt is unnecessary, for these things, by and large, represent a change in cultural patterns more than a lack of piety in the family. Each of us must turn for ourselves in heart sorrow for our offenses to Divine Mercy. Right now we catch only glimpses here and there, the moon's reflected light. 211. Copyright © 1982 Birdwing Music (A Division of the sparrow Corp.) and BMG Songs Inc./Cherry Lane Music Publishing Co. Inc. In the ongoing work of the kingdom of God, nothing is more important than Intercessory Prayer. We are consumed by a relentless, inexorable divine standard of holy obedience. Sacred dance is another form of body prayer that is once again being utilized in Christian celebration. 155 156 / RICHARD J. I'm unsure of your will, and I'm unsure of myself.... Psalm 119, that extended paean of praise to Torah, contains this haunting lament: "My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept" (Ps. 119:136). I felt myself transported into God's being and at the same time I was so filled with joy, peace, and sweetness, that I cannot express it. Well, first of all, let me tell you what we are not to do. The word radical itself comes from the Latin radix, which means root. Certainly the biblical witnesses speak with one voice, urging us to give "thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 104. But this does not come automatically. Our little prayers of intercession are backed up and reinforced by the eternal Intercessor. Jesus did not ask him about his effectiveness, or his skill, or anything but his love. You may remain skeptical about Healing Prayer. Others gather in small bands—the church within the Church—for mutual nurture and accountability. This may have frightened you, especially if you do not feel worthy of receiving the goodness and grace and bounty of God in the first place. Forsyth reminds us, "The deeper we go down into the walley of decision the higher we must rise...into the mount of prayer, and we must hold up the hands of those whose chief concern is to prevail with God." 1 The Interceding One We are not left alone in this interceding work of ours. Hymns for the Family of God, Hymn 118. At times our prayer may be reduced to a single word: "Mercy!" Second, we confess. PRAYER / 133 I knew it was a holy moment, but what was I to do? Louis Bouyer, The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers, vol. We must also confess how little we know of the ways and timing of God. I do not know why the heartfelt petition of a terminally ill person or a homeless person goes unanswered. The promises and commitments of your heart are not made in vain. We bow under the wonder of it all. Fasting is the voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity. 24. Sometimes there is sin in our lives that hinders God's work. If you must do this fifty times in an hour, you have made fifty beautiful acts of love toward God. On one of those nights when it was my turn to stay up with Joel, I prayed every prayer I could think of, but nothing seemed to help. Carolynn and I have just returned from feeding some geese that now and then visit a small pond behind our house. No, it must be rooted in the acceptance of the concrete details of who we are and the way we live. We pray again, struggle struggle again, struggle aga and confusion, deep within we know stability and serenity. Allow me to share it with you. FOSTER Spiritual Ecstasy The final step into Contemplative Prayer is spiritual ecstasy. FOSTER famine or plague, almost every death-bed, is the monument to a petition that was not granted." 5 The problem is intensified when we consider the lavish promises to answers contained in the New Testament, especially in the words of Jesus. Our quick-fix approach is a little like turning on a light switch, and, if the lights do not come on immediately, declaring, "Well, I didn't believe in electricity anyway!" But Jesus gives us an altogether different vantage point from which to view our prayer work. "Contemplation," Service Book and Hymnal (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg; Board of Publication Lutheran Church in America, 1958), Hymn 483. In the early Christian communities it was not unusual to memorize "the entire David." Saint Jerome said that in his day one would frequently hear Psalms being sung in the fields and gardens. In the afternoon I met with the pastor of the church—a young, energetic rising star in his denomination. Maybe we see an opportunity to influence our children for good. From this fundamental lack and estrangement from God flow all of the world? The idea is to let go of all competing distractions until we are truly present where we are. It was 2:00 A.M., and she was completely alone...except possibly for the angels of God. You see, I am not talking about something complicated or unusual in the least. I then asked those to stand who felt drawings to pursue a deeper life of discipleship to Jesus Christ. I sat back into the warm sun and drank in the stillness of land and sea and sky. Now, I cannot prove to you that our little prayer game made Julie well. In each case they seem to be perfectly at rest. Frank C. 1990). Finally in the early hours of the morning he was able to escape with six men-four seriously wounded. This is not prayer as we normally think of it, but it is most certainly prayer. —Gregory of Nyssa Penthos is the Greek word for it. In the nineteenth century an anonymous Russian peasant tells the moving story of his search to pray without ceasing in The Way of a Pilgrim. 5 Once he learned the Jesus Prayer, he prayed it continuously until the prayer moved from his mind into his heart and finally throughout his whole body—becoming so internalized that it was present with him at all times, whether he was awake or asleep. On it goes: Daniel standing with his people; Daniel standing wit trifles that make up the bulk of our days. And so we enter into that never-ending fellowship of love that gives Christian community its life. I just came by to visit with you a bit." Derek's friend responded weakly but gratefully, "Oh, I'm so glad. I shall call her Gloria. Søren Kierkegaard echoes Woolman's experience when he notes, "God creates everything out of nothing—and everything which God is to use he first reduces to nothing."4 Do you know what a great freedom this crucifixion of the will is? An opposite but equally important counsel is to let go of trying too hard to pray. Journal and Essays of Woolman, p.112. Why, then, are some not healed? But then, as I examined the decaying tree, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "This is my Church!" When I heard the words, tears came to my eyes. FOSTER this way single people, single-parent families, couples without children, and nuclear families can all be enriched by the presence of one another. Our busyness seldom keeps us from eating or making love. 60. As the leaves drop, one by one all of the irregularities and defects of the tree are exposed. We are no longer worried about how we can make ourselves more at peace, for we are attending to the impartation of peace within our hearts. It is not that they lack influence; it is that the place of influence is viewed as unimportant. We invite God to walk with us as we grieve the loss of our dream. This has been confirmed by numerous circumstances and the wise counsel of many from around the country. Many who read these words would be uncomfortable with various details of the Ignatian retreat, but I want to commend this four-part rhythm to you. Gratitude itself is often very powerful. We, on the other hand, worship a God who was born in a smelly stable, who walked this earth in blood, sweat, and tears, but who nevertheless lived in perpetual responsiveness to the heavenly Monitor. Not that there is anything wrong with big things, but they are no longer what impress us. Walsh and Daniel J. Examen comes from the Latin and refers to the tongue or weight indicator, on a balance scale, hence conveying the idea of an accurate assessment of the true situation. But you long for more: more power, more love, more of God in your life. Oh, no, you want more, much more. Aside from the huge size of the two trees, there was nothing unusual in the scene. This is the ordinary stuff of the Prayer of the Heart. The point of all this emphasis upon the senses is to move us from reading about to entering in. 2:5, RSV). Jean-Pierre de Caussade, The Sacrament of the Present Moment (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), p. He could see everything clearly: the coffin with the lid open, the chancel, the high arching beams, but he was seeing it all from inside the coffin. 31, 35. Many times we have only fragmentary glimpses of the heavenly glory. No, this book is about a love relationship: an enduring, continuing, growing love relationship with the great God of the universe. But in the school of Gethsemane we learn that "my will, my way, my good" must yield to higher authority. 249-51. In the Prayer of the Heart we have come to the end of our tether. Perhaps that is as it should be. See also Confession; Contrition Repetition, problem of, 103-103; the prayer of, 93-96, 103, 138. The Scrutiny of Love In the examen of conscience we are inviting the Lord to search our hearts to the depths. Some have suggested, for example, that while the less discerning will continue to appeal to God for aid, the real masters of the spiritual life go beyond petition to adoring God's essence with no needs or requests whatever. My own personal history confirms as much. PRAYER / 43 Like the tax collector in Jesus' parable, we plead, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). "I love you," he sang. But if we are listening, really listening, there is often a rise within us, an inner "yes," which is a divine invitation to prayer. Forsyth, Church and Sacraments, p. In the seventeenth century Jonathan Edwards wrote a slender book with a bulky title: A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Last Time. 47 48 / RICHARD J. Sometimes they come because of disobedience or PRAYER / 223 wrong living, and, when this is the case, we are to change the way we live. But these theological niceties are of little help to us when we enter the Sahara of the heart. Prayer ushers us into the Holy of Holies, where we bow before the deepest mysteries of the faith, and one fears to touch the Ark. If we will commit various passages to memory, they will go deep into our heart and so inform and shape our more spontaneous expressions of prayer. --P. Special ministry. 131-32. I'd better get back for lunch." The same words were spoken over me: "Be still...Rest...Shalom." They seemed to calm my spirit, and I returned to a quiet attentiveness. We need not go looking for a demon under every bush. FOSTER the race hate and the child molestation that are such a part of modern society are diabolical powers of destruction and brutality. Little by little we are changed by this daily crucifixion of the will. Besides, it could well be that all this lofty talk of contemplation is discouraging to you. On the active side we are pursuing God. The ancient Hebrew pattern was three times a day -morning, afternoon, and evening. We shout. Tozer writes, "We pursue God because and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit." 5 And here is the beautiful thing: finding God only deepens and heightens the pursuit. We do not learn adoration on the grand cosmic scale by centering on the grand and the cosmic, at least not at first. I would hesitate even mentioning it were it not for my conviction that you are quite serious about the life and work of prayer. "Bill," I queried, "what are you thinking?" "Oh," he spoke deliberately. That is all. He invites us into the dining room of his strength, where we can feast to our heart's delight. Regarding myself, I am normally reluctant to share personal prayer experiences openly. Remember the heir of David, whose blood was broken and whose blood was poured out. That would not even be desirable. And Paul, whose sufferings were abundant and well documented, declared, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us" (Rom. How dare anything of importance happen without us there! You see, we are a little like the fly on the chariot wheel in Aesop's Fables, who looked back and declared, "My, what a dust storm I'm causing!" A Lutheran pastor friend—the Reverend Bill Vaswig—and I once were discussing Galatians 2:19 and wondering what it means to be crucified with Christ. There is a division among the great devotional writers over the use of the imagination in contemplation. Hymns for the Family of God (Nashville, TN: Paragon Associates, 1976), Hymn 222. I think Jesus understood this, and, as a result, he gave more than one teaching on our need for persistencewhat we today call the parables of importunity. Think of the Psalmist's plaintive cry to God, "Why have you forgotten me?" (Ps. 42:9). We endure the petty frustrations of home and office more easily. This cannot be brought about merely by your own experience. 125. One time-tested way to enter the examen of consciousness is by means of a spiritual journal. He will show us what we need to see it. We love God more than the gifts God brings. This is precisely how it is with prayer. We are attending to him who loves us, who is near to us, and who draws us to himself. No wonder they are barely hanging on. The old writers had a term for this dynamic of change—conversatio morum.1 It is a hard phrase to translate. The dulling of our spiritual sensitivities is something I hope we will come to fear. She received death as she had life and disability: with patience and courage. Don't teach methods; don't teach some lofty way to pray. Is there anything left to do? Even in many "primitive" cultures today the doctor and the priest are one and the same person. We are on not a rabbit trail but a major highway. It is a prayer of repentance: "I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession" (Dan. They seem to have fared quite well in their own spiritual formation without it. I have often wondered why this is so. 20, 1990). See Holy Communion Compassion, 44, 134, 208, 230-231 Complaining to God, 12, 23 Confession, 43, 107. And he is inviting you—and me—to come home to where we belong, to come home to that for which we were created. God is in the business of breathing new life into dry bones. The next week when I came to see Franky, sunlight was streaming through the window, and Franky, ball and glove in hand, was preparing to check out of the hospital. We have no fatalist resignation. FOSTER The final stripping of dependence upon exterior results comes as we become less in control of our destiny and more at the mercy of others. Like many others I have discovered that, when praying for people with the laying on of hands, I sometimes detect a gentle flow of energy. It is the mental icon I want you to hold onto. 84. We are talking more about demonic influence and affliction than about PRAYER / 279 demonic ownership and control. E. and ed. Prayer of the Forsaken 1. Remember also that God knows the intentions of your heart. But we know better. We do well to meditate often on this unparalleled expression of relinquishment. The Twelve Steps of Saint Benedict A second classical approach to Formation Prayer is the active pursuit of humility described in The Rule of St. Benedict.5 Using the metaphor of Jacob's ladder, Benedict discusses twelve steps into humility. 35. We must admit that it is in short supply everywhere we look. We do it by coming against all social evil and institutional injustice. 2, by John Michael Talbot (Brentwood, TN: Sparrow, 1990). FOSTER Hosea 11:1-4, 134 Amos 5:24, 247 Micah 7:18, 38 Habakkuk 2:20, 76 Matthew 4:4, 137; 5:4, 39; 5:8 160; 6:7, 109; 6:9-13, 184; 6:14, 188; 6:14, 188; 6:14, 188; 6:14-15, 186; 7:6, 232; 7:7-8, 180; 7:9-11, 180; 9:17, 251; 11:28, 93; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 197; 23:37, 39; 27:46b, 17 Mark 1:35, 101; 6:5, 208; 6:31, 185; 7:33, 204; 8:22-25, 208; 9:7, 135; 9:14-29, 208, 234; 9:24, 212; 10:13-16, 248; 11:23, 233; 11:24, 1820, 1820; 17:14, 1820; 9: 14:36, 135; 16:18, 208 Luke 1, 90; 1:38, 24; 2:49, 134; 3:22b, 134; 4:16, 106; 6:21, 39; 7:36-50, 39; 9:1-2, 234; 9:54, 183; 10:9, 234; 10:17, 234; 10 4:1-26, 248; 4:24, 110; 5:19, 120; 5:30, 120; 6:1-14, 185; 8:32, 31; 9:1-12, 207; 9:6, 204; 12:24, 53; 13-17, 193; 13:36-38, 69; 14:11, 120; 15:4, 159; 15:7, 195; 10:7, 195; 10:7, 195; 10:7, 195; 10:7, 195; 10 195; 10:34b-35, 249; 19:11-16, 195; 20:19, 39; 20:31, 3 5, 164 Galatians 2:19-20, 53; 4:6, 134; 5:22, 58 Ephesians 1, 239; 1:20b-22a, 239; 2, 239; 2:6, 239; 4:8, 42; 5:19-20, 107; 5:20, 84; 6, 239; 6:12, 239; 6:12, 239; 6:12, 239; 6:12, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:12, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Colossians 1:24, 218; 4:2, 120 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 120 1 Timothy 1:17, 90, 107; 2:5, 193; 3:16b, 239; 6:13-18, 240; 6:17, 137; 6:18, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 4:6, 120 Philippians 2:12, 59; 3:10, 218; 3:12-14, 59; 107; 4:7, 59; 5:22, 209 2 Timothy 1:7, 90, 149 Hebrews 4:3, 96; 4:9, 94; 5:7, 39, 219; 6:1-6, 208; 7, 99; 7:25, 192; 8, 99; 9, 99; 11:38, 222; 12:2, 219; 5:8, 157 1 John 1:9, 44; 3:20, 10; 4:4, 157 Revelation 5, 240; 5:11-12, 84; 19, 240. Go back to this passage and this time be open to receive whatever God has for you. 11:38). Has it ever seemed like your prayers did no more than bounce off the ceiling and ricochet around an empty room? Pascal declared that his Pensées was written "on his knees." Søren Kierkegaard said of his vocation as a writer, "I have literally lived with God as one lives with a Father, Amen. PRAYER / 21 Have you ever been there? At the end of life, as at the beginning, we find ourselves, in the words of Gerhard Tersteegen, "looking at God, listening is hard for me. My guess is that God is far more accepting of prayers than even the most broad-minded among us." "No. What else is there?" "Well, there is more than just finding out what it says and what it means. As quoted in Lynn J. It is because his children ask. Nagging questions assail us with a force they never had before. FOSTER The trenchant words of William Penn ring true to life: "No Cross, no Crown." For disciples of Jesus suffering simply comes with the territory. -Andrew Murray As we are learning to pray we discover an interesting progression. I do not, however, lack for trying, and I will continue trying, for sometimes—not always, but sometimes—the most wonderful things happen. When Moses as he grew weary. I asked if he would mind if I prayed for him—never mind that he was an atheist; I would have faith for him. ix, 49. Rock me gently Jesus, Rock me gently all night long. Jesus' touch of compassion was comparable to our taking hold of a person with AIDS, stopping the bleeding with our bare hands, and putting our own life in jeopardy. The mountain of offenses grows too high for us—its very weight threatens to crush the life out of us. Our hearts are enlarged to receive and accept all people. "What else could they think?" "The episodes and the darkness have continued now for six months." Gloria was sharing with me in a straightforward and utterly lucid manner. We boldly speak the words of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. As Derek rode up the elevator he thought he might just command that disease away, but when he got into the room, he saw that his friend was asleep. In much smaller but still significant ways the story of MyongSong Presbyterian Church can be repeated many times over. Listen: "We have sinned and done wrong...we have not listened...we have sinned against you" (Dan. Even so, it is sometimes helpful to mention some of the more common ways the Holy Spirit moves among his people in the Prayer of the Heart. The first is an examen of consciousness through which we discover how God has been present to us throughout the day and how we have responded to his \* Some small explanation should be given for the use of the rather unfamiliar word examen. I must capture this moment for the future. His way is like the rain and the snow that gently fall to the earth, disappearing into the ground as they nourish it. For example, we may have been taught that prayer is a sublime and otherworldly activity, that in prayer we are to talk to God about God. The most straightforward answer to this perplexing question is "I don't know." I wish-desperately so-that every single person who sought Healing Prayer were instantaneously and totally healed. Perhaps the most common way of all is through special revelatory impressions and words that the Spirit imparts to the individual. -St. Mary of Jesus We now come to a topic that is not at all popular. The rest of the day was spent in thumbtwiddling silence. St. Symeon the New Theologian, Oratio 32; PG 120:480 C, as quoted in Hausherr, Penthos, p. He had only a flesh wound. 73. We become all that God created us to be. Do we need a little space to think things out? After she finished her sharing, I stood behind her, gently placing my hands on her head in a ritual form of the laying on of hands. International copyright secured. It is the fact that sin hinders our prayers. That became a distinction in later centuries. We expect God to perform like a magician or shower us with blessings like Father Christmas. Crushed over the sin and desolation of Moab, Isaiah cries out, "I weep with the weeping of Jazer; I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh" (Isa. Chapter 3. No, I am talking about the kind of writing that has come out of long experience in the desert and long experience in Santa Barbara, California. A very large number of us find ourselves in situations where the Christian leaders simply do not lead in this realm, but that must not stop our work of intercession. What Do We Do? 166 / RICHARD J. Waging the Lamb'S War As a means of advancing the kingdom of God, Authoritative Prayer is focused primarily upon coming against the principalities and powers of this present darkness. "It's there," continues Bloom, "silent and accepting everything and in a miraculous way making out of all the refuse new richness...transforming corruption itself into a power of life and a new possibility of creativeness, open to the sunshine, open to the rain, ready to receive any seed we sow and capable of bringing thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold out of every seed."6 Such is the power of humility. But God, the great iconoclast, is constantly smashing our false images of who he is and know something about the landscape of the spirit. Liturgical practices, sacramental symbols, aids to prayer, books on personal fulfillment, private devotional exercises—all of these become as mere ashes in our hands. When he says "symbol," he means that the bread and the wine "embody" the reality "as its very expression and mode of manifestation." 9. I must not, however, give the impression that the only expressions of the Prayer of the Heart are in the ecstatic realm, because many are not. Refresh me." It was not hard to wait in silence—that entire outdoor sanctuary seemed hushed in reverence. He knows that we are stiff-necked and hard-hearted, so he has provided a means of entrance. We must want it, want it with a consuming passion. Even more, he is pleased with your attempts to please him. It is the key for prayer in the name of Jesus. We are, in point of fact, in his shoes! Along with Abraham we, too, struggle with the decision to sacrifice the one thing most precious to us. The experience lasted for perhaps an hour and a half, though I had no watch with me to tell for sure. They give us permission to shake our fist at God one moment and break into doxology the next. Under no circumstance are we to tell those receiving prayer that it is their fault: that they lack the faith, or that there must be some sin in them that is hindering the prayer, or any such thing. Give me, please, food to eat today. At times we must confess with the father of the demonized child, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Resting in God The Bible tells us that, after speaking all things into existence from ant to aardvark, and after breathing into the human species the breath of life, God rested. Anthony Bloom tells the story of an elderly woman who had been working at prayer with all her might but without ever sensing God's presence. To this question the old writers answer with one voice: union with God. CHAPTER 18 HEALING PRAYER Many great and wonderful things were wrought by the heavenly power in those days; for the Lord made bare his omnipotent arm, and manifested his power, to the astonishment of many, the healing virtue whereby many have been delivered from great infirmities. I could no longer evade my personal responsibility and involvement. Do not try to study or analyze them. Most often discernment and prudence operate hand in glove. for the functioning of the 252 / RICHARD J. God will then take what looks like a foolish waste and use it to bring us further into his loving presence. Dallas Willard writes, "The aim of God in history is the creation of an all-inclusive community of loving presence." ant."11 I believe that God is gathering just such a community in our day. When I speak of Formation Prayer, I am talking not about perfectionism but about perfectionism but instead the entire time was spended to speak at an adult forum, but instead the entire time was spended to speak at an adult forum, but instead the entire time was spended to speak at an adult forum, but instead the entire time was spended praying for individuals who wanted their hearts warmed in various ways: one who needed physical healing of a defective heart, another who needed emotional healing of a broken relationship, and so forth. It was a repetition that was not only vain but also filled with vanity. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (New York: Paulist, 1978), p. The desire simply is not there. This is no excessive, unhealthy asceticism. No, instead we want to see the dynamic interaction of prayer in concert with an overall spiritual life. 6 (Dec. It gives preaching its point, sharpness, and potency. "When we can see an animal and know that it is a fox and not a wolf," chimed in another. The first night one gentleman shared frankly, "Be easy on me because I am not one of you." This was his way of saying that he was not a Christian, and the group received his comment graciously. He knew when to speak and when to be silent. The Christian number is plural, not singular. The resurrection is God's abrupt absolution! One more thing is needed, namely, our response of repentance—not just once but again and again. Quickly, however, I found myself withdrawing from the intellectual bantering. As Kenneth Swanson reminds us, "We all live in a fallen world, where illness, suffering, and pain are part of the fabric of existence."2 Sometimes we make a faulty diagnosis of the problem and pray, for example, for physical healing when the real need is for emotional healing. We are responsible before God to pray for those God brings into our circle of nearness. I should, at the outset, comment on the special linguistic problem in addressing God. We see a sunset and are drawn into analysis rather than doxology. I rose and jotted down a few ideas that tied into the message I planned to preach, but I really did not have a clue as to how God would warm our hearts. How moved Jesus was by the one, how saddened by the nine! Think of the woman who bathed her Master's feet with the tears of gratitude. We all need a more profound experience of that resurrection, which empowers us to obey Christ in all things. How can we possibly fulfill such promises? We ask. We stand against evil thoughts and suspicions and distortions of every sort. 2:4; 7:7-11). Usually this was a tribal blessing. In utter silence I made my way back upstream, bowed in awe and adoration. 30 / RICHARD J. Speaking of the love of God, you might want to turn next to the Revelations of Divine Love by Juliana of Norwich. FOSTER death to the status guo, death to the status guo, death to things as they have always been. 1:7). He rejoiced in the wedding of a couple in Galilee and added wine to the sacred festivities. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. It was my grand obsession. We are glad to deprive ourselves of many things so that they may have a better chance at life. How do I give up control? Our fasting is a sign that nothing will stop us in our struggle on behalf of the broken and oppressed. Simple, ordinary things are undertaken for the love of God. I do not know about you, but I am not used to "hearing voices." 1 Yet what followed, while unusual, was not strange in the least. "Then I felt a presence: a horrible, awful presence. Such experiences help us on to the next stepping-stone: the practice of gratitude. The same is true for us. It is the mood of the times. Press, 1989), p. Often they have such a "stained-glass" image of prayer that they fail to recognize what they are experiencing as prayer and so condemn themselves for not praying. He had to walk this path alone. When we see through a glass darkly, the Spirit adjusts and focuses what we are asking until it corresponds to the will of God. Vigorous prayers need to arise for prophetic vision to create new solutions to old problems. At home or in the car no one hears but God, and he is pleased. In the final week, which focuses on the resurrection of Christ, the grace we seek is the power of the Spirit to always choose God and God's way. FOSTER vain repetition condemned by Jesus. So what happened? This aspect of God's character—this respect, this courtesy, this patience—is hard for us to accept because we operate so differently. Give it all into his hands and then turn around and walk away. Besides, to be next to the heart of God is a good place, a safe place, for sleeping. No, I need to be in control. Simple courtesy leads us to express our thanks for what we have asked to happen. à Kempis, The Imitation, pp. I do not fully understand the reasons for the wildernesses of God's absence. I have, therefore, chosen to follow the standard usage of the masculine pronoun, although I am keenly aware of the inadequacies of this approach. These experiences seem to be the exception today; there was a time when they were the rule. In the fourteenth century Julian was a woman's name. I am tired of praying. Like Esther we plead with God over the fate of the nation (Esther 4). In Acts 8:5-17 the Samaritan believers received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by Peter and John. Just a brief comment about the stories—personal and otherwise—in this book. 125-26. All distractions are gone. As we read, we will do well to follow the counsel of Thomas à Kempis: "Search for truth in holy writings, not eloquence. Honan (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954), p. We allow inner distractions and frustrations to melt away before him as snow before the sun. True, we need to have our business meetings and our committee meetings and our self-help groups and our self-help groups and our self-help groups and our business meetings and our committee meetings and our self-help groups and center, these things are only ashes in our hands. P. We are able to listen to others intently, quietly. But then I came upon Jesus' shocking words: "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes PRAYER / 235 in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the works that I do and also do the works that I do and, in fact, will also do the w enjoying pleasures, we demand more pleasures—whether we enjoy them or not. It has nothing whatever to do with a Casper Milquetoast kind of personality. 8 (Oct. On a purely human level we understand this instinctively with regard to our children. Are we unable to find a babysitter to care 186 / RICHARD J. Jesus, when you walked among the Ierusalem crowds and in the Iudean hills, vou pioneered this way of living. My bet is that a little prayer sprinkled here and there is simply not enough for you. Unction is the divine in preaching. The Necessity of Struggle We must not, however, get the notion that all of this comes to us effortlessly. There are as many ways to go about the work of intercession as there are people. I have seen the Word spoken and the power descend on street corners and in hospital rooms and in business offices. The Pentateuch contained detailed stipulations about going to the priest whenever disease was suspected (Lev. This is a newspaper published by the National Korean Presbyterian Church. It comes from the same source as the word womb, and so we could speak of the womblike heart of Jesus, which brought healing mercy to the leper. 6. When Jesus defined neighbor, namely, that he is someone like us. This Little Way, as she called it, is deceptively simple. We like our children to ask us for things that we already know they need because the very asking enhances and deepens the relationship. "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake," writes the great Apostle, "and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's 217 218 / RICHARD J. After a few moments allow God to call you by name: "Christy," "Nathan," "Joel," "Tess," "Carolynn," "Richard," "Lynda," "Joy." Next, allow this question to surface: "What do you want?" Answer this prayer, and it is the Holy Spirit who sustains it. administered by BMG Songs, Inc. If we are drawn into confession and repentance, we may want to lie prostrate, face down, in contrition and heart sorrow. Through the course of the time God reawakened in one student her gifting in music and gave her a song-"Abba's Lullaby." She gave me a handwritten copy. We do everything we know. 164. He opens my ear to wait in great gentleness and teachableness of soul for what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. 2 (June 26, 1974): 170. Madame Guyon, Experiencing God Through Prayer, ed. Abraham J. See Jesus Christ Song. I am indebted to 268 / RICHARD J. The way of abandonment. On the one side are those who stress liturgy and sacrament and written praver. George Arthur Buttrick, Prayer (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942), p. By now the long shadows in the canyon signaled the end of the day. Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, ed. Martin Lut St. Benedict Bernard of Clairvaux, 72, 158, 169 Bloesch, Donald, 194, 225, 247 Bloom, Anthony, 32, 61, 96, 172 Body: of Christ, 237; prayer, 116-117; and soul, 203 Bonaventure, 159 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 68, 105, 146, 191; on divine love, 254-255 Book of Common Prayer, The, 107, 109 Borst, James, 163 Bounds, E. One of the really helpful introductions to this faith-inspiring cloud of witnesses is James Gilchrist Lawson's Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians. We watched in reverent worder as he received the gift of saving faith. CHAPTER 6 FORMATION PRAYER Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness. Think of those solitary words atop Golgotha, "My God, My God, why...why?" Christians down through the centuries have witnessed the same experience. All creation seems in harmony with you, the Master Conductor. This is a conscious shouldering of the sins and sorrows of others in order that they may be healed and given new life. "O that my head were a spring of water," he moans, "and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!" (Jer. PRAYER / 275 Chapter 18. It was not to be. 133. Believe me, God receives you just as you are. 156. Or consider Elisha retaliating against the children who jeered at him, calling him a "baldhead": "He cursed them in the name of the LORD. God created us with an imagination, and, as Lord of his creation, he can and does redeem it and use it for the work of the kingdom of God. Fuller (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p.166. Perhaps prayer for others is a starting point. Ole Hallesby writes, "The secret prayer chamber is a bloody battle-ground. How this is done, however, is not well understood in our day. Slowly we are being taken off of vain securities and false allegiances. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, trans. It becomes like our breath or our blood, which moves throughout the entire body. First, lift up into his arms your children, your spouse, your friends. CHAPTER 11 UNCEASING PRAYER When the Spirit has come to reside in someone, that person cannot stop praying; for the Spirit prays without ceasing in him. We worship God with our bodies. Then we pray for daily solitude and rest. In nearly any Psalm we can find a passage that will aid us in praising 90 / RICHARD J. 34. About the Author Richard J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: Paulist, 1987), p. You are probably aware of the priestly confessional in the Roman Catholic Communion. He will never allow us to see more than we are able to handle. There is death to the self-life. And as we wait for that promised land of the soul, we can echo the priestly confessional in the Roman Catholic Communion. He will never allow us to see more than we are able to handle. of deep sobs, even wailing, came over Carolynn as she mourned the death of Anne's child. It is too early to tell how significant this new awakening toward prayer will be, but the signs are encouraging. Other than the ever-present seagulls, I was quite alone. We give thanks. We have families, and jobs, and social responsibilities. "In the prayer of adoration we love God for himself, for his very being, for his radiant joy."1 Adventure in Adoration I went to the annual meeting of a small group of writers in high spirits. Juliana of Norwich declares, "The whole reason why we pray is to be united into the vision and contemplation of him to whom we pray."10 Bonaventure, a follower of Saint Francis says that our final goal is "union with God," which is a pure relationship where we see "nothing."11 And Madame Guyon writes, "We come now to the ultimate stage of Christian experience. In time their very presence and actions will bring down those structures that are sustained by greed and pride and fear. / Would it spoil some vast, eternal plan / If I were a wealthy man?" PRAYER / 13 Share your sorrows, share your joys—freely and openly. Let me describe it for you. 53. In one story a leper came to Jesus, begging to be healed. At times the issue has been tied to the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth century and following in which many felt that the use of icons was a form of idolatry. It is not repetition itself but the repetition itself Family of God, Hymn 404. Even all warm fellowship has disappeared. Our spiritual defiance 248 / RICHARD J. Rest in God's love. Swanson, Uncommon Prayer, pp. 1991): 24. If my fists are clenched and my arms folded tightly around myself, I cannot hold anything. For a useful discussion of breath prayer see Ron DelBene with Herb Montgomery, The Breath of Life: Discovering Your Breath Prayer (Minneapolis, MN: Winston, 1981). He was in Italy during the Second World War and was in charge of a mission of thirty-three men. In waiting we begin to get in touch with the rhythms of life—stillness and action, listening and decision. This particular year we were meeting at a lovely resort near the Canadian border. We pray for our enemies. Some are educated; others are illiterate or semiliterate. We must face the fact that things will never be the same. No doubt Jesus embraced the two disciplines of every faithful Jew: recite the Shema twice a day and observe the three hours of prayer—morning, afternoon, and sundown. Humility is one of those virtues that we never attain by focusing on it. Edward Hays in Prayers for the Domestic Church provides a whole host of prayers that can be participated in by the entire family, whether large or small. As Abraham did, so we are brought to the place of giving over to God our most cherished possession. The peace came. The Laying on of Hands Since I have mentioned the touch of compassion, this might be a good time to discuss the laying on of hands. 22. Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God (New York: Doubleday/Image, 1977), pp. In the Bible it is common for those who encounter God to fall on their face as though dead. Because of this rock-solid foundation, we know that all work is holy work and all places are sacred places. Together we prayed just as I had described it to him, and then we thanked God that this was the way it was going to be. You can rest in God's presence. The Hebrew and Aramaic roots of compassion are inward parts, what the old King James Version used to call bowels of mercy. We are forgiven as we forgive. What movements of the Holy Spirit did you experience this week? Migne, Patrologia Latina 14, p. 12:1). Full, total, unvarnished self-knowledge is the bread by which we are sustained. And I was hoping someone would come by and just visit with me." command of faith only when it is right and good. Forsyth observes, the "sacrament of the Word is what gives value to all other sacraments."15 Body Prayer I do not have a spirit. FOSTER giving them to God. In Simple Prayer we bring ourselves before God just as we are, warts and all. The offense is real, and the hurt is real. We blow the trumpet against institutional structures that guarantee the poverty of the poor. This process is a hard one for us to accept, and we can easily become disheartened by it. In time we can come back and try again. He blessed the children; he talked with an outcast woman; he hobnobbed with a wealthy crook (Mark 10:13-16; John 4:1-26; Luke 19:1-10). If we are honest, and not just trying to cover up our insecurity, we must all admit to deep perplexity over these things. These, of course, are only glimpses. That was many years ago, and the wonderful thing is that although this man has had the normal ups and downs of life since then, the old sorrows have never returned. Three times in that first year I rushed home because the medical staff called, saying the end was near. 12:12, RSV). I knew our meeting that morning was for this moment. I like to have a cup of coffee in hand whenever I pray in the morning. CHAPTER 20 AUTHORITATIVE PRAYER God has instituted prayer so as to confer upon his creatures the dignity of being causes. FOSTER The Covenant of Holy Obedience. For you must always believe that God's power to forgive is greater than your power to sin."11 Whatever we may think about the

historicity of the stories, we are better people for having read about these Friars Minor who called themselves God's Jugglers and went about humbly serving others, inebriated with the love of God. We also need the spiritual gift of discernment and the cardinal virtue of prudence to provide guardrails for the right exercise of Authoritative Prayer. first is the very reasonable question of why we should ask God for things when he already knows our needs. P.T. Forsyth writes, "In the sacrament of the Word the ministers are themselves the living elements in Christ's hands—broken and poured out in soul, even unto death; so that they may not only witness Christ, or symbolize him, but by the sacrament of personality actually convey him crucified and risen."12 I hope you understand that when I speak of the sacrament of the Word, I am referring to more than preaching, though I certainly mean to include preaching. See also Faith; Laying of hands; Skepticism; "Wounded healers" Heart: God's warming of the, 131-133; prayer of the, 131, 133; prayer of the, 131, 1 138-139; preparation of the, 76. 349. We are learning the obedience of settled peace in the expectation of events beyond our control. Frustrations—we "ignore the smell of Deity." 5 Once I was leading a worship service in a home on a hot summer evening. I worshiped, laughed, gave thanks, and even at one point asked some questions that had often troubled me. Two Common Problems By focusing on this basic parent-child relationship, we get light on two of the most common problems in Petitionary Prayer. How good of you to reveal my blind spots even in the midst of my stumbling attempts to pray. When we are perpetually bombarded by the rapturous experience of divine love, it is only natural to want to be like the Beloved. No longer do we laboriously think up ways to act peacefully, for acts of peace spring spontaneously from within. This offering cannot be made in some abstract way with pious words or religious acts. In time, what was in the heart of Judas came to light. Our responsibility here is to have a continuous openness and receptivity for the Spirit to rest upon us. The Psalmist declares, "As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for his children, who sits upon these broken covenants. And God the Father, who sits upon the set upon us." throne of heaven, is using our prayers to form a perfect soliloquy—God speaking to God. We walk into a room and quickly know who is sad or lonely or dealing with a deep, inexpressible sorrow. Here is what I want you to do. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. This is the compassion of Jesus. "Like a lathe," writes Virginia Stem Owens, "a journal forces us inward to the heart of the wood."9 Journal keeping is a highly intentional reflection on the events of our days. We relinquish all competing loyalties. It is true that those in the first flush of faith often are given unusual graces of the Spirit, just like a new baby is cuddled and pampered. Instantly you see the application. Balance every complaint with ten gratitudes, every criticism with ten compliments. I know these are garden-variety losses, but that does not make them hurt any less. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments (London: Independent, 1947), p. Used by permission. We commit sins of commission and sins of omission. Not that there is no pain. Not even gentle assurances. The Prayer of Relinquishment 1. 12:15). We all need a richer contemplation upon that life, which sets us free. It contains both a negative (lead us not into temptation) and a positive (but deliver us from evil). We are part of a people; we identify with them and commit ourselves to them. Everyone loves Father Zosima. 1 Now, in our practice of the prayer of a Father Ferapont with the compassion of a Father Zosima. Through the Prayer of Tears we give God permission to show us our sinfulness and the sinfulness of the world at the emotional level. We move from detached observation to active participation. So Saint Teresa is right after all; this is "the bread with which all palates must be fed." Her words are wise counsel indeed: "32 / RICHARD J. Were you struck by anything? God is working at the desire level of your formation. The simple fact is that we are learning about the prayer that heals, and there is much that we do not know. It has two basic aspects, like the two sides of a door. We may have made commitments in the past that we were not able to fulfill—perhaps a marriage vow or a promise to our children. I hope in this way to define something of the character of our dialogue with God. We pray in suffering, and, as we do, we are changed. Spare not tongue nor pen; but be obedient to the Lord God...and be valiant for the Truth upon earth...walk cheerfully over the world."8 When we do these things, we have come to the place where we love others for God's sake and not our own. To the extent we can draw a line of demarcation, praise lies on a higher plane than thanksgiving. Solitude is the first and the most foundational of these approaches. All Christians participate in these sufferings and through them enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22, 1 Thess. St. John Chrysostom, De paenit. I would always decline, knowing that there were many good resource people in her city. and trans. Jerome tells of a bishop whose love of poverty left him with only a wicker basket to hold the bread and a plain glass cup to contain the wine. He had a free will and a genuine choice, and he freely chose to submit his will to the will of the Father. Another approach comes from the great preacher and pray-er George Buttrick. There are so many, many places to turn: from The Life of Anthony in the fourteenth, to Toyohiko Kagawa in the twentieth. "This is why," writes Bonhoeffer, "human love becomes personal hatred when it encounters genuine spiritual love, which does PRAYER / 255 not desire but serves."12 To attempt to love our neighbor without an ongoing love relationship with God will destroy community. We are not sinners because we commit sinful acts; rather, we commit sinful acts because we are sinners. Children are being destroyed. At first it will feel like we are doing the work, that we are the initiators. God's love demands expression; it cannot stand alone. Like walks, and talks, and good wholesome laughter. See also Imagination Mere Christianity (Lewis), 3 Merton, Thomas, 75, 153, 160; on created things, 171 Messiah (Handel), 68 PRAYER / 293 Micah, 38 Michelangelo, 59, 173 Middle voice: prayer in the, 96-98 Militarism, 152 Moody, D.L., 70 Morning Prayer, 109 Moses, 9, 10, 18, 50, 116, 221; book on life, 150; speaking to God, 120 Mother, language of the, 134 Murray, Andrew, 47, 49 Music and song, 70, 90, 111, 129, 135-37 N Nature: attention to, 87-89, 151, 243-244, 109 Moses, 9, 10, 18, 50, 116, 221; book on life, 150; speaking to God, 120 Mother, language of the, 134 Murray, Andrew, 47, 49 Music and song, 70, 90, 111, 129, 135-37 N Nature: attention to, 87-89, 151, 243-244, 109 Moses, 9, 100 holiness of, 171; lessons of, 102-103; wholeness of, 172 Nayler, James, 240 New Covenant, the, 69 Newman, John Henry, 131 Nicholas of Cusa, 158 Nouwen, Henry, 158 destruction. As I prayed, I gradually became aware of how extremely warm my hand on his chest was becoming. Spiritual mentors are people gifted in discernment, wisdom, and knowledge. Of course, it would be much easier if that were the case, but then we would be describing a mechanical arrangement rather than a living relationship. 152. Most important of all, we both entered into a deeper understanding of death to the self. 38-39. Positively, it means constant change, constant change, constant change, constant openness to the movings of the Spirit. Jonathan Edwards, ed., The Life and Diary of David Brainard (Chicago: Moody, n.d.), pp. The speaker of the evening had just finished and was inviting these young men and women to commit their lives to Jesus Christ. Increasingly, we focus more on God and less on the individual leader. No teaching flowing out of the Sabbath principle is more important than the centrality of our resting in God. I know you have preparations of your own. Increase my awareness. Forsyth, The Soul of Prayer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1916), p. If the key is prayer, the door is Jesus Christ. For his more expanded description, see Christianity Today 35, no. The Father's will was not yet absolutely clear to him. When we pray with muddy motives, the Spirit purifies the stream. If the power of God is present, then we do not need any special effects, and if the divine authority is absent, then all the gymnastics in the world will not make up for the deficiency. In the beginning the experience was wholly effervescent, but in time the experience began to give way to a whispered, "Holy! Holy! PRAYER / 83 Holy!" Worship grew deeper, more fertile. "Until now you 194 / RICHARD J. Sanford, Healing Light, p. When we try to love our neighbor, we discover our utter inability to do so, which irresistibly drives us back to God. What this does within us is altogether wonderful. We give even our lack of prayer to God. "Know thyself" is the famous dictum of Socrates. The concern is legitimate. If left to our own devices, it is so easy for us to take one good look at who we truly are and declare ourselves unredeemable. 77-85 Fulham Palace Road London, W6 8JB, UK United States HarperCollins Publishers Inc. I would like to learn how to sink down into the light of your presence until I can become comfortable in that posture. Crucifixion always has resurrection tied to it. This is the fruit of the Prayer of Rest. For instance, it has a way of tempering our gnawing need to always get ahead. —John Henry Newman The Prayer of the Heart is the prayer of intimacy. In the military annals Joshua was the commander who won the victory that day. The word itself comes from the Latin humus, which means fertile ground. 6:14). As this happens, thanksgiving and praise and adoration will flow naturally in their proper time: "To experience the tiny theophany is itself to adore." 8 This is where we begin, but it is not where we end. This is how we live. I am the better for our meeting. William Law, The Spirit of Prayer and the Spirit of "build my Church" from within existing structures. By the power of the Holy Spirit I speak directly to the thoughts, emotions, and desires of my heart and command you to find your satisfaction in the infinite variety of God's love rather than the bland diet of sin. If we forget our neighbor in our zeal to love God, we will soon forget God as well. Walter Hendricks, ed., The Complete Poems of John Donne (Chicago: Packard, 1942), pp. As the preacher approaches the God of heaven. © 1996-2014, Amazon.com, Inc. 97. We must never try to catalogue or categorize these winds of the Spirit too carefully. This prayer, this experience which begins so simply, has as its end a totally abandoned love to the Lord. Adoration is the spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honor, magnify, and bless God. One of the genuinely rewarding experiences in reading the devotional masters for ourselves is discovering how readily and how naturally they flow from precise description into the most passionate prayer and then on into narrative again without the slightest artificiality. And it is through your forsaken prayer that I speak these words. Foster January 1, 1992 COMING HOME: AN INVITATION TO PRAYER True, whole prayer is nothing but love. (I am speaking not organizationally but organizationally but organizationally.) We are witnessing in our day a whole host of children and men who are getting hooked into a different order of reality and power. He went out of his way to find the "little people": the poor, the sick, the powerless. Follow the counsel of Saint Theodore the Studite: "Let us go in the Spirit to the Jordan...and let us receive baptism with him, I mean the baptism of tears." 15 Also, when you cannot weep outwardly, shed tears before God in your intention. Perhaps you worry that you have done things, or said things, or said things that disqualify you from partaking of the table of the Lord. With the ocean in retreat, I was able to walk almost completely around this magnificent rock fortress, which rises straight out of the sand. Some enter a trancelike state; others lie quietly on the ground or floor. Many times we have personal needs, so we ask of God, and he answers. These folk of faith knew the examen of God, and they experienced it not as a dreadful thing but as something of immeasurable strength and empowerment. On top was a forest of hemlock, Sitka spruce, and Western cedar. FOSTER What do we do? In the country there are chores to be done morning and evening—such as milking the cows and feeding the chickens. In my concern over falling off the deep end, I realized that I just might fall off the shallow end. St. Ignatius of Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, trans. God, says Paul, has taken those who have been saved by grace through faith "and raised us up with him and seated us up with him and seated us with him and seated us up with him an regularly for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading. Even more: he straightens out and cleanses our feeble, misguided intercessions and makes them acceptable before a holy God. Clements and Matthew Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 272 / RICHARD J. 16:9). We waited for some time with a gratifying response as perhaps a dozen individuals rose to speak of particular ways God was melting the coldness and softening the hardness of their hearts. My student friend came to the microphone. I do not really know how to do this. Drawing upon the prophet Isaiah, Jesus declares, "My house shall be a house of prayer" (Isa. Help me to so delight in your presence that I will want to come home to you often. We smell the sea. By the second year, however, he was struggling to maintain his spiritual life, and so he decided to take a private retreat. Just because we continue to experience emotional pain does not mean that we have failed to forgive. It is vitally 148 / RICHARD J. Please nurture this desire of mine, which seems so small and tentative right now. "The more love sandpapers our hearts," writes Glenn Hinson, "the more it quickens us to suffering of our time in our own hearts, and that becomes the starting point for ministry. Sadly, I find that this is often exactly what happens. Bloom, Beginning to Pray, p. We have been given his name to use with his full authority. See also Christians Eucharistic prayer, 111-113 Evil, 189-190, 235-236, 241, 242, 277-279n.20.4. See also Sin; Spiritual warfare Examen: of consciousness, 27-30; the prayer of, 27 Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ (Guyon), 5 288 / RICHARD J. PRAYER / 269 5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together, trans. Instead of feeling guilty that we cannot set aside time for prayer on a daily basis, perhaps it would be better to devote Saturday mornings, for example, to more extended experiences of prayer never seem to get past our frustration over the unwashed dishes in the sink or the chemistry exam tomorrow. We let go of all distractions until we are driven into the Core. I have teamed up with James Bryan Smith to compile writings from fifty-two of the devotional masters from Gregory of Nyssa to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet like a child in its mother's arms" (Ps. 131:1-2, JB). See also Leadership; Spiritual Warfare Autobiography (St. Teresa of Avila), 152 B Baillie, John, 76, 77 Balthasar, Hans Urs von, 180 Barth, Karl, 150 Baxter, Richard, 72, 76, 90 Believing, 212 284 PRAYER / 285 Benedict, 72, 75, 153, 174; twelve steps of, 60-62. She persisted. And still there is nothing. nothing! It feels like we are "beating on Heaven's door with bruised knuckles in the dark," to use the words of George Buttrick.1 I am sure you understand that when I speak of the absence of God, I am talking about not a true absence but rather a sense of 17 18 / RICHARD J. It is, very simply, the fear that we will not be able to fulfill our covenant. No, I have no models, no paradigms for resting. So what is this Prayer of Examen? It is not hard to honor this regular time of meeting, for the language of lovers is the language of lovers is the language of waste. There are activities of mind, body, and spirit that will conguer pride and bring the joy of a meek and humble life. Soon I was aware of a gentle murmuring of worship and adoration arising from my friend—syllables that made no sense to the conscious mind but that made perfect sense to the spirit. Nor is it about methods and techniques of prayer, though I am sure we will discuss both. The Shema—"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD"—was (and is) a confession of faith (Deut. The truth of the matter is, we all come to prayer with a tangled mass of motives—altruistic and selfish, merciful and hateful, loving and bitter. The accomplished pianist, who today spryly runs her hands up and down the keyboard, once had to agonize over the simplest scales. Yes, we might like the less crude realms of adoration and contemplation, but, as P. As quoted in Steere, Prayer and Worship, pp. In the middle of the night, however, she was yanked awake. We pray, we listen, we worship, we carry out the duty of the present moment. Stepping-Stones The Prayer of Adoration must be learned. But how to rest? Dalrymple, Simple Prayer, pp. FOSTER John Woolman, the Quaker tailor who did so much to remove slavery from the American continent, once had a dramatic vision in which he "heard a soft, melodious voice, more pure and harmonious than any I had heard with my ears before; I believed it was the voice of an angel who spake to other angels. Our task, therefore, is to see where God has been working and into that context proclaim the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ. Also, note the sense of nearness and intimacy: God is addressed in a close, personal way. 4:6). I asked him if he noticed how warm my hand had become as we were praying. While I am going to share ways we can enter the Prayer of the Heart, I am not talking about methods or techniques. Augustine writes, "With the mouth of our heart we panted for the heavenly streams of your fountain, the fountain of life." As they were talking, however, words failed them, and they were talking, however, words failed them, and they were talking this contain of life." than his song "If I Were a Rich Man," in which he prays the question many of us wish we could ask the Almighty: "Lord, Who made the lion and the lamb / You decreed I should be what I am. Our task in reality is a small one: to hold the agony of others just long enough for them to let go of it for themselves. Here is how a wonderfully wise woman of prayer taught me to pray for the nations.6 We are to begin, she said, by focusing on one nation and prayerfully discerning what kind of nation it should be. She simply stopped breathing. (Strangely, it never occurred to me to get up and let the cat in!) Later in the evening someone mentioned the cat. We are attentive and responsive. 683. And the Apostle Paul reminds us that "the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. Yanni Embracing the Love of God by James Bryan Smith Songs for Renewal by Janet Lindeblad Janzen with Richard J. A Magnificent mode Moses was one of the world's great intercessors, and one particular incident in his life provides a magnificent mode Moses was one of the world's great intercessors. for us in our continuing work of intercession. Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child,' to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors?" (Num. And who shall stand in his holy place? Actually, it is from the vantage point of the age to come—to the extent that we can understand that perspective—that we get our first hint of a solution to the problem of unanswered prayer. FOSTER 1. See Corporate prayer Original sin, 41 Others, praying for, 199-201 Otium Sanctum (holy leisure), 98 Outward movement, xii, 59, 255 Owens, Virginia Stem, 33 P Parent-child relationship, 180. 45. It is an essential part of our growing and deepening in things spiritual. We bask in the warmth of his presence. Our prayer privilege may never be this striking, but it will be just as important. Understandable Fear I can well imagine that you almost instinctively draw back from all this language of commitment. Do not let yourself get away with the "I'm just not the emotional type" excuse. But each time she would rally a bit, and the dark tragedy of death would be replaced by the untheatrical regularity of the uneventful. Healthy Skepticism and Wholesome Faith I wish I had space to go into other matters, for there is so much to learn. Joshua was needed to lead the charge. Without apology and without defense we ask to see what is truly in us. The Covenant of Time means a commitment to a regular experience of prayer. Intercessory Prayer is priestly ministry, and one of the most challenging teachings in the New Testament is the universal priesthood of all Christians. Instructed By a Commercial I want to plant a visual icon in your mind for the Prayer of Relinquishment. The Journal of George Fox (Cambridge: Univ. But soon I began to quiet down, and as I did, I heard this: "Why don't you go over and turn off the blower yourself?" I was less than five steps away from the switch! In my youthful enthusiasm I was expecting God to intervene by some divine fiat when what was needed was a simple action on my part. The usual distinction between these two experiences is this: in thanksgiving we give glory to God for who he is in himself. A sacred trust has been broken. I am the first to admit that our language is simply limited here. The gentleman suddenly began to weep, heaving deep sighs of sorrow and grief. It is one means through which God imparts to us what we desire or need, or what God in his infinite wisdom knows is best for us. To stop this jostling you must bind the mind with one thought, or the thought of One only. Constance Garnett (New York: W. That is accurate enough in analysis, but when we come to practice, it can be misleading. In a world in which Winning Through Intimidation is the order of the day, I am attracted to people who are free from the tyranny of assertiveness. 6 I am drawn to those who are able to simply meet people where they are, with no need to control or manage or make them do anything. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Meditating on the Word, trans. I also want to be your Teacher and your Friend. No, I think it is better if we turn our attention to the practice of the Prayer of Suffering. Agape, in contrast, gives, expecting nothing in return. We speak balance into phobic and neurotic personalities. Most of us live such fractured and fragmented lives that collectedness is foreign to us. He invites us to see and to hear what is around us and, through it all, to discern the footprints of the Holy. Don't manipulate God; just receive. "Therefore take up the whole armor of God," writes Paul, "so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day." And these are weapons of real power: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, the life of prayer (Eph. She lived an ordinary learn wy voice," declares the Psalmist (Ps. 5:3). A short time later he picked up his Bible and glanced over the text once again. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p. We do not pretend to be more holy, more pure, or more saintly than we actually are. Some people work at the business of praying with such intensity that they get spiritual indigestion. 1:25) A bystander told me that a student had fallen out of the back of a pickup truck as it was turning the corner and that her head had struck the concrete pavement. It is the kind that enriches the lives of others and brings healing to the world. At the center of our being we are hushed. So we are brought to the most primary form of prayer: Simple Prayer. You can't make yourself sleep, but you can create the conditions that allow sleep to happen. I am giving not a moralistic judgment on our activities but a theological judgment on our separation from God. Praying the Ordinary 1. If this is the case (and present scholarship leans in this direction), then the idea is as follows: with the death and resurrection of Christ the age to come has been inaugurated. 33. A second problem with Petitionary Prayer arises from those of tender heart. So how do we pray in Jesus' name, that is, in conformity to his nature? In remembrance of your sorrow help me to weep over my sin...and my sins. As we begin to follow these nudgings of the Spirit, we are changed from the inside out. Jim shared his insights, hoping they would impress the monk. As long as the only cry heard among us is for vengeance, there can be no reconciliation. You too have such a center, I am sure. Later he PRAYER / 49 shared with us how the prayer touched a deep center in his past relating to his baptism as a child. This we must fight against with all our might, for it is always opposed to life in the kingdom of God. This particular book has had an influence upon Christians far beyond the borders of the Eastern Church. At the very heart of the universe is God's desire to give and to forgive. We say our prayer, and we are unaware of having said it. We begin right where we are in the nooks and crannies, the frustrations and fears, of ordinary life. But our responsiveness is important and worthy of our attention. I am not trying to escape nor retreat from the struggles and hardships. Certainly Anne's depression had lifted enough that she could function normally once again. Saint John of the Cross named it "the dark night of PRAYER / 19 faith." George Fox said simply, "When it was day I wished for night, and when it was night I wished for day."2 Be encouraged—you and I are in good company. It forces us to keep coming back to the Great Sacrifice. Then, too, we fear that commitment will take all the spontaneity and joy out of our lives. Vain search! No, it is not a journey into ourselves that we are undertaking but a journey through ourselves so that we can emerge from the deepest level of the self into God. Then there are times when our prayers are simply self-contradictory, a "grant me patience quickly" kind of prayer. What would happen if I closed my hands completely?" The response is PRAYER / 103 immediate: "Why, the bird will be crushed and die." their parents. It is as if God's graciousness in giving to us allows us to see the enormous debt we owe and leads us to cry out, "Forgive us our debts." The debts are enormous indeed. The earliest altar was the hearth whose open fire burned in the center of the home. I am speaking, of course, about the Prayer of Suffering. Surgeons can be prompted to prayer by each scrubdown as they prepare for an operation. It is given for our joy. But the story she told that day was anything but sophisticated. This is not a law but a practical help. All week she tries to live as an heir of God's power, doing his works and thinking his thoughts. Hymns for the Family of God, Hymn 86. You are being prayed for right now. He is the founder of Renovaré, an infrachurch movement committed to the renewal of the Church in all her multifaceted expressions, and a general editor of the Renovaré Spiritual Formation Study Bible. In the bread and the wine remember...remember Calvary. While Joshua engaged in spiritual combat by raising hands of prayer over the conflict. In this book, however, I will follow the division between the two that has developed over the centuries of the Church, though I certainly do not want to make too much of the difference. Friday, after the customary introductions, I shared my conviction that God had a special word for us, not from me but from one of their own. When we suffer these things—things for which we are not responsible and over which we have no control—we are to endure them patiently, putting our trust in God. To my knowledge, when this experience is uncontrived (and there are plenty of charlatans in this realm), it always seems to have beneficial results. What are you to do? He is 'Abba,' Father, to me. FOSTER In time, this led me to the inescapable conclusion that the healing ministry of Jesus is intended for the total person, and so my prejudices against physical healing began to crumble. "What, Lord, do you have for this congregation this morning? But you may not be as well acquainted with the lovely experience of Saint Augustine and his mother, Monica, while at the city of Ostia on the Tiber River. We need all the help we can get in order to move into a deeper, fuller adoring. Some scholars will go so far as to suggest that behind all Jesus' references to God as Father in our Greek New Testament is Hebrew and Aramaic Abba language. Real, solid, enduring virtues begin to develop deep within. It was the guidance to pray for the rising up of a new generation of leaders—prophets of the apostolic mold—leaders who could once again gather the people of God into communities of radical faithfulness. But it gets even better. Carolynn was still asleep, so I quietly slipped out for an early walk on the beach. In the affairs of human beings there is a vicious circle of retaliation: you gore my ox, and I'll gore your ox; you hurt me, and I'll hurt you in return. When we do these kinds of things with some degree of regularity, we, in time, begin to experience pleasures rather than merely scrutinize them. The Hebrew title of the Psalms also means hymns. But in praise my soul ascends to self-forgetting adoration, seeing and praising only the majesty and power of God, His grace and redemption."2 The Bible is certainly packed with praise. Therefore, it is good to see if anything helpful can be said as we face the barren wasteland of God's absence. Sometimes we, like the disciples of old, want to rain down fire from heaven upon God's enemies. We can lift our hands, clap our hands, fold our hands. The wounds are deep, and we may hurt for a very long time. It is in the everyday and the commonplace that we learn patience, acceptance, and contentment. The great Apostle Paul tells us that "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal. To make this hour gloriously rich. In holy boldness we cover the earth with the grace and the mercy of God. Besides, as C. See also Confession; Repentance Conversation morum (change principle), 57-581 Corporate prayer, 197-199; for others, 199-201 Covenant: the new established by Jesus, 69; of obedience, 70-72; of place, 75-76; prayer of, 67-70; of time, 72-75 Created things. We can be hugged and find comfort in his arms. What then is forgiveness? Hans Urs von Balthasar writes, "It is quite wrong to subordinate oratio to contemplatio, as if vocal prayer more for the advanced, for each pole determines and presupposes the other; the one leads directly to the other."3 Petition, then, is not a lower form of prayer. The scriptural admonition is, "The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!" (Hab. "Tell them to come as quickly as they can," he instructed. By steady prayer for the preacher, to be sure. Following lunch, I went on a solo hike near a lovely lake, thrilling at the infinite variety of blues and greens. I do nothing. It is not that we love pain or are trying to find ways to be martyrs. We speak with the boldness of Martin Luther when he prayed for his sick friend Melanchthon: "I besought the Almighty with great vigor...quoting from Scripture all the promises I could remember, that prayers should be granted, and said that he must grant my prayer, if I was henceforth to put faith in his promises."5 I was once visiting a young boy, whom I shall call Franky, who was in the hospital, suffering from a deteriorating eye condition. We can also establish a "hermitage" in our home. Perhaps half of the congregation stood, and I led an extended prayer of commitment—interspersed with times of silence—as we continued to wait upon God for the warming of our hearts. Although there have been many fine English translations of The Imitation, PRAYER / 261 I heartily endorse this fresh translation by William Creasy because he has succeeded in creating a text that elicits an experience similar to that of the original reader. A strange name came to him over and over, a name he did not know. See Psalms, p. We learn about the goodness of God but by watching a butterfly. Baxter, Saints' Everlasting Rest, p. Del Mastro (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Image, 1979), p. We did not learn to walk overnight. But this was something she had lived with all her life; she never dreamed of praying about it. It was a tender moment. We weep. For Gregory—and we who follow him—virtue is discovered not so much in the attaining as in the trying, the struggling, the running of the race. The dangers are all too real. Often there is a simple warming of the spirit toward the things of God. We must not, however, be too quick to judge. FOSTER problem." Deep within, however, I sensed the need for something more than mere solitude...but what? In this view our asking represents a more crude and high minded approach, since they are free from any egocentric demands. We have swung like a needle to the polestar of the Spirit. We plead the case of the orphan and the widow, or whoever the helpless ones are in our context. The haunting words "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place" describe a pattern of life more than a single event (Mark 1:35, RSV). That puts us in the "on-top" position, where we are competent and in control. Briefly I gave them a crash course on Healing Prayer. You're not really thinking about what you are praying." The allegation is basically accurate, but far from being a drawback, I see it as primarily an asset. He has a way of bringing to pass the longings deep within—after all, he placed those longings there! Life-Giving Covenants covenant is a Bible word. She showed me her "family album" of some two hundred photographs of missionaries and others she was concerned to hold before the throne of heaven. In what ways have you encountered Christ in your study of the Bible this week?10 Many issues need to be resolved for those committed to small group spiritual formation: how to develop spiritual mentors while maintaining shared leadership, how to allow for the free proliferation of groups without destructive excesses, how to maintain accountability without legalism. This song is copyrighted by Carol Lacquement Penick. FOSTER 11. The opportunities to live in this way come to us constantly, while the great fidelities happen only now and again. Blessing is jubilant praise, praise raised to its highest point. Forsyth writes, "When we speak to God it is really the God who lives in us speaking through us to himself.... He pleads with God to use strongarm tactics to bring him around: "Bend your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new." It is a strong prayer, to be sure, but one that can have startling results. I ask you: is the servant any better than the Master? He invites us into the living room of his heart, where we can put on old slippers and share freely. FOSTER I Ignatius of Loyola, 59, 174 Imagination, 147-14817. PRAYER / 171 The Holiness of Created Things The Bible is almost casual in its assertion that "God created the heavens and the earth...and indeed, it was very good" (Gen. The one thing we are to do is show compassion. The movement outward (Part III) is prayer to God the Holy Spirit, which corresponds to his role as Empowerer and Evangelist among us. Moody was so overcome by God's loving presence that he rushed to the home of a friend in order to have a room alone where, for two hours, wave after wave of God's ravishing love swept over him. That in itself is a sin against heaven. Just what are we expecting it to accomplish? The Wells That Nourish Us While we always want to affirm Holy Scripture as the first and purest source for lectio divina, we can also draw from the great devotional writings that have nurtured Christians throughout the ages. Matlaw, trans. Finding Value The values of the Prayer of Suffering are legion. We are listening, always listening, for the Divine Whisper amid the human clatter, for, as P. Finally, I got up and stood at his left shoulder, placing one hand on his back and the other over his heart. You may recall that the children of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. We should not overstate the place of prayer in the formation of "holy habits." Prayer by itself is severely limited in the good it can accomplish. I am sure they are correct. Second, we do not have to put on some special voice or jump up and down or do anything bizarre to function in this realm. But by then I could no longer speak, for a great brokenness came over me, and I quietly sobbed on her behalf. Our problem is that we assume prayer is something to master algebra or auto mechanics. 2:12; 1 Tim. The divine word continued, "But this is what my Church is going to be!" Great hope rose up within me as I stared at this massive icon of strength and endurance. You get the idea—food, home, clothes, life itself—for all these and more we practice gratitude. Lewis, The Problem of Pain (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. Or it could have been something far more simple—a pledge to be diligent in devotional reading, for example. Are there things in this world that you want destroyed—the systems of religion we use to hide from you—the artificial lines we draw that separate us from each other: black from white, men from women, parents from children—the terrible injustices done to the weak and the helpless—the unspeakable violence done to women and to unborn children? Likewise, when Paul spoke of the word of God as the sword of the Spirit, he used the word of He Spirit, he used the word of the Spirit, he used the word of God as the sword of the synch set of the synch set of the word of God as the sword of the Spirit, he used the word of God as the sword of the Spirit, he used the word set of the synch agony which saves the world. We can use trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, strings, pipe, and loud clashing cymbals. That is part of our suffering, a little like arguing with our best friend. We do it by coming against every "mountain" that hinders our progress in God. Any thoughtful person knows that this means far more than just tacking on a rote formula to the end of our prayers. As quoted in Thomas Merton, Contemplative Prayer (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Image, 1971), p. Well, we pace the floor with God, telling him of our hurt and our disappointment. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it" (Exod. We brood on the truth that he is now filling us with his peace. FOSTER bed was holy ground. Hallesby, Prayer, p. FOSTER been confined to the twentieth century. Here violent and decisive battles are fought out." 8 But remember, we are told that the gates of hell cannot withstand the onslaughts of the Church (Matt. And finally, sometimes our prayers, if answered, would do us in. Then the lines are drawn, the debate begins, and the self-deception takes over. It means a simple recollecting of ourselves until we are unified or whole. On New Year's Day 1937, he wrote, "God, I want to give You every minute of this year. Under their leadership and by the power of the Holy Spirit the people of God are once again being gathered. See Helen Bacovein, The Way of a Pilgrim (New York: Doubleday/Image, 1979). We are led to a profound and holy distrust of all superficial drives and human strivings. FOSTER helplessness. If so, the concern would be not to bring people into experiences of leadership before they are ready, that is, where the exercise of power and authority would lead to pride and various other abuses. 83. God does not expect you to dive immediately into the ocean of constant communion and swim from one continent to the other. Relinquishment takes us into rugged terrain. 6). 6:7; Rom. And, like Abraham, we come down from the mountain with the meaning of the words my and mine forever changed. Saint John calls this the "Passive Dark Night." It is the condition of Peter, who once girded himself and went where he wanted but in time found that others girded himself and went where he did not want to go (John 21:18-19). Notice the steady influence upon Augustine of sterling examples of virtue: Monica; the deceased friend of his youth; Victorinus; Anthony; Ambrose. Like loving our spouse, and playing with our kids, and working with our colleagues. True pleasures are, after all, "shafts of the glory," to use the phrase of C. PRAYER / 211 Again he said, "Lady, your sins are forgiven you," and again, she kept right on with her monologue. 2:20). Perhaps you have felt deeply the load of guilt at your offense against heaven. For further information see Bloesch, Struggle of Prayer, pp. And seventh, while we always want to be bold in the boldness of God, we must immerse our efforts in the most profound humility of spirit. Here we have the incarnate Son praying through his tears and not receiving what he asks. —St. Augustine God has graciously allowed me to catch a glimpse into his heart, and I want to share with you what I have seen. It was hard, backbreaking labor. On and on goes the litany, thanksgiving. The Little Way This leads directly into a third classical approach to Formation Prayer: the Little Way of Thérèse of Lisieux.8 This simple woman, known only as "the Little Flower," devised a prayer-filled approach to life that has helped many. He may be eating or drinking, he may be resting or working—the incense of prayer will ascend spontaneously from his heart. Fifth, liturgical prayer helps us avoid the familiarity that breeds contempt. Thomas Kelly writes, "There is a degree of holy and complete obedience and of joyful self-renunciation and of sensitive listening that is breathtaking."2 I know that all this sounds so frighteningly absolute and final. In despair Jim told the brother that he simply could not do what was being asked of him. This does not promote inactivity, but it does promote dependent activity. I command every evil influence to leave; you have no right here and I allow you no point of entry. The adventure is just beginning. Put PRAYER / 61 in simple terms, humility means to live as close to the truth about others, the truth about others, the truth about others, the truth about others, the truth about the world in which we live. I am also indebted to a special group of individuals who prayed for me throughout this writing and held up my often sagging arms: Wendell Barnett, Ken and Doris Boyce, Karen Christensen, Taddie Gunn, Dotsy Hill, Ed and Alice Kerr, Claudia Mitchell, Bonnie Parker, Betse Rockwood, Sarah Smith, Dallas and Jane Willard, Jean Winslow, and Dick and Gayle Withnell. I want to free you of the greed and avarice, the fear and hostility that make your life one great sorrow." Now, we may chaff under this and struggle against it, but in time we learn the goodness of rightness and begin to move into holy obedience. It is only two years ago that the keeping of records was begun here in Hippo, and already, at this writing, we have nearly seventy attested miracles."8 May we like Augustine, be able to trade in our healthy skepticism for wholesome faith as we witness the humble testimony of those who receive the healing touch of God. While I never felt any need to reject these professional tools, I came to believe that Healing Prayer could greatly enhance the good that was being accomplished. In the fourteenth century there was a renaissance of hesychasm among the monks at Mount Athos, and since that time it has been associated with Eastern Orthodoxy. We question, we doubt, we struggle. At the time, I worked at a family counseling center, and I was acutely aware of my seeming inability to bring the healing power of Christ to bear on emotional and mental illness. Please forgive all my offenses against your law. Break my stony heart with the things that break your heart. Often our best prayers feel like inarticulate groans. Besides healing, some of the more common uses of the laying on of hands are as follows: 1. Since the purpose is to bring about conformity to Christlikeness, there is throughout The Exercises an uninterrupted asking for special charisms, or graces of the Spirit. No influence is allowed to come near to me but that it is first filtered through the light of Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. We rejoice for every advance of modern psychiatry and psychology as better ways are discovered to promote the healing of the deep mind. Therefore, I would like to provide you with a simple approach to Healing Prayer that I hope will be helpful in ordinary situations. Jesus himself taught in this manner, making constant appeal to the imagination in his parables. Social holiness takes us beyond our comfort zones and our geographic borders. And so I trust that many passages in this book will be instantly recognizable—making you think, "Of course! I've experienced that!" By naming our experiences, I hope to increase our understanding of what God is doing among us so we can be more intentional in our practice. FOSTER perfectly embodies the central core of prayer in that we are full participants in the action, but the grace that comes is all of God. 14:15-16a). That is forgiveness. Why, for example, did Jesus say, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24)? Our Eternal Lover lures us back regularly into his presence with anticipation and delight. To the person they love Jesus with their whole heart. We stayed in those words for some moments, and I am sure that long after all my lectures are completely forgotten, this simple song will remain because on that day Jesus sang his lullaby over us. When I recite the words of the Morning Prayer—"O God, come to my assistance. We can share in the joyous wonder of such flaming visions through the biographies and journals of the saints and the wonderful stories of countless unnamed, unheralded ordinary people. They are a way to the end. No, it is not the parental image of God that startles us as we read the Gospels; it is the invitation to address God in such a personal and intimate way that is entirely new. Sometimes we are invaded to the depths by an overwhelming experience of the love of God. I have chosen to side with those who see the imagination as a useful aid in Contemplative Prayer. Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptural quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. We are bringing the resources of heaven to bear upon a particular matter on earth. I have a little book in my pocket to record Your words as they come to me all day long, just as I might learn any language."12 Interestingly, the experience of that year led him into his life's work, known worldwide as the Laubach Literacy Method. This is a hard reality for us who carry the illusion that the world revolves around our decisions. Thank you, Lord, for resurrection." Some things will remain dead—it is better for you that they do. Far from getting overcommitted, perhaps you find it hard to get up much enthusiasm to pray for others. Sometimes, I just wish I could walk into intensivecare rooms and mental health wards and bring people to wholeness, one after the other Nothing of substance would be changed. He is waiting patiently for us to focus our attention on him. When in honesty we accept the evil that is in us as part of the truth about ourselves and offer that truth up to God, we are in a mysterious way nourished. Here and there I have changed minor details in order to protect the anonymity of the individual Jean-Pierre de Caussade writes, "The soul, light as a feather, fluid as water, innocent as a child, responds to every movement of grace like a floating balloon." 2 In earlier chapters I have made passing reference to the way prayer changes the ingrained habit structures of our lives. Brother Masseo and, my favorite, Brother Juniper. FOSTER for they lack those elements necessary to be "newsworthy"-money, power, and scandal. FOSTER Chapter 4. Like Mary our soul magnifies the Lord, and our spirit rejoices in God our Savior (Luke 1). We discover that the workings of faith, hope, and love become themselves subject to doubt. Contents Acknowledgments v Preface vi Coming Home: An Invitation to Prayer 1 Part I Moving Inward: Seeking the Transformation We Need 5 Chapter 3 The Prayer of Relinquishment 47 Chapter 6 Formation Prayer 57 Chapter 7 Covenant Prayer 67 Part II Moving Upward: Seeking the Intimacy We Need 79 Chapter 14 Contemplative Prayer of Adoration 81 Chapter 13 Chapter 14 Contemplative Prayer 15 Part III Moving Outward: Seeking the Ministry We Need 167 Chapter 15 Praying the Ordinary 169 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 179 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 203 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 179 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 179 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 203 Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer 179 Chapter 1 Index 284 About the Author 299 Other Renovaré Resources for Spiritual Renewal 300 Other Books by Richard J. 6 (Nov./Dec. The week had been filled with good theological debate. 8:10-26). But you may find it difficult to love God. It is the prayer of love and tenderness of a child to Father God.\* Like the mother hen, who gathers her chicks under her wings, we, through the Prayer of the Heart, allow God to gather us to himself—to hold us, to coddle us, to love us (Luke 13:34). The Eskimo Christians I met there had a deep sense of the wholeness of life, with no break between their prayer and their work. Christian Community Our commitment to the entire world must also be made specific, and so the true prophetic message always calls us to Christian community. We are to come back to this most basic way of prayer over and over. Jesus, we are told, "offered up prayers and supplication, with loud cries and tears" (Heb. Every effort seems to leave you cold and hard of heart. Doberstein (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954), p. I am sorry for my many rejections of your overtures of love. Though Jim could barely believe it, the angel's word to Mary seemed to be a word for him as well: "You have found favor with God." Mary's perplexed query was also Jim's question: "How can this be?" And yet it was so, and Jim wept in the arms of a God of grace and mercy. Then we would not have to be dealing constantly with the frustration of unanswered prayer and the embarrassment of those who seek to engineer God for their own ends. But when we pray, genuinely pray, the real condition of our heart is revealed. FOSTER I tell you all these things only to be suggestive. When they call to me, I will answer them." and began praying Scripture to God. When Gloria awoke, she felt somewhat better. 13:12). FOSTER and both are drawn into the love and goodness of God. Joyfully, we receive the nourishment of heavenly manna. As quoted in Bloom, Beginning to Pray, p. Many have traveled this way before us. In addition, many of the angels of God have been assigned to aid us in our battle. How easily we think we can contain the movings of the Spirit, who always blows where he wills. Sin was there to be sure: an angry word, a missed courtesy, a failed opportunity to encourage someone. In our case, for example, both boys went to different churches from us during their teenage years in order to have the emotional space to explore their own faith experience. "I am weary with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping" (Ps. 6:6). The next morning Julie was perfectly well. Short David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my moaning," laments David, "every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with tears; I drenc cloud of unknowing "with a short dart of longing love." 5 We may not see the end from the beginning, but we keep on doing what we feel. Amen. This is not hard to do, for the structure of many Psalms is geared to this end. Perhaps you will want to picture Jesus sitting in the chair across from you, for he is indeed truly present.17 If frustrations or distractions arise, simply lift them up into the arms of the Father and let him care for them. As we wait before the Lord, graciously we are given a teachable spirit. They are seeking simply and faithfully to follow the command of Yahweh: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live" (Isa. Ordinary folk throughout the ages tell us it is possible. The village had the same name the minister had been weeping over.17 In some way that we do not now understand, this minister was allowed to share in the sufferings of the village people and so share in the sufferings of Christ. Speak words of love and compassion to the Father. Here is one approach to recollection. Jim went back to his room and opened his Bible, muttering to himself, "Birth narrative, I've read it a thousand times." For the first couple of hours he sliced and diced the passage as any good exegete would do, coming up with several useful insights that could fit into future sermons. Of course, the idea of God as Father is not new. How easily we fall short! In the levitical legal code the fire on the altar was to be kept burning god to kindle a fire of love within you. Can we give a prophet's honor to those with the prophetic mantle, or must we always kill them? Now, it is not wrong to pray over our own pressing needs, but that must never be the end of our prayer work. Often we must stand under the imponderable 208 / RICHARD J. The crippled woman whom Jesus calls a "daughter of Abraham" was bound by an evil spirit for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17). They come from every class and category of people. FOSTER hearts the words of the Psalmist: "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long.... That is what we are doing in the examen of consciousness. Several recent workbook-style manuals help to apply the Ignatian retreat idea into contemporary settings. Praises joined with the river in joyous exaltation. Now, I wish this did not sound so trivial, because, on the practical level of knowing God, it is the most profound truth we will ever hear. But it is not self-centered prayer, for the requests of breath prayer are seasoned reflections on the will and ways of God. James Borst says, "He is closer to my true self than I am myself. Praise music abounds today that can ease even sad hearts into adoration. We seek the fellowship of other Christians and discover only backbiting, selfishness, and egoism. One of the first things that strikes us when we read the Gospels is the deep, personal, intimate nearness of Father God that Jesus experienced and taught. Demosthenes was free to be a great orator only because he had gone through the discipline of 67 68 / RICHARD J. The doctor asked me to call Maria's parents, who lived in Texas some eight hours' drive away. Yet we somehow think we can do without what he deemed essential. In one form or another I have had (and in some measure continue to have) all of the concerns that are often expressed about Sacramental Prayer. And still we went upward, meditating and speaking and looking with wonder at your works, and we came to our own souls, and we went beyond our souls to reach that region of never-failing plenty where Thou feedest Israel forever with the food of truth." After describing this unusual experience of spiritual ecstasy, Augustine notes, "We sighed and left captured there the firstfruits of our spirits and made our way back to the sound of our voices, where a word has both beginning and end."21 Augustine's experience, while certainly unusual, is not unique. And may the God of all peace strengthen you, bless you, and give you joy. S., 173 Elisha, 9, 116 Ephrem, 37 Eskimo Christians, 172. Two things, at least. Why ease? Perhaps you are bruised and broken by the pressures of life. What is our response? Besides, everyone will really begin to be concerned about my absence." In full gear now, my mind began envisioning self-centered surrealistic scenarios: "People may be thinking that I tipped over in the canoe, and right now they are probably discussing whether to mount a rescue effort!" The same words served to discipline my mind: "Be still...Rest...Shalom." The final temptation, however, was the most alluring. We are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Watkins, 1965), p. The will is surrendered moment by moment as you face the ordinary decisions of home, family, and job. Basil Pennington uses the phrase centering prayer. "My aim? I have never forgotten his prayer. So much do I love this solitude that when I walk out along the road to the old barns that stand alone, far from the new buildings, delight begins to overpower me from head to foot and peace smiles even in the marrow of my bones.10 The Covenant of Place includes a commitment to community. Help me, Lord, to work resting and to pray resting. We do not try to conceal our conflicting and contradictory motives from God.-or ourselves. 5:19-20). Normally the aid of prayer and the aid of prayer and the aid of medicine should be pursued at the same time and with equal vigor, for both are gifts from God.-or ourselves. I was a teenager at the time, but even at that young age I knew that the place where I stood beside that 200 / RICHARD J. 256 God, taken from the Song of Solomon: "My Well Beloved." If you have disturbing thoughts, simply return to your special name for God, and the distractions will be driven out. She graciously agreed. The Prayer of Suffering 1. As they lifted the student into the ambulance, I recognized PRAYER / 213 her as the young woman I had met earlier in the classroom. But regardless of whether we feel strong or weak, we remember that our assurance is not based upon our ability to conjure up some special feeling. Also you will find that the content of what you pray will PRAYER / 177 change. CHAPTER 7 COVENANT PRAYER What we need is a desire to know the whole will of God, with a fixed resolution to do it. Even more, the imagination helps to anchor our thoughts and center our attention. We today lack such a religious sanctuary in the community, which argues all the more for having one in the home. We must pray for God to make a way where there is no way. But if we are truly willing and obedient, the teaching of the Lord is life and light. We become tentative and unsure of ourselves. We do not take occasional joggers and put them in a marathon race, and we must not do that with prayer, either. We much prefer the image of restful harmony. Søren Kierkegaard, The Journals of Kierkegaard, ed. But there is also the subjective, experiential side. Perhaps you feel miles away from such experiences. Do you not crave an increase of God's love, God's joy, God's peace, God's power? The wells that nourish us are vast and deep. 214. Crucial questions must be addressed. The idea is ludicrous. Authority needs compassion to keep it from becoming destructive. Do you get the idea? It also calls us to detailed resolves. I think especially of his Game with Minutes, in which he sought to see how many minutes in a day he could become conscious of God's presence. Rural life tends to function around a weekly cycle. FOSTER your baby are your prayer. Look for them—they are not hard to spot, even though they seldom call attention to themselves. Father Zosima, on the other hand, is the epitome of the compassionate, kind, caring priest. 5:1-5). You may want to ask yourself several questions of examination to help evaluate your own readiness: "Am I becoming less afraid of being known and owned by God?" "Is prayer developing in me as a welcome discipline?" "Is it becoming easier for me to receive constructive criticism?" "Am I learning to move beyond personal offense and freely forgive those who have wronged me?" If, after this small experience of examen, you sense that you are not yet ready for unmediated communion with God, then feel perfectly free to pass over this chapter. We will "call evil good, and good evil," as Isaiah savs (Isa. Sidnev Spencer (Canterbury, England: Clarke, 1969), p. In reality this is a pagan concept of prayer in which we rouse the gods to action by our many incantations and vain repetitions. FOSTER Maybe this sounds impossible, even undesirable, to you. FOSTER Almighty, most holy, most high God, thank you for paying attention to small things. The confession that the world is sacramental does not negate the fact that God ordains particular sacraments for imparting his mercy. In the same way that a small child cannot draw a bad picture so a child of God cannot offer a PRAYER / 9 bad prayer. Together they form a paradigm for Petitionary Prayer by which we can conjugate all the verbs of our individual asking. These experiences of abandonment and desertion have come and will come to us all. In fact, we cannot sustain a life of prayer outside the community. "No way!" we say. We are to do likewise. The point is that we do not have to have everything perfect when we pray. As we live this way, we develop what Thomas à Kempis calls "a familiar friendship with Jesus." We become accustomed to his face. The Limitation of Prayer Before proceeding, I must offer a caution. Several years after this event we lost contact with each other, and I have not seen him since. We taste the salt in the air. God in his great wisdom has freely chosen to mediate his life to us through visible realities. Foster 301 Credits 302 Front Cover 1 Copyright 303 About the Publisher 304 Acknowledgments It is never possible for any of us to cover the list of those who have shaped us. Both the active and the passive sides are necessary, and both stand in a dynamic tension with one another—a little like Michelangelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel of God and Adam stretching out to one another. I take into myself the weapons of truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, the word of God, and prayer. Their profoundly simple approach is to go through all the activities of our days in joyful awareness of God's presence with whispered prayers of praise and adoration flowing continuously from our hearts. At other times we sense the nearness of God and are encouraged by the intimate friendship. Often these are times of tension, for teenagers are struggling to define themselves. PRAYER / 157 It is not that we must be accomplished in these areas. One special value of a journal is the record that it keeps—a personal Ebenezer, if you will. It is just when we are gasping for breath that Jesus invites us to pray: "Forgive us our debts." He teaches us in this way because he knows how very much God loves to forgive. In Simple Prayer the good, the bad, and the ugly are all mixed together. We believe with the whole person: body, mind, spirit. We are to cultivate silence, avoid frivolous talk, and use plain, simple speech. We must first have our minds filled with and disciplined by Scripture before we can, with genuine profit, 146 / RICHARD J. FOSTER demands of home and family and school and work that conspire to make life a blur. Why? And so I urge you: carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life, a little like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. FOSTER taste and see that the LORD is good," invites the Psalmist (Ps. 34:8). "What did you say?" she asked. Absolutely nothing! There were no sudden revelations. Thank you for your gifts of grace: -the consistency of sunrise and sunset, -the wonder of colors, -the solace of voices I know. So Derek went over to his friend, touching him on the shoulder to wake him, and said, "Good morning. Chapter 10. We are "co-laborers with God," as the Apostle Paul put it—working with God to determine the outcome PRAYER / 51 of events. Here no one has any advantage. We say no to food because we are intent upon others receiving a far greater nourishment. Helmut 250 / RICHARD J. Evelyn Underhill, Abba (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), pp. The task will be monumental, and there will be setbacks, but gains will be made as well. In addition, I read various chapters at the weekly meetings of The Milton Center, and its members gave me valuable critique and encouragement. It is sort of like compelling a neighbor to help provide food for a stranger—even though to do so is terribly inconvenient—because otherwise the whole village will be disgraced for not caring for the stranger in their midst (Luke 11:5-13). Madame Guyon, Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christian Books, 1975), p. It was a casual comment, not pertinent to the topic of the conference, but I heard nothing else the entire week. But we are starting from the wrong end of things—putting the cart before the horse. 11:26). 15, and Behold Your God (St. Paul, MN: Macalester Park, 1973), chap. Kelly, Testament, pp. In our praying and in our living we value all, breaking down every barrier. Eventually I went home to get some sleep, and so I learned from the students what happened about 6:00 A.M. the next morning. Many are not as fortunate. How easy it is to replace "this work is really significant." With a profound PRAYER / 73 understanding of this, Benedict would call for prayer at regular intervals throughout the day—right in the middle of apparently urgent and important work. Very simply, we begin right where we are: in our families, on our jobs, with our neighbors and friends. The redemption that is in Jesus is total, involving every aspect of the person—body, soul, will, mind, emotions, spirit. We now have the dubious distinction of being able to communicate more and say less than any civilization in history. We pray. We were invited upward into the intimacy we need: adoring God, resting in God, listening to God. He discovers to me how union with God's will is union with God's will is the Father's claim, the Son's example, and the true blessedness of the soul. 172. Social Holiness The true prophetic message always calls us to "social holiness," to use the phrase of John Wesley. We are also listening to God, asking him to show us the key to the problem. 109. Here Ignatius is at his best by insisting upon the use of all things, by singing his "Canticle of the Sun," with its celebration of Brother Sun and Sister Water. You might want to use the words of Charles de Foucauld; "Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. FOSTER is a lot more behind it than the desire for a periodic breather. Dalrymple, Simple Prayer, p. Rex Warner (New York: Mentor/New American Library, 1963), p. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that when we pray for our enemies, "we are taking their distress and poverty, their guilt and perdition upon ourselves, and pleading to God for them. As a result, we are inclined to view our experiences as distractions and intrusions into proper prayer. PRAYER / 249 Jesus' social revolution went all the way to the corridors of religious power. Press, 1952), p. The rich and the poor, the intelligent and PRAYER / 185 the illiterate, the simple and the wise—all speak forth this praver. I am talking about a form of suffering, to be sure, but it is redemptive suffering. Woolman's Journal is well worth patient, praverful reading. In the Scripture passage the angel had just informed Mary of her future destiny. Their writings dance with the excitement of discovery. Chapter 13. By means of intense personal discipline Flannery O'Connor was able to rise above a debilitating disease to become one of the finest fiction writers of the twentieth century. 10 / RICHARD J. Maybe an offhand remark by a neighbor triggers a whole explosion of emotions within us: anger, jealousy, fear. This way of prayer can be extremely dangerous, which is one reason I waited until nearly the end of this book to bring up the subject. Specific preparations can be extremely helpful. I picked my way around boulders and over fallen trees until I came upon a huge outcropping of rock that jutted into the river, causing it to form a twisted U-turn. Next, if you will immerse yourself in the Gospels, they will cure you of the "stiff-upper-lip" religion that is so foreign to the one who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Jesus knew the Prayer of Tears, and he will show you how to follow "in his steps" (1 Pet. It is given for our healing. We will never have pure enough motives, or be good enough, or know enough in order to pray rightly. Listen to me. Commitment. Finally, I said to her, "Let's make the idea of my coming a matter of prayer itself. Following the river downstream for perhaps an hour or so, I eventually found myself off all existing paths and far beyond tourists and day hikers. We have received the message, and so you do not need to keep sending pain signals to his ear. King David—who ought to know—witnesses, "The LORD searches every mind, and understands every plan and thought" (1 Chron. When we are filled with sadness, for example, it seldom helps to count our many blessings or rehearse the glorious attributes of God. In the power of God we learn to take authority over everyday issues like our failures. One of the most sobering insights from such a meditation is the realization that life would continue right on without us—and quite well, for that matter. We do this individually and in little bands of two and three. Third, learn the prayer of abandonment. It is not something that we cause to come about by creating a certain kind of music. It is prayed at weddings and deathbeds alike. Without pressing the analogy too far, it is helpful to see that the three movements into prayer are trinitarian in character. We seek to follow God again. In the Name of Jesus has been raised, I would like to make a few comments about it. Chapter 16. It seems that God has freely chosen to allow the dynamic of the relationship to determine what we will eventually ask. In the center of his greatest spiritual moment Blaise Pascal wrote the single word "Fire!" Still others have a visitation of such indescribable peace that they stand and walk and sit and lie in wordless adoration and submission and worder stands the deeper intent of our prayers and so responds to this greater need, which, in its time and in its way, solves our specific prayer concern. I grieve for those wounded by these terribly destructive experiences, and I pray, even as I write these words, that they may know grace and healing. The most exaggerated things we can think of will still be far below what is actually the case. Our tendency is, on the one hand, to take firm control, or, on the other hand, to do absolutely nothing. Their suffering is messy business, and we must be prepared to step smack PRAYER / 219 into the middle of the mess. 168. One prayed, "We place Maria into your hands; there is nothing else we can do." I understood the sentiment, but he was completely wrong, for there was a great deal we could do in bringing the healing light of Christ into Maria. 66 / RICHARD J. Even our closest friends will see it as a waste of precious time and rather self-centered. Dallas Willard, "Studies in the Book of Apostolic Acts: Journey into the Spiritual Unknown" (unpublished study guide). Simple Prayer is beginning

prayer. 16 / RICHARD J. But in 424 A.D. a brother and sister came to his town of Hippo, seeking healing of convulsive seizures. Few of us can—or would even want to—follow the desert fathers and mothers in any literal sense. For the most part they are insignificant and irrelevant even in the world of religion. We major in instant solutions and manipulative prayers. See Docility Paternoster. Organized, corporate, intercessory prayer is a crucial means for the fulfillment of these yearnings in the heart of God. The Father's heart is open wide—you too are welcome to come higher up and deeper in. The next week one member of the class—an elderly woman far into her seventies—began looking over her family tree, but she was unable to find any problems to pray over. He will not "break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick," as Scripture says (Matt. This is as it should be. We make mistakes—lots of them; we sin; we fall down, often—but each time we get up and begin again. Fourth, we give thanks. But Unceasing Prayer is hidden prayer, the prayer of the closet. 34:9). But even this may not be strong enough medicine for you. Actually her leaving was so quiet, so uneventful, that they did not discover it until later. Perceptively Guardini comments, "If at first we achieve no more than the understanding of how much we lack in inner unity, something will have been gained, for in some way we will have made contact with that center which knows no distraction."18 The Prayer of Quiet As we grow accustomed to the unifying grace of recollection, we are ushered into a second step in Contemplative Prayer, what Teresa of Avila calls "the prayer of Quiet." We have through recollection, we are ushered into a second step in Contemplative Prayer, what Teresa of Avila calls "the prayer of Quiet." We have through recollection, we are ushered into a second step in Contemplative Prayer, what Teresa of Avila calls "the prayer of Quiet." distractions of the mind, all vacillations of the will. Ronald E. Even in our prayerlessness we can hunger for God. We, like Jesus in the wilderness, will be tempted with power and influence and the opportunity to help others without reference to God. handicapped people, often explains with a simple illustration his approach to those who live at L'Arche. FOSTER In the strong name of Jesus Christ I stand against the world, the flesh, and the devil. What do they mean for me? Prayer develops a deep rhythm inside us. We exercise Authoritative Prayer from this heavenly position of authority. 18:20) Far from being dreadful, this is a scrutiny of love. 2 (New York: Oxford Univ. There can be no sterile, arm's-length purity. And, by your imagination, that moment you are the prodigal...at another time, you are Mary Magdalene: at another time, Peter in the porch."8 PRAYER / 149 As a practical aid in living the experience of Scripture, Ignatius of Loyola encourages us to apply all our senses to our task. Certainly all things are possible with God, but I am sure such a thing would be the exception and not the rule. While the Bible does not give us a lot of information on the nature of the spiritual world, we do know enough to recognize that there are various orders of spiritual beings, and some of them are definitely not in cooperation with God and his way! I say these things not to make you fearful but to make you knowledgeable. For now a brief word about its practice will be sufficient Spiritual director is the old term for this; others use the term spiritual friend. But—and here is the wonder—our repenting prayers on behalf of others somehow seems to make it easier, more possible for them to turn on their own. And finally, I thank God for Carolynn, who prayed with me and for me from the conception to the birth of this book. This leads logically into Paul's famous description of the spiritual warfare we wage and the spiritual resources we have available to us (Eph. Penthos means a broken and contrite heart. The child was in a particularly cantankerous mood, fussing and fuming. Everyone, that is, except Bill—a former missionary filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit. These decisions do not come easily. Allow this spot to become a sacred "tent of meeting." Thomas Merton writes, My chief joy is to escape to the attic of the garden house and the little broken window that looks out over the valley. Either we will give it up as futile, lacking the support and watchful care of others, or we will make it into a thing of our own. 3:10). We ask for clothing, day by day. 6, 1. So does the famous Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." We join with the multitude of voices from all the ages, asking for the gift of repentance, the Prayer of Tears. I do not mean that we commit sins—though I am quite sure that is true, too. Far from causing any loss of identity, union brings about full personhood. 11 (Aug. To pray in his name means that we recognize that our prayers cannot penetrate the tribunal of God unless they are presented to the Father by the Son, our one Savior and Redeemer. 3 This is the objective, forensic side of prayer in Jesus' name. 28. 27 28 / RICHARD J. But just as we believe that God can take our reason (fallen as it is) and sanctify it and use it for his good purposes, so we believe he can sanctify the imagination and use it for his good purposes. And on it goes, ad nauseam. Jean-Nicholas Grou will be offering a most excellent prayer."7 We can be assured of this: God, who knows all and sees all, will set all things straight in the end. In this we will do well to begin with our own country—whichever country that may be. We think, "This is wonderful. Carolynn has the gift of burden bearing, and so, as she began praying, she vicariously took on Anne's grief. We do not know how to pray. Tertullian calls it "a kind of holy violence to God."10 Like Jacob of old, who wrestled all night with the angel, we refuse to let go until we receive a blessing, not for us but for others. We do the kind of thing Moses did. May it become, in the name of Jesus Christ, the most precious occupation of your life. Forgiveness means that the power of love that holds us together is greater than the power of the offense that separates us. Why do I alone want to sing my own melody? There was never a day or night...when his vigilant eyes did not appear bathed in tears." Abba Anthony declared boldly, "Whoever wishes to advance in building up virtue will do so through weeping and tears."2 The Soft Rain of Tears? Now, however, it is denuded and desolate, and I can see its real condition. The past does not merely parallel but actually intersects the present. Radical Prayer refuses to let us stay on the fringes of life's great issues. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Inc. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in Frank Kermode and John Hollander, eds., The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, vol. Paul, you may remember, urges us to offer our bodies—our very selves—as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. We can wrestle with existence clarification—who we are and what our purpose for being is. This "resting of God" on the seventh day became the theological framework for the Sabbath regulation that summons us to rest in God. FOSTER mysteries of the divine. As quoted in Roger Pooley and Philip Seddon, eds. The tide was out, and the night mist was just beginning to flee from the morning's encroachment. Each role was essential for victory. There is a principle of progression in the spiritual life. We ask wrongly, to spend it on our passions, as James reminds us (James 4:3). And besides, here I've come all this money and I can't concentrate on a single thing the speakers are saying. We pray for and work for the kingdom to come on earth—on all the earth—the earth ear as it is in heaven. How do we know what Jesus would ask and do, you may 196 / RICHARD J. The eternal Son becomes an infant in a feeding trough. I call this a fact because simple observation shows us that Jesus is the only one of whom it can be said, "He cured all of them" (Matt. Do we think just because many of the Psalms we love were born out of the context of ritual ceremonies that they had no joy to them? We see the face of God in our neighbor, and to neglect God. 257 258 / RICHARD J. It is the space where growth can take place."15 For us, too, the hands of God are cupped lightly. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, 2d ed., trans. Griffin, Clinging, p. If it had come from the lips of any other than Jesus himself, we would consider it an intrusion of materialism upon the refined realm of prayer. It's like sleep. PRAYER / 129 "O Lord, my Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth." The Pleiades and Orion sing your praise. 19. Bid the brooding Spirit of God to apply your prayer to the specifics of your day. I live too unaware. He allows no evil to be concealed in the lives of His children."2 And so there is a painful "inward burning," but we know that it is a purifying fire and can welcome its cleansing. If anything, you are too serious, too concerned. Rather than dissecting peace, we are entering into it. I joined in the Psalmist's query: "How long will you hide your face from me?" (Ps. 13:1). As I read the words, my heart was quickened, and I immediately called her on the phone, saying that I believed God had given her not just a song but also a very special word for the entire seminary community. The movement inward (Part I) is prayer to God the Son, Jesus Christ, which corresponds to his role as Savior and Teacher among us. I reiterate: this is not suffering for suffering for suffering and ask him to help us see the hurt behind the emotion. I hope you know that I am talking about holy obedience within the disheveled friction of home and office and school and shopping mall. Most striking of all is how he blended compassion and courage, tenderness and firmness. Anatomy of an Absence Allow me to share with you one time when I entered the Prayer of the Forsaken. But forgiveness means that this real and horrible offense shall not separate us. It supports, soothes, cuts, confronts, and brings dry bones to life. Breath prayer is discovered more than created. The impression came to me, "The devil is trying to eat me up!" doesn't feel very sacramental to me!" I am well aware of the problem: preachers who prestitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who prostitute the divine office for personal aggrandizement, preachers who his people. No, even we who are filled with our own self-centered agendas respect the most fundamental codes of parent-child relationships. If we are drawn into a loving adoration of the Lord high and lifted up, we may want to kneel with hands slightly raised, palms up, in silent thanksgiving and wonder. The Sela, which often occurs in the middle of a Psalm, is meant to signal a meditative interlude. You have old, painful memories that have never been healed. To the outward eye everything looks barren and unsightly. The old writers spoke of three stages in prayer of the lips, prayer of the l their assessment that when we come to the Prayer of the Heart, we have entered a realm where the Holy Spirit is the initiator. We command fears of all kinds to leave and never return. Once we think about it—even for a moment—we realize how utterly ludicrous this is because we are entering the strange mix of divine influence and human autonomy. John Dahymple, Simple Prayer (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), p. Commitment means responsibility, and responsibility sounds confining. Our spiritual defiance involves attempting to change God's mind when we believe that to do so is consistent with God's unchanging love. By the authority of almighty God I tear down Satan's strongholds in my life, in the lives of those I love, and in the society in which I live. Our approach needs to be more like that of the Psalmist, who sought to avoid "marvels beyond my scope. It may be that the only time the Divine Name has been on your lips has been in angry expletives. Through their stories we learn how great Christians walked with God and how we can follow their lead. Then on Friday or Saturday evening she leaves the heights and comes down into the depths of her being, asking the Spirit of God to guide her memory back over the week to any sin or failing that needs his forgiveness. Next, place into his loving 56 / RICHARD J. 1990):13. God is giving you the desire -you would not be reading these words if the desire was not already bubbling up inside you. Our difficulty is due, in part, to our culture's inability to reconcile struggle with love. Catherine Marshall writes, "Resignation is barren of faith in the love of God.... He doubted the validity of Healing Prayer, stating in his early writings that Christians should not look for the continuance of the healing gift. Become weak, frail, vulnerable. Ralph E. Her words, placed in quotation marks, come from this phone conversation. 1 of The New Century Bible Commentary, ed. New graces emerge: new ability to cast all our care upon God, new joy at the success of others, new hope in a God who is good. They love their enemies and pray for those who despise them. What followed was a dialogue about the story in Luke, about God, about Mary, about Jim. "Is prayer only a psychological trick?" "Does evil ultimately win out?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does evil ultimately win out?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Does dod really love me?" "Is there any real meaning in the universe?" "Is there any read meaning in the universe?" "Is threatening to destroy it. "Prudence," says C. We are offended, and, instead of offending in return, we forgive. Stott (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985), p. Just as our blood must flow out to his creation. The Remembrance of Love In the examen of consciousness we prayerfully reflect on the thoughts feelings, and actions of our days to see how God has been at work among us and how we responded. "My will be done" is conquered by "not my will." Here we have the perfect flowing into the will of the Father. She sprinkled herself on the floor, saying, "I will worship only God." There on the floor of the chapel she fell asleep. After it subsided, he exclaimed to no one in particular, "What a wonderful way to start the day!" Now, my friend is not prone to levity. How much richer and fuller is the biblical witness. We experience the agony of prayerlessness. James H. It is of no consequence to them who is up front, who gets the attention, or who is remembered in the annals of history. Smith, "Prayer," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. Foster. The next day Jim met with the brother to discuss his spiritual life. Franky could not recognize me, though he knew by the shadows that someone had come into the room. We can PRAYER / 107 almost hear their shout of praise: "To the King of the ages," immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. "Aren't you glorifying work a bit to much—you know, Protestant work ethic, and all?" you may be wondering. I did not know what to think of the last part of this message until a few months ago, when I received an unusual revelation from God, the gist of which indicated that I would be severing some very precious roots in my life. That was ten years ago, and the darkness has never returned. As far as we know, Jesus never engaged in this practice, nor did Francis of Assisi or any number of other well-known Christians. And so we do, allowing the words to become our own. Did she know somehow? While we prayed, I sensed that my small prayer partner had exercised unusual faith. On occasion Jesus' disciples also failed in their attempts at Healing Prayer (see, for example, Mark 9:14-29). Simply allow the cool wetness to refresh your skin. Later, Carolynn received a letter from Anne, describing the new life that had been breathed into her during that prayer session. Life is complicated enough as it is. But all of the great devotional masters have found it so. It was utterly fundamental—this principle of progression—I used it in every other field of endeavor, but somehow I had failed to apply it to the spiritual life. FOSTER is expressly for the unworthy! Come! Eat! Drink! "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. FOSTER brutalities, delusions of power, and fits of madness of which they never appeared to be capable before; year by year we have seen an increasingly poisonous atmosphere settling down upon our globe and we sense how real and almost tangible are the evil spirits in the air, seeing an invisible hand passing an invisible cup of poison from nation to nation and throwing them into confusion.11 In the intervening decades have we not seen enough of the hideous and the horrible to speak without embarrassment the phrase of Martin Luther: "The prince of darkness grim"? The first is derived from The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola.4 Although Ignatius designed this approach to prayer for all of us. In the Apocalypse, the last book of our Bible, Christ is pictured as both the sacrificial Lamb and the conquering King (Rev. With tragic finality God declared, "They shall not enter my rest'" (Heb. I stood there, trying to decide how to counsel Franky, and for an instant I entertained the demonic notion that perhaps blindness was the will of God for him. His parents told me that wondrously the deterioration had been reversed somehow, and Franky's eyesight was now almost normal. Liturgies are intended to conserve the best of Christian devotion, and in so doing they often save us from the latest fad. Clarence J. I held my hand there as we talked on, both of us amazed at what was transpiring. The child simply would not obey. We are not all asked to be public leaders, but all of us are to engage in Intercessory Prayer. This is what Jesus Christ does for us in his role as eternal Intercessor—"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. In a very real sense we are freeing them to receive God's grace. The solitary figure etched against gnarled olive trees. We pray once or twice, and, when nothing seems to move, we go on to other matters, or sulk in self-pity, or even give up on prayer altogether. Underneath the organized structures of injustice and oppression are principalities of privilege and status. It is more than fervor; it is prayer. Falling asleep in prayer is no problem. This, in unison, we gladly confess. So, as you read these words, yield yourself into the loving hands of the Master Potter. For those who are not accustomed to written prayers, the Psalter provides the best introduction possible. Or think of Paul, who came to Asia "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears" (Acts 20:19). His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. First of all, receiving is not a bad posture when we are entering into communion with the omnipotent Creator of the universe. Some sprouts of green went out on two sides, but it would be only a matter of time before the tree died, for its center was exposed—apparently it had been struck by lightning in some far distant past. It was a little like when you do not realize that a child has grown at all until you measure her against the mark on the hallway doorjamb from last year. These are busy people—executives and secretaries and homemakers—but they have found that one Saturday a month makes good sense, spiritually and in every other way.12 You too, I am sure, will discover creative ways to enter the solitude of the heart. Discernment is like the rotating axis of the gyroscope, and prudence is akin to its horizontal plane, the combination of which gives freedom of movement within the context of balance and direction. 185-86. There is so much farther to go, so much more to learn. Gerhard Tersteegen, The Quiet Way (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), p. If our abilities or opportunities allow for nothing more than picking up sticks, we are to do so with all our might to the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. 6:18). As quoted in Swanson, Uncommon Prayer, p. This is no hit-and-run kind of ministry. We have become focused. For some moments I sought to enter into the experience of each word. Got me a cradle, yes Lord, God's hands my cradle, Mmm, Mmm. This wonderful work of Divine Grace is the major burden of this book, and it is to this that we must now turn our attention. How unimpressive! How commonplace! But think of this in the creation and the incarnation the great God of the universe intertwined the spiritual and the material, wedded the sacred and the secular, sanctified the common and the secular, sanctified the common and the secular, sanctified the sacred and the secular, sanctified the secular, sanctified the sacred and the secular, sanctified the sacred and the secular, sanctified the secular, sa 110-111 Purity, 160-161 Q Quietude. We will resist any and all instruction unless we are docile. Washing dishes, making beds, waiting in supermarket lines—all can call us to prayer. For her part, Thérèse was convinced that these "trifles" pleased Jesus more than the great deeds of recognized holiness. This is how to wait. In an almost comical aside Luke tells us that the evil spirit leaped on these seven pseudoexorcists and overpowered them, and they ran out of the house "naked and wounded" (Acts 19:11-16). For two things to become one, they need similar natures. You seem to have little faith, or none. Are we not able to come into the Prayer of Rest? Through the Prayer of the Forsaken we are learning to give to God the same freedom. Glenn Hinson, "The Contemplative View," in Christian Spirituality, p. There is a triumph that is in Christ, but it goes through suffering, not around it. Frankly, this side of eternity we will never unravel the good from the bad, the pure from the impure. 5:22)? "Instead of saving, 'this also is Thou,' one may say the fatal word Encore."6 One reason our addiction for more, more, more destroys our ability to adore is because it keeps us from reflection. 32). Another prayed, "Lord, help Maria to get well, if it be thy will." That was enough for me. As the most heavenly spirits will have the most heavenly employment, so the more heavenly the employment the more it will make the spirit heavenly."13 O most high, glorious God, how great is my dilemma! In your awful presence silence seems best. With Samuel of old we say, "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 10:31). My desire to maintain religious respectability could easily result in a domesticated faith. 162 / RICHARD J. I say "can" because it can also lead us to despair or simply to abandon the search. It is the same reason we find it difficult to reconcile Jesus' words about bearing our cross with his promise of life abundant. The disciples were understandably amazed at all this and could hardly wait to get Jesus alone so they could ask the reason for his success and their failure. For further details write to RENOVARÉ, P.O. Box 879, Wichita, KS 67201-0879. All I know is that Julie was healed, and that was all I needed to know. On those days when it was too cold to be outside, I went literally into a closet in our tiny duplex in New Mexico. This is the life of God flowing out to people, and God uses whatever means he wills to manifest his glory. Jesus was, and is, a social revolutionary. The imperfections are always there, of course, but they have been hidden from my view by an emerald blanket. Both are inspired by the same Spirit. 94. Often I find kneeling especially appropriate for this particular time. Even when a person is resting in the Spirit. there may well be a deep, inner communion going on that is much more active and participatory than at any other time. 6:9-13). 149. Her family had a godly history with many pastors and other relatives who truly loved and served God. In cases of Healing Prayer it appears that the laying on of hands was done quite freely. We pass from thinking of God as part of our life to the realization that we are part of his life. Perhaps you know what I mean. No, I mean something quite different when I say that sin hinders our prayers. The powerful people we value; the helpless we don't. Jesus knew the burden of unanswered prayer. Laubach, Letters by a Modern Mystic, pp. "O 72 / RICHARD J. Instead of striving to make this or that happen, we learn trust in a heavenly Father who loves to give. Perhaps you have had the experience of hearing someone talk about faith and confidence and victory. When we try to love God without loving our neighbor, we cut ourselves off from the "pulmonary artery" of God. As a child she had been stricken with polio and as a result had a withered leg. All, that is, except me. We want to pray as we feel drawn to it. How desperately we in the modern world need this wordless baptism! We have become, as the early Church father Clement of Alexandria says, like old shoes—all worn out except for the tongue. We jog through our neighborhood, blessing the families who live there. We call for wholeness and well-being to come sweeping into the lives of people. We listen with the mind, and we listen with the mind, and we listen with the heart. 11:11b-12). People would go about their normal duties. A hermitage is a house especially set aside for silence and solitude. As I did this, God graciously helped me enter into a holy mourning in my heart on behalf of the Church and a deep tear-filled thanksgiving at God's patience, love, and mercy toward us. That says much more about the reality of the step. The words were familiar but somehow different. We agonize. Well, we cannot. In one sense it is hardly our fault. Forsyth notes, "Love loves to be told what it knows already.... The litany seems old-fashioned and out of touch with the modern world. Later that day I was walking across a part of the campus I had not seen before, and I noticed a crowd gathering on one corner. This is why it could be said of Jesus that he "for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. Progress in intimacy with God means progress toward silence. This is the stuff of recollection. Timothy Ware, ed., The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology, comp. 138. I imagine you experience the same. If in all the pantheon of prayer there is one form that is totally other centered, we have now come to it. 87. François Fénelon writes, "We must silence every creature, we must silence ourselves, to hear in the deep hush of the whole soul, the ineffable voice of the spouse. The dialogue of grace is really the monologue of the divine nature in self-communing love."7 How incredible! How beyond belief! "We pray, and yet it is not we who pray, but a Greater who prays in us."8 One poet puts it this way: They tell me, Lord, that when I seem To be in speech with you, Since but one voice is heard, it's all a dream, One talker aping two. We do it by demon expulsion. Those who think they can leap over Simple Prayer deceive themselves. Only one thing is required—Love."5 Second, as we begin, we must never be discouraged by our lack of struggle of Saint Augustine, you may want to turn to the joyous simplicity of The Little Flowers of St. Francis. There I found darkness and silence, both of which taught me focus. More often than not a pain is a and with many tears," and later he could rejoice that their "mourning" and "godly grief" had led them to repentance (2 Cor. CHAPTER 9 THE PRAYER OF REST Rest. "You lack faith," some may tell me. Listen to the symphony of rustling leaves and scampering chipmunks and twittering birds. It has been painful enough for them to seek us out. Let your heart be saddened too. Thanksgivings poured forth for all things great and small. Indeed, even the desire to experience the living voice of God is a divine work upon the heart, for we automatically hide from the Hound of Heaven. What a waste!" But the question kept hounding me. The first is solitude. It is only because of our intimacy with God that we can thus wrestle with him. And I have never forgotten his words. In one sense Healing Prayer is incredibly simple, like a child asking her father for help. We will never receive a medal or even a "thank you" for these invisible victories in ordinary life—which is exactly what we want. We focus on his trustworthiness and especially on his steadfast love. Before a loving and gracious Father we declare our sins without excuse or abridgment: unbelief and disunity, arrogance and self-sufficiency, and at every gathering each of us answers several questions, the first one being: "What experiences of prayer and meditation have you had this week, and what is your determination for next week?" Simple, practical decisions can aid us in maintaining our covenant. Sometimes I wonder if in such experiences God is working through the creative factor of the brain to bring to the conscious mind wonderful new combinations of ideas and insights. We worry whether this act or that thought is inspired by fear, vanity, and arrogance rather than faith, hope, and love. The fact that God is all-knowing—omniscient, as we say—does not preclude his withholding judgment on matters in which the decision depends on the give and take of the relationship. \* For now, do not worry about "proper" praying, just talk to God. 32-33. FOSTER unction never comes to the preacher. All I want you to do is create the conditions: open your Bible, read it slowly, listen to it, and reflect on it." Jim went back to his room and began reading. Repetition by itself in not wrong. Instantly, Jim was disappointed, for under the brother's cowl he noticed jogging shoes...Adidas jogging shoes! Jim was expecting a bearded sage filled with the wisdom of the ages, and instead he got a jogging monk! The brother gave Jim only one assignment: to meditate on the story of the Annunciation in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. This is when God truly begins to work with us. Tozer called "the fine threads of the self-life, the hyphenated sins of the human spirit."5 It means freedom from the self-sins: self-abuse, se arguments about prayer, though all of these have their place. Throughout the time I may jot down brief notes in a small prayer journal as I sense the Spirit giving instruction. This is a problem in my country because it gets cold in the winter! So everyone brings a little pot of tea or coffee to keep warm while they wait for next service." 6 This is organized, corporate, intercessory prayer. Each has come at a critical turning point in my life. The next day they met again. John Calvin writes, "As, therefore, Christ has suffered once in his own person, so he suffers daily in his members." 16 And these sufferings are redemptive; they are actually used of God to change and transform and draw people into the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys" (2 Kings 2:24). We work for laws of equity and justice. I wondered to myself if she was telling a story my own children might recite some day, for I was a young pastor, and for me, too, the hours were long, the money short, and the parishioners picky. As quoted in Day, Discipline and Discovery, p. The Rock-Bottom Reality The most rock-bottom reality for the Prayer of Tears is that we are sinners. See D. We feel the sum on our heads and the hunger panges in our stomachs. Actually, the examen of consciousness is one way we heed the call to rehearse the mighty deeds of God. The most straightforward answer PRAYER / 181 to this question is simply that God likes to be asked. Such graces do not come automatically: "Prayer, much prayer, is the price of preaching unction; prayer, much prayer, is the one, sole condition of keeping this unction. The Cambridge professor Herbert Farmer reminds us that "if prayer we have a truncated prayer life. In the eleventh century Bernard of Clairvaux wrote a kind of expanded commentary on Benedict's twelve steps, called simply The Twelve Steps of Humility. "Lord," we may pray, "let me receive the gift of tears." If at first heart sorrow does not come, we keep seeking, we keep seeking at the second set of temptation" means this: "Lord, may there be nothing in me that will force you to put me to the test in order to reveal what is in my heart." We want to be progressing in the realms of transformation with no hidden sins so that God will not be forced to put us to the test. 23. This is how we pray in Jesus' name.4 Persistence That Wins When we begin praying for others, we soon discover that it is easy to become discouraged at the results, which seem frustratingly slow and uneven. All the more, then, God who lovingly respects us and joyfully gives to us when we ask (Matt. The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. Jesus, you will remember, established the New Covenant in his blood for the forgiveness of sins. Keep your soul in tears. Even the recognized authorities in the contemplative life found it to be a fleeting experience rather than their staple diet. ocean waves. And if you do partake, you fear you will bring condemnation upon yourself. We are forming the habit of obedience, and all habits begin with plenty of slips and false starts. FOSTER but it is put out by a small amount of tears, for the tear puts out a furnace of faults, and cleans our wounds of sin."16 Gracious Jesus, it is easier for me to approach you with my mind than with my tears. How can we call it prayer when we do little beyond receiving? In the midst of praying the Scripture, he started chuckling and then laughter; high, holy, uproarious laughter; high, holy, uproarious laughter; high midst of praying the Scripture and then laughter. however, should not hinder us from recognizing the special avenues of God's grace into our hearts and lives. No, we start more simply. Do we realize what this means? It 236 / RICHARD J. 650. That is a Hindu concept of prayer, in which we sink passively into the impersonal and fated will of gods and goddesses. FOSTER I need your help if I am to be still and listen. We are glad for God's friends, the doctors, who with skill and compassion help our bodies fight against disease and sickness. I remember one night well, even though it was many years ago. The movement upward (Part II) is prayer to God the Father, which corresponds to his role as sovereign King and eternal Lover among us. We cannot do a single good act except God first gives us the desire for it and then empowers us to do it. 278 / RICHARD J. FOSTER ask? He sensed it was a call to pray, but for whom, for what? PART II MOVING UPWARD Seeking the Intimacy We Need CHAPTER 8 THE PRAYER OF ADORATION In the school of adoration the soul learns why the approach to every other goal had left it restless. We know something of the psychology and physiology of ordinary laughter; the holy dimension only intensifies and deepens the reality. Help me bow in your presence in endless wonder and ceaseless praise. Can I live this way? But I cannot do that, and I know of no one who can. That's it, isn't it? 145 We will discuss in considerable detail the spiritual warfare we wage in a later chapter. He was giving the people a specific way of remembering. How wonderful! The discovery of God lies in the daily and the ordinary not in the spectacular and the heroic. We would be orphaned in the cosmos, cold, and terribly alone. 15). The Practice of Prayer Only through the specifics of daily life can you be led into the Prayer of Relinquishment. Chapter 2. When our reply to God is most direct of all, it is called adoration. Unfortunately, contemporary men and women simply do not value self-knowledge in the same way that all preceding generations have. Negatively, it means 57 58 / RICHARD J. If we must place blame somewhere, let's place it on ourselves as the prayer-ers; perhaps it is our lack of faith or our sin that is hindering the flow of God's grace and mercy. There simply is no good English equivalent. As it turned out, this fast from public life lasted about eighteen months. With such divine aid, are we not able to relax our tightfisted hold on life? It is not that they lack impact; it is that the kind of impact is seen as irrelevant. And slowly, one step at a time, I began discovering the ways of Healing Prayer. CHAPTER 2 PRAYER OF THE FORSAKEN To come to the pleasure you have not you must go by a way in which you enjoy not. Within a week Maria was released from the hospital, completely restored, due in large measure, I think, to the faithfilled belief of those students and parents. 109, 130, 140, 141, and 143; Communal-60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 124, 126, 137, and 144. -Blaise Pascal In Authoritative Prayer we are calling forth the will of the Father upon the earth. 9. My mother understood the sanctity of the ordinary. Also, a spirit of hate or resentment arrests the flow of life immediately. After a brief rest she was up and working on another patch. but not turn back."9 Nor shall we turn back. Madame Guyon writes, "This way of prayer, this simple relationship to your Lord, is so suited for the dull and the ignorant as it is for the well-educated. This is our way, but it is not God's way. I knew that my colleagues, while well intended, did not believe Maria would get better, and their prayers 214 / RICHARD J. Their simple noncooperation with the oppression, prejudice, and class strife of modern culture will transform the world almost beyond recognition. Unable to trust in Yahweh, they rebelled and spent their remaining days wandering in the deserts of the Sinai. But my sources are reliable. "What was your aim in reading the passage?" he asked. The kingdom of darkness goes into full retreat when we take up the full weapons of our warfare. James Bryan Smith and I have revised this material for the modern reader, found in the RENOVARÉ Devotional Readings 1, no. In Formation Prayer we considered briefly how solitude changes us; here we are looking at how solitude simplifies us. Outler, ed., John Wesley, in A Library of Protestant Thought (New York: Oxford Univ. 200. It has four straightforward steps. Still, I come to you just as I am. "I need to be there. Moses himself went to the top of a hill overlooking the battleground with his two lieutenants, Aaron and Hur. Go back home and speak to no one except God about the idea of my coming, and if at least six people share with you a desire for this kind of teaching in the next week or so, then we will know God is in it, and I'll come." She agreed. These are not people who are blown about by every wind of doctrine...or every wind of emotion. For most of us, however, those days are gone. And we can worship deep within our spirit. Over the years since this encounter I have sought to pray in the way I was instructed, though not as faithfully as I am sure I should. It is here that the Holy Spirit steps in with "sighs too deep for words." We receive from the Spirit the spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. I was a teenager and she at midlife, or so we thought. But contemplation is different. The second aspect is an examen of conscience in which we uncover those areas that need cleansing, purifying, and healing. And who we are—not who we want to be—is the only offering we have to give. Kadloubovsky and E. 131 132 / RICHARD J. The esprit de corps and tête-à-tête are always exhilarating. They are being brought out of bondage to human beings. There is a technical word for what I have been describing, and it might be helpful for you to know it—lectio divina (divine reading). But for now there is one "something" that needs immediate attention. We are enraged that people are thrown into prison at the whim of an attention. unjust ruler, or that the child down the street is emotionally or physically abused. (Not even Jesus' sacrifice produced that kind of result—a result we would not even want once we fully understood it.) No, it is more like the releasing of little droplets of grace and mercy—droplets that perhaps can be shook off but certainly cannot be ignored. Sometimes—not always, but sometimes—we reach a point beyond this prayer where we are stilled within and without. Nouwen, Making All Things New (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. None of us will keep up a life of prayer unless we are prepared to change. Perhaps you do not believe in prayer. (The fact that God speaks to us is no guarantee that we hear or understand correctly!) In time I came to see that God was speaking about our deep roots in the city where I teach. It is God's desire to bring individuals and families into saving faith. PRAYER / 173 It is at the latrine cleaning that many have a problem. The singer who so beautifully describes and families into saving faith. our soul's thirst for God as a deer longing for flowing streams goes on to confess, "My tears have been my food day and night" (Ps. 42:3). St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, trans. 8. The sight of Jesus in his heavenly intercession gives us strength to pray in his name. Backhouse (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985). Bernard of Clairvaux, The Love of God, ed. Bloesch, Struggle of Prayer, pp. Graybeal Streams of Living Water by Richard J. It is a ministry we can indulge in lavishly. I was worried that people might step out from under the sovereignty of God and attempt things in their own strength. But Daniel is not confessing his sins; he is confessing the sins of his people. Israel. I am a daily laughing-stock, everybody's butt" (Jer. More often than not the demand for relevancy is simply a temptation of the devil that needs to be resisted. (You see how I am struggling for the language to describe this experience of abandonment, for words are fragmentary approximations at best, but if you have been there, you understand what I mean.) As I mentioned earlier, this discipline of silence lasted some eighteen months. An interesting footnote to this story occurred about eight years later, when I was asked to lead a committee through a nine-month study process that did indeed bring about a beneficial resolution to the situation. Also, while contemplation is usually wordless, it does not necessarily need to be imageless. I do not exactly mean hard, for I understand that this is a matter of receiving rather than trying. As quoted in Thielicke, Our Heavenly Father, p. You will be led to other similar prayers. It is God's desire to deliver people from racism, sexism, nationalism, consumerism. Many have condemned themselves with inner vows of sickness and failure and death. To be sure, it is an inferior stage, but only in the sense that a child is at an inferior stage to that of an adult. There are those who, as Saint Symeon tells us, "even puncturing would not cause compunction."13 I know because I am one of them, and only by special graces has it been otherwise. If only we could slip over into that life free from strain and anxiety and hurry! If only we could know that steady peace of God where all strain is gone and Christ is already victor over the world! If only...But listen, my friend, I am here to tell you that this way of living can be ours. You're trying to control God. I had only one remaining task—to preach this Sundayutation over the world! If only...But listen, my friend, I am here to tell you that this way of living can be ours. You're trying to control God. I had only one remaining task morning in an area church—and then I would be on my way home. I was in my grateful center. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings."10 The many diary notations of Frank Laubach are radiant with the Shekinah of God: "This afternoon the possession of God has caught me up with such sheer joy that I thought I never had known anything like it. God is inviting us deeper in and higher up. PRAYER / 199 One congregation I know has forty prayer meetings per week involving a total of a thousand people. PerfectBound<sup>™</sup> and the PerfectBound<sup>™</sup> logo are trademarks of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. This was in stark contrast to a meeting I had had earlier in the evening with a few faculty who wanted to pray for Maria. Some may be puzzled by my examples—rhema, glossolalia, resting in the Spirit, holy laughter, and the like. As this is happening, we experience an inward attentiveness to divine motions. Actually, Jesus' use of "Abba praying" was an inclusive action. The Conversion of the Heart Simple Prayer is often ignored in many of the books written about prayer. It contains seven syllables that can be spoken easily in one breath. The desert father Ammonas, a disciple of Saint Anthony, writes, "I have shown you the power of silence, how thoroughly it heals and how fully pleasing it is to God.... To pray in the name of Jesus means that we are praying in accord with the way and nature of Christ. But there is something even more vital: holy listening. Edwards was right, and part of our spiritual growth comes in understanding and entering into these "means of grace." 4 This is the task to which we now turn our attention. Jesus used well-known first-century medical techniques in his ministry (Mark 7:33; John 9:6; etc.). 41, 32, 68, 69-70. Why do you hide your face from me?" (Ps. 88:13-14, JB). Here we give to God the various difficulties and trials that we face, asking him to use them redemptively. Prayer can open the prison, and strike off the fetters."10 242 / RICHARD J. See Inward movement Twelve steps of St. Benedict, 60-62 U Unanswered prayer, 181-184, 206-208. Jesus needed frequent retreat and solitude to do his work. There are also many ways to enter the examen of conscience. More will be said about this in a later chapter. We speak rightly when we say that something has come between them. In our sufferings those who suffer come to see the face of the suffering God. In time, the words not only will become our own but also will lead us to our own but also will lead us to our labor because we most closely approximate the Creator when we engage in the creative activity of work. Moses was needed to intercede on behalf of the children of Israel. Few of us today have much capacity for despair and destitution, and the Prayer of Suffering increases this capacity. 6:7, KJV). Besides, even the most spiritually advanced—perhaps especially the most spiritually advanced—need frequent times of laughter and play and good fun. The first we have already been discussing. This is all right! It is enough to experience what Brennan Manning calls "the wisdom of accepted tenderness." 9 You may be given a special love name for God that you can breathe PRAYER / 141 quietly over and over as often as necessary to call you back into his loving presence. Living the Experience of Scripture In Christian meditation we seek to live the experience of Scripture. We are sojourners seeking a city whose builder and maker is God. The distinction is valid, but we must not make too much of it. One summer I went outside each evening at about 10:00 P.M. to the little basketball court we had set up in our driveway. Of course we are busy with work and family obligations, but that is only a smoke screen. Meditation will not bring divine union; neither will love, nor worship, nor your devotion, nor your devotion, nor your devotion. 1987), p.198. Some are women; some are men; some are children. In time she became an effective companion in his remarkable ministry. We are pressing on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. Solemn vows sound so grim, so much like going through life with clenched teeth. quite lavish in his answering mercy to all kinds and sorts of people, irrespective of their sanctity. From the Confessions of Saint Augustine to the Markings of Dag Hammarskjöld, Christians throughout the centuries have found value in recording their spiritual trek. With the eyes of faith I am just looking ahead a little bit—a few weeks or months or years, it does not matter—and giving thanks for what can be...what will be, by the mercy of God. Sometimes and in some places we live without this special grace. And wonderful results are promised as a result of doing so. Painfully, we let go of the vain images of ourselves in charge of everything and everybody. Roger L. "I doubled over in agony, she told me. Saul, it appears, had the "Spirit of the Lord" upon him and "an evil spirit" that tormented him (1 Sam. 7:6). Therefore we lift our voices in joyful song, declaring, "This is holy ground; For the Lord is present, And where he is holy. But what about the boring jobs, the unimportant jobs, the mundane jobs. 155 56. 18. The Jogging Monk Allow me to tell you the story of Jim Smith, a former student of mine. On a purely human level music is one of the most powerful of mediums because it appeals to both emotion and volition, both imagination and reason. George MacDonald notes, "The Son of God suffered unto the death, not that men might not suffer, but that their sufferings might be like His."6 The Passive Side and the Active Side and there is a passive side and the Active Side and there is a passive side and the passive side and there is a passive sid joy and thanksgiving. In the midst of intense personal struggle we are still and relaxed. 7:12, etc.). This is a point where we let go of our labor and be with God. And it may be just a little more than you—or I—would bargain for right now, and that is all right, for this is not really something God gives—and then only when he knows/intense personal struggle we are still and relaxed. 7:12, etc.). we are ready. And on it goes. It differs even from the study of Scripture. PRAYER / 77 The preparation of your own little sanctuary can draw the heart into worship. The Paternoster is really a total prayer. Bloesch, The Struggle of Prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), p. We ask and continue to ask even though there is no answer. Copyright © 1992 by Richard J. But here we are faced with the practical question of how we pray in the name of Jesus. While we do not do violence to our rational faculties, we go beyond the rational. I felt like taking off my shoes—we were on holy ground. In time these "holy habits" will do their work of integration so that praying becomes the easy thing, the natural thing, the spontaneous thing—the hard thing will be to refrain from prayer. But in time we will see that it is God who inflames our heart with a burning craving for absolute purity. Like Job, we serve God even if he slays us. Like a frightened child we walk cautiously through the dark mists that now surround the Holy of Holies. His way is higher than our way. Swanson, Uncommon Prayer, p.185. You may have tried to pray and were profoundly disappointed...and disillusioned. A simple question such as "What would you like prayer for?" can at times be tremendously revealing. I guessed I had a few things to learn! "Teach me," I prayed. In essence, he told them to declare the availability of the kingdom and to demonstrate its presence, with works of power. Someone PRAYER / 75 will knock at your door. If you do have teenagers, I want to offer you a word of encouragement. What temptations did you face this week? We are exercising ourselves unto godliness. We fear that commitments will make prayer seem like compulsory exercises rather than free-will offerings. See Brennan Manning, The Wisdom of Accepted Tenderness: Going Deeper into the Abba Experience (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1978). We do it by taking authority over the sicknesses of mind and body and spirit. You are correct, of course. When we have immersed ourselves long enough in the way of Christ, we can smell Gospel. Basilea Schlink writes, "The first characteristic of the kingdom of heaven is the overflowing joy that comes from contri- 40 / RICHARD J. It may be helpful to look at these two aspects separately. Saint Maximus is not using the word symbol(symbola) in opposition to real. (Often we are terribly narrow in our broad-mindedness.) We who are people of the Way, however, have been asked to pray by virtue of the authority given to us by Jesus Christ, who claimed to be the unique revelation of God to us. So it is with enthusiasm that we applaud the demise of the heretical tendency to fragment and compartmentalize human beings. Beaching the fir-coverect tendency to fragment and compartmentalize human beings. outcropping. The hand of God has been upon you, wooing you, winning you, drawing you to himself. I oppose every attempt to keep me from knowing full fellowship with God. It is a community empowered to attack evil in all its forms, overcoming it with good. Sometimes I have John Baillie cultivate my heart by means of his famous Diary of Private Prayer, or I may turn to the lesser-known Doctor Johnson's Prayers. It is important to recognize this fact and be easy with yourself. FOSTER engaged the children of Israel in battle (Exod. This we must never do. John Calvin, Sermons on the Epistle to the Epistle to the Epistel to the Epister to the Epister and be easy with yourself. little better acquainted, but his eyesight continued to degenerate. I understand these concerns; even so, I have chosen to continue to use the word prophet both because there is a rich tradition in the Bible that informs what I am talking about. Gracious Holy Spirit, so much of my lifeause there is a rich tradition in the Bible that informs what I am talking about. seems to revolve around my interests and my welfare. He laid his head on my chest and began weeping quietly with deep sighs. Whether the curse is physical, emotional, or spiritual, we break it in the name and by the authority of Jesus. -Amen. We need an interpreter, an intermediary, a go-between. Communal life is the most intensive expression of Unristian community, and it nas existed in all the ages of the Church. Our personal motivations become suspect. The focus of my lectures was Contemplative Prayer, and the atmosphere of the meetings had been enhanced by the relaxed beauty of stately eucalyptus trees and red-tiled haciendas. 85; Julian of Norwich, Showings, trans. To talk about ourselves or our activities out of true proportion is dangerous indeed, but when we magnify God, we are on safe ground. I am sure it is unnecessary to recount for you the details of tabernacle ceremonial laws and levitical priesthood and temple rituals. Christ, the third on the passion of Christ, and the fourth on the resurrection of Christ. We are insulted that our culture defines life in such a way as to grind the poor all the more deeply into their poverty. 6:4, RSV). Allow me to misuse an ancient passage: sufficient unto the day are the pleasures thereof! PRAYER / 87 Lewis mentions one more obstruction: conceit. They returned from their mission ecstatic, saying, "'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!'" (Luke 10:17). How do we do it? And abba is so personal, so familiar a term that no one ever dared to use it in address to the great God of the universe no one until Jesus. We are also inviting our offenders back into the circle of fellowship. See Lived prayer World: embracing the, 249-251 "Wounded healers," 220 Z Zosima, Father (character), 231. Douglas V. They talked about this—God and Jim—what might be, what could be. I draw back from it, too. Alone, I would shoot baskets, all the time inviting God to do a spiritual inventory on the day. Rock me gently Mmm, In Your hands I can be strong.4 These good men and women—people who had wrestled long and hard with the arguments of Barth and Niebuhr and Pannenberg and Tillich—absorbed these simple words of love and intimacy like dry sponges. As it turned out, I was home on summer break. Where would we be? He went up to the synagogue on the Sabbath "as was his custom," says Luke (Luke 4:16). So here is my counsel: begin by paying attention to the little creatures that creep upon the earth. I had some of those very feelings as I penned this chapter, for I feared I was writing on the edge of unlived truth. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. We speak a definite, straightforward declaration of what is to be. Our concern is to see the ways the life of prayer is enhanced by God's grace coming to us through his created world. In time, however, we begin to enter into a grace-filled releasing of our will and a flowing into the will of the Father. 8: 35b-39). Maybe a single word will come to your conscious mind: "peace," "faith," "strength." Perhaps it will be a phrase: "to understand your truth," "to feel your love." Next, connect this phrase with the most comfortable way you have of speaking about God: "blessed Savior," "Abba," "Immanuel," "Holy Father," "gracious Lord." Finally, you will want to write out your breath prayer, staying within what is comfortable to say in one breath. 22 / RICHARD J. It is this constant, longing love that produces a firmness of life orientation in us. And God was silent too. It delights him when we share. A psychiatrist in England was teaching about the history of inherited traits in the family tree and the need to pray for healing so that the negative characteristics would not come down upon future generations. We should feel perfectly free to complain to God, or yell at God. Gregory of Nyssa, "The Life of Moses," in The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. But it is a gift that God loves to bestow upon all who ask. I never before had felt so pungent 37 38 / RICHARD J. I come to the table "just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me." You, too. I hope you know that there is no need to answer the telephone, or the door, for that matter. This is an ethereal, decarnate spirituality. 32-38. Our Staple Diet When our asking is for ourselves it is called petition; when it is on behalf of others it is called intercession. Now listen to the voice of the true Shepherd and learn from him. Christ, writes James Nayler, "puts spiritual weapons into [our] hearts and torments...but with the word of truth...returning love for hatred, wrestling with God against the enmity, with prayers and tears night and day, with fasting, mourning and lamentation, in patience, in faithfulness, in truth, in love unfeigned, in long suffering, and in all the fruits of the spirit, that if by any means [we] may overcome evil with good."9 Exercising Our Authority Spiritual warfare is not something we talk about; it is something we do. We love God by loving our neighbor, and we can love our neighbor only as we love God. It was his funeral! As the people, filled with sorrow, filed past the coffin, he tried to tell them that everything was okay, that he was fine, and that what was happening was good. Hence you begin praying, "Help me live your truth, Lord." 6 Begin praying your breath prayer as often as possible. To pray in this way, do we literally have to cry? But immediately there was a rise of 212 / RICHARD J. I now want to give a counsel that may sound strange. Now with regard to the petition "deliver us from evil": as much as we might like it otherwise, the original text is quite clear that Jesus is urging us to pray for rescue not from evil in a generic sense but from the evil one, namely, Satan. Quickly I jumped into the ambulance, explaining to the medical staff that I was her "pastor." I did this so I could begin praying for her immediately at close range. Suppression implies a pressing down, a keeping in check, whereas in recollection we are giving away, releasing. Though I am not a member, I am close to a group that is communal, calling themselves the "Friends of Jesus Community." These four households have pooled their resources in order to buy a small apartment complex in the inner city to work to heal the wounds of racism. FOSTER saw] how wrong it would be to allow the memory of these marvels of divine power to perish from among our people. I went into the classroom early for a course on spiritual formation that I was teaching. To be sure, our participation is more passive, but at times that is all we can take. 2. It is spoken by both children and kings. That afternoon I experienced no ecstasy in the classic sense of the term, but I did enter a loving adoration that heals our sorrows and draws us near to the heart of the Father. I am at home but I will not open the door."9 I have never quite been able to do that, but I have on occasion put a sign on my office door that everyone understands—"In Conference with the Boss!" Be assured of this: everything will try to pull you away from this sacred time. Perhaps you have prayed for many years, but the words have grown brittle and cold. A second time-honored practice is silence of our grasping, manipulative control of people and situations. Over this matter I want to give some counsel for parents of infants. The bruised and broken enter Simple Prayer as freely as do the healthy and wealthy. Even today the family table can be a significant altar where meals are celebrated and all the great and small events of our personal histories can be recounted. Are there activities of body, mind, and spirit that help us?" Oh, ves. many-more than I can number. So we ask and do as we know he would ask and do. For Christmas I helped Mom paint pinecones silver. Even his teachings are filled with good, ordinary "horse sense." When he told us not to cast our pearls before swine, for example, it was not to be mean but because he knew that swine cannot digest pearls; they do them no good (Matt. Anthony Bloom writes, "A prayer makes sense only if it is lived. Help me to walk in your steps. 13. Since those early days, I have learned many things. Most of all, do not try to find God in the water or to make yourself be thankful for the water. It is being "cut to the heart" over our distance and offense to the goodness of God (Acts 2:37). Banish my bitterness.'" He next encourages us to go on to leaders in "statecraft, medicine, learning, art, and religion; the needy of the world, our friends at work or play, and our loved ones." The great value of Buttrick's counsel is that it keeps us moving beyond our provincial little concerns and into a broken and needy world. Tears in the Eyes of God If we could only see the heart of the Father, we would be drawn into praise and thanksgiving more often. With many subjects it is perfectly acceptable to share one's wanderings, but this is not true with prayer. Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. We pray with our bodies. Strengthen me in this covenant. See Thérèse of Lisieux, The Story of a Soul, trans. The paradoxical experience of the children of the story of a Soul, trans. The paradoxical experience of the children of the story of a Soul, trans. tables before we attempt calculus, so to speak. Deafness has come, in part. -C. But just then a belt on one of the air-conditioning blowers began to squeak, and a distracting, disconcerting screech echoed throughout the auditorium. Radical Prayer, you see, is prophetic. But also I get inklings that vast numbers of people around the globe have been given similar guidance, so that great waves of prayer for the rising up of prophetic leaders has been ascending to the throughout the years. Think of Jesus healing the ten lepers. How touched he was by this lavish act of adoration! And what about us? To focus so much on the "self" can easily lead to selfishness and narcissism. He smiles gets up, and comes over to us. Remember, in Meditative Prayer God is always addressing our will. I choose the term means of grace to discuss this less specific understanding of God's mediated presence. And I can well imagine that Jeremiah shook his fist toward heaven as he spoke! God is perfectly capable of handling our anger and frustration and disappointment. Watch how personal disobedience, institutional evil, and social corruption all work their way into the warp and woof of his PRAYER / 151 life—and ours. Well, here is assurance given by the highest authority. Jesus Christ through the Spirit continues to live within his Church, and our sufferings are his sufferings. Even the jobs that seem meaningless and mindless to us are highly valued in the order of the kingdom of God. God values the ordinary. My booklet Meditative Prayer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983) contains additional material. They were extremely painful, and we would often be up with him all night. My own church tradition is decidedly nonliturgical, which is precisely why at times I use one of the great books of liturgy designed to aid private prayer. You see, that is exactly the opposite problem of your situation. 90. "Then, in your lecture on prayer, you warned of spirits that are opposed to the way of God, and I thought maybe you would understand my story. In the beginning we become less and less sure of the inner workings of the Spirit. We also voluntarily take into ourselves the griefs and sorrows of others in order to set them free. We confess and begin again...and again health such as diet and exercise and sleep. God, you see, rushes to us at the first hint of our openness. 253; On the Prayer of Jesus: From the Ascetic Essays of Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, trans. Instead we must turn a deaf ear to media caricatures and prayerfully discern the way of Christ amid the complex issues of our day. God wants us to be present where we are. Oftentimes your heart will condemn you for things for which God does not condemn you. In fact, the Hebrew and Greek words that are generally used for prayer mean "to request" or "to make a petition." 1 The Bible itself is full of Petitionary Prayer and unabashedly recommends it to us. God has to help us let go of our tiny vision in order to release the greater good he has in store for us. To begin with, it saves us from a superficial triumphalism. Rather, we are called to lifetransforming obedience because we have encountered the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But in our own way you and I will pray this Prayer of the Forsaken if we seek the intimacy of perpetual communion with the Father. It ended finally and simply with gentle assurances that it was time to reenter the public square. The scandal of Christianity in our day is the heresy of a 5 percent spirituality. To one question in particular I think God chuckled good-naturedly at my naivete. If we could make the Creator of heaven and earth instantly appear at our beck and call, we would not be in communion with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This wonderful release of his spirit into holy laughter lasted for perhaps thirty minutes. See Barry Liesch, People in the Presence of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), p. Few of them, in fact, are known to the custodians of the modern media, 246 / RICHARD J. But I also know that you have a far better Teacher than me, and he will lead you into all truth. As we pray, we are drawn into the love of God, which irresistibly leads us to our neighbor. We overcome this modern heresy by Praying the Ordinary. Samuel McComb (New York: Oxford Univ. 292. Finally, as you wait patiently for the baptism of tears to come, rest in the words of John Chrysostom: "The fire of sin is intense, 46 / RICHARD J. For one thing, seldom in the life of the Church do we find sufficient literary skill to produce something even close to, say, The Book of Common Prayer. Perhaps prayer is the delight of your life. Who, for example, can improve upon the Spirit-empowered words of the General Confession from The Book of Common Prayer? As quoted in Eriedrich Heiler, Prayer, trans. In the Sermon on the Mount he told the people, in essence, that the entire temple ritual system could dry up and blow away, and their blessedness would still remain. Trust is confidence in the character of God. Spurgeon Do you know why the mighty God of the universe chooses to answer prayer? As quoted in Bengt R. Soon I was off to college a thousand miles away. We tend to fight and struggle over every minor inconvenience that comes our way. In the days of the monarchy King David chose certain priests to be ministers before the Ark of the Covenant with a singular commission "To invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel." He appointed special singers to do nothing but "the singing of praises to the LORD" (1 Chron.16:4-36). The questions are simple enough, but at times they search us to the depths. He described a popular advertisement of the day for NesTea in which different people, sweltering from the summer sun, would fall into a swimming pool with a thirst-quenching sense of "ahhh!" on their faces. The final stepping-stone I want to mention is joyous, hilarious, foot-stomping celebration. If that in some measure describes your feelings, do not be disheartened. Do protect me from the evil one. God will become real to you through your baby. Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (New York: Bantam Books/Harper's Magazine Press, 1974), p. 146-52. It is rather that we are invited to be partners with Christ by sharing in the "fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. Papadopoulo-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, Russia: n.p., 1904), p. 000 small word of counsel before we strike out onto this disciplined journey into the holy place: healthy prayer necessitates frequent experiences of the common, earthy, run-of-the-mill variety. In one important to him than the anxiety we feel over the surgery we must face tomorrow and the exasperation we feel today over our child's irresponsibility and the desperation we feel over the plight of our aging parents. Do you, do I exhibit this patient determination in our prayers for others? We listen with the whole being. "The desire of prayer," writes Mary Clare Vincent, "is prayer, the prayer of desire." In time the desire will lead to practice, and practice will increase the desire. The desire for prayer of desire." In time the desire will lead to practice, and practice will increase the desire. The desire for the desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire for prayer, "writes Mary Clare Vincent," is prayer of desire. "In time the desire will be desire." In time the desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire will be desire. The desire will be desire will be desire. The desire wil infinite offenses to your goodness that I have committed today...this hour. Derek then did an unusual thing. It is only through the royal law of love that our deeds of mercy and compassion become a blessing. The writer to the Hebrews urges us to "continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Heb. We literally caught our breath and pulled back a half step. After all, these experiences are given for the encouragement of all the people of God, not just a few individuals. Go to it in your imagination as often as you can and from that place allow whispered prayers of thanksgiving to flow forth. FOSTER they are all gone. Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. We can all work whether we have employable skills or not. We are asking for forgiveness, or giving thanks, or seeking healing. It is an honest answer. Now, I do not know what kind of medical treatment the doctors had given him, but I am glad for their efforts. Clever words are useless. FOSTER Precisely because the Lord is present with us, we can relax and let go of everything, for in his presence nothing really matters, nothing is of importance except attending to him. Regardless, we pray for our children as they go through the rapids, and we pray for our children as they go through the rapids.

goodness do. In her autobiography she writes, "This path of self knowledge must never be abandoned, nor is there on this journey a soul so much a giant that it has no need to return often to the stage of an infant and a suckling." 3 Self-knowledge is not only foundational but also a foundation that can never be forgotten. Listen carefully. This is a form of prayer that has been largely lost in our modern, sanitized religion, but the Bible abounds with it. 5 (Dec. 38. Are there things in me that need to be burned out?...pride...fear...anger? Doing this, you will quickly reach the end of your tether. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" is Saint Paul's counsel (1 Cor. Rather, it is built upon a confident assurance in the faithfulness of God. —Jean-Nicholas Grou Contemplative Prayer immerses us into the silence of God. The first part of the petition has disturbed many. By simple repetition we are being more and more deeply immersed into the prayer concern. It could be a den or a study or an attic room. Therefore our prayer efforts are a genuine give and take, a true dialogue with God—and a true struggle. Resignation lies down quietly in the dust of a universe from which God seems to have fled, and the door of Hope swings shut."2 We are not locked into a preset, determinist future. The answer I got: nothing. 1) gives us our heavenly position of authority (Eph. Ordinarily we think of prayer as something we do-something in which we are the initiators or at least active participants. See his sorrowing soul. To believe that God can reach us and bless us in the ordinary junctures of daily life is the stuff of prayer. In the following chapters we will turn our attention to several specific forms of intercession. —George Fox Healing Prayer is part of the normal Christian life. 2), which results in the ability to wage the warfare of the Lamb against all principalities and powers (Eph. Perhaps you have said or heard said things like: "Oh, you're PRAYER / 109 just going through the motions. Dear Lord Jesus, in my better moments I want nothing more than to be like you. Remember, even the great Apostle Peter made promises that were too much for him (John 13:36-38). (Some branches of Quakerism give freedom of conscience over the use of physical elements.) Even they, however, are sacramental in the sense that they believe God's life often comes to us through his created world. Also, we can cultivate the habit of a Godward-directed mind and heart. By means of the cross Christ opened the "spigot of grace," as Adrienne von Speyr put it.9 That is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. I am having to relinquish it. Laughing until he had to put a pillow over his face to muffle the noise. We cannot just make it happen by logistical arrangements. The encounter was wonderful, but I was also aware that time was slipping by. We saw some of the ways God's loving friendship draws us inward into the transformation we need: changing us, molding us, forming us, forming us, molding to be in us."4 We must never believe the lie that says that the details of our lives are not the proper content of prayer. Finally he held her by the shoulders and looked her directly in the eye and said, "Look at me. See also Formation prayer Chapman, Dom, 7 Chardin, Teilhard de, 169 Chariots of Fire (film), 172 Christian community, 251-254 Christians: early, 176; Eastern, 122, 3; Eskimo, 172; Korean, 198-199 Christ. After several hours the burden lifted, and he knew his intercessory work was complete. De Caussade's book SelfAbandonment to Divine Providence may be helpful. These are people who by repeated trial and error have learned to distinguish the voice of Christ from that of human manipulators. It consumes everything. In Meditative Prayer there is no loss of identity, no merging with the cosmic consciousness, no fanciful astral travel. "I Want to Warm Their Hearts" As I lay in the quilt-covered bed waiting for dawn to come, I thought over the past few days. Often people will come to us with a glib "pray for me," and they have no idea what they are asking of us. This reality of deepest intimacy permeated everything Jesus said and did. (Earlier I had been slightly irritated because I had to take a late flight home, but now I understood the reason, for we had ample time to be together in quiet and uninterrupted surroundings.) As he shared, he began to go deeper and deeper into the recesses of his heart. The theologians call this essential corruption peccatum original sin, and the sin that is at the heart of all sin is a refusal to believe, a lack of faith, a defectus fidei. Unless they are 'lived,' unless life and prayer become completely interwoven, prayers become a sort of polite madrigal which you offer to God at moments when you are giving time to Him."2 The work of our hands and of our minds is acted out prayer, a love offering to the living God. Mary Clare Vincent, The Life of Prayer and the Way to God (Still River, MS: St. Bede's Publications, 1982), p. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1943), p. It is a miracle of grace whereby the offense no longer separates. It is, of course, immediately identifiable with the commonly used word examination, and it carries much the same meaning minus the academic context. I must be willing to step out even if the waters looked deep. 60 / RICHARD J. I believe my soul gained very much in this way, because I began to practice prayer without knowing what it was."6 Many of us can identify with her words, for we, too, have tried a merely cerebral approach and found it too mechanical, too detached. Part of the answer lies in the fact that frequently we hold on so tightly to the good that we do not know. First, liturgical prayer helps us articulate the yearnings of the heart that cry for expression. Human love reaches out expecting a return, needing a return, demanding a return, demanding a return. We must be prepared to devote the entire time of contemplation to this recollection without any thought for result or reward. rest still remains for the people of God" (Heb. See also Thérèse's biography, Story of a Soul, pp. What a liberation! We do not have to conjure up some special pious emotion in order to be worthy to partake. Steere, Prayer and Worship, p. We now begin to think with love. He sang off key. 28, 33. We listen in utter silence for the Kol Yahweh, the voice of the Lord. Jesus, please, teach me your way of relinquishment. Seldom can we focus on a single thing for long. Before writing my first book, Celebration of Discipline, I did nothing but talk about it for a solid year. We do not need to have good feelings or a warm glow in order to do work for the glory of God. In order, the guotations are from the following sources: Brother Lawrence, The Presence of God(Philadelphia: Judson, n.d.), p. Let me give you a few of the more common. I cannot prescribe for you how this is done. FOSTER This silence of all creaturely activity enables us to hear God. Fresh flowers can delight both sight and smell. The result of these experiences is to draw our hearts more and more deeply into the heart of God. Do not berate yourself for this. Then came the words, "Be still...Rest...Shalom." That was all. This is the sacrament of the Word. We focus on nothing but his goodness. We feel more in love with God, more desirous of his presence, more eager to learn his ways. Notice that he is not telling us to speak to God about the mountain; he is telling us to speak directly to the mountain. "Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life," writes Henri Nouwen.10 The reason for this is simple to see: by means of solitude God frees us from our bondage to people and our own inner compulsions. Eugene Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor (Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), p. They became trapped by enemy gunfire. Find some uninterrupted time and a quiet place and sit in silence, being held in God's loving presence. The Bible does not make anything like careful distinctions between meditation and contemplation. Next I prayed for a lady severely crippled with arthritis—she continued to be crippled. I rather imagine God was bringing him into the deep joy reserved for those who are well acquainted with heart sorrow and tear-filled repentance. Radical Prayer 280 / RICHARD J. Those words and no more. They spoke more than they knew. Did you notice that Jesus asked repeatedly for the cup to pass? I must write it all down!" Again: "Be still...Rest...Shalom." All the more focused, I settled back into Sabbath Prayer. Forgive me. This is a time not for technical studies or analysis or even the gathering of material to share with others. FOSTER Furthermore, we can be grateful for every cooperative effort of the many branches of healing. God had to tell him to take off his shoes—he did not know he was on holy ground. Wait quietly. "Journal," in Albert C. We consider, for example, whether the boisterous neighbor of last night was more than just a rude interruption of a quiet evening. When I finished and sat down, Bill looked at me wide eyed and whispered, "It happened?" I responded blankly. In experience the two weave themselves in and out of one another and become part of an organic whole. We moved in only recently. However, it is possible that we have never had such a soul-shaking encounter. In preparation for writing down this story, I went over the entire sequence of events with "Gloria" on the telephone. But prayer is not another duty to add onto an already overcommitted schedule. This story is recorded in Paul Yonggi Cho, Prayer: Key to Revival (Dallas, TX: Word, 1984), p. Therefore, says Paul, when we face, for instance, people who are deaf to the Gospel or laws that are cruel and unjust or leaders that are cruel straight from the pit. Thomas Merton, The Sign of Jonas (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1953), p. They all evidence the call of God upon their ministries. The slightest stirring of his heart is like a voice which sings in silence and in secret to the Invisible. Amazing as it may sound, God could use you, God could use me to speak his Word, which shall not return void but will accomplish that for which it was sent. 25 Ryde Road (PO Box 321) Pymble, NSW 2073, Australia Canada HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. The more I tried to ignore the cat, the worse it got. It is also the things we leave undone. All good work is pleasing to the Father. We can also prepare the heart by cultivating "holy expectancy." With our mind's eye we pass through the outer court and into the inner court. Like the proud mother who is thrilled to receive a wilted bouquet of dandelions from her child so God celebrates our feeble expressions of gratitude. "No," said the old man, "those things will not help us." Puzzled, the students demanded, "How then can we know?" The master teacher drew himself up to his full stature and replied quietly, "We know the darkness is leaving and the dawn is coming when we can see another person and know that this is our brother or our sister; otherwise, no matter what time it is, it is still dark." Embracing the Whole World The true prophetic message always calls us to stretch our arms out wide and embrace the whole world. The two commandments form a seamless robe. We seek nothing but his exaltation. Keep them in Thy favor. Richard Baxter urges us: "Be much in that angelic work of praise. 164 / RICHARD J. Third, we believe. Not just once, or now and again, but with every breath. It is writing that flows out of those who live on Mount Sinai and still speak to men and women on the level where they live. And as P. But there is a kind of suffering that has purpose and meaning. Thomas Merton urges us to have an "unspeakable reverence for the holiness of created things." 1 Prayer in Action Jesus, we must remember, spent most of his earthly life in what we today would call a blue-collar job. Commenting on breath prayers, Theophane the Recluse notes, "Thoughts continue to jostle in your head like mosquitoes. Some like to pray over them at night. We tell God, for example, how frustrated we are with the co-worker at the office or the neighbor down the street. I am the executive director of a small fellowship of writers called The Milton Center. It is the intimate and ultimate awareness that sin cuts us off from the fullness of God's presence. Thomas Kelly notes, "God, out of the pattern of His own heart, has planted the Cross along the road of holy obedience."4 But here is the wonder: the suffering is not for nothing! God takes it and uses it for something beautiful, something beautiful, something is not for nothing! delivered his people from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. But others show no change whatsoever. On a Tuesday in Baroda Bazaar, India, he writes, "Over three hundred and thirty millions who cannot read are calling for help. Chapter 21. FOSTER will give thanks to you forever" (Ps. 30:12). 31. For now, be encouraged that God desires authentic dialogue, and that as we speak what is on our hearts, we are sharing real information that God is deeply interested in. Again, the supposed disadvantage is mostly asset. This time will pass—sooner than you think. And he stared down death without flinching so that we can face our own death with hope. The tide had come in by now, and the rock was completely surrounded by water, the waves savagely breaking against it. FOSTER option. "If you are willing" was his questioning, his wondering. The weapons of our resistance make us appear to be completely irrelevant to a world based on power, efficiency, and control. He really did want the cup to pass, and he asked that it would pass. It is entering into the liberating shocks of repentance. 211-12. For a thousand years, Christians did a dance called the tripudium to many of their hymns. To begin with, if we are the lone examiners of our heart, a thousand justifications will arise to declare our innocence. (Of course they always turn out to be our enemies, too, which works out quite well for us.) But Jesus makes it abundantly clear that fire from heaven is simply not God's way (Luke 9:54). I sensed that the afflictions Gloria had been experiencing were from the enemy of her soul. Try to live one entire day in utter thanksgiving. Julian of Norwich, Enfolded in Love: Daily Readings with Julian of Norwich, trans. None of the normal responses seemed appropriate. Our vocation is an asset to prayer because our work becomes prayer. CHAPTER 16 PETITIONARY PRAYER Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the person receiving ministry is also a roadblock. It was Ponticus Evagrius (346-99) who first systematized this order. Lingering over a rose or a phrase of Scripture-smelling, tasting, chewing, drinking it all in-this is the stuff of adoration. We cannot simply draw some universal road map that everyone will be able to follow. A cup of cold water is enough to put tears in the eyes of God. In over twenty years of praying for people in this manner, I have yet to have one person turn me down—and I have done this in airports and shopping malls and crowded hallways. I do not draw a hard line between meditation (where the imagination is much more widely accepted) and contemplation. These words are taken from a song entitled "Holy Ground" found in the music album Come Worship the Lord, vol. Believe me. All of the senses are employed. The words of the liturgy are archaic. And yet when I am honest, I know that I often do not even want to pray. S., 12, 108, 109; on adoration, 85, 87, 88, 90; on contemplation, 156; on contrition, 43; on prudence, 232; on unanswered prayer, 181-182 Life: common ventures of, 177; as a relationship with God, 19-20, 171-173; wholeness of, 172 Life of Moses, The (Gregory of Nyssa), 150 292 / RICHARD J. There may be times when God asks us to rely upon prayer alone for healing, but this is the exception, not the rule. No, neither manipulative control nor listless passivity is an appropriate model for the Prayer of Rest. This must never keep us from praying for our own needs, for we are commanded to do so, but it should remind us that we are commanded to do s events. Julian of Norwich, Showings, p. Remuneration is not a factor in deciding the value of labor in the kingdom of God. I cannot, for instance, receive love if I do not give love. FOSTER no set times of prayer, nothing. Richard J. No penetrating insights. It seemed best simply to visit with his friend. Ask him to develop an ache in your heart. In each case the point of the teaching is persistence. I could go on, for the reasons healing does not occur are labyrinthine, but whatever the reasons, the sad fact is that sometimes we stand face to face with one for whom we have prayed and he or she is not well. and at times when he is praying for individuals, the spirit of sobbing comes. For your sake and in your name, I pray. The young leader Timothy was encouraged to 276 / RICHARD J. We see the crowd. Behind absentee landlords of ghetto apartments are the spiritual forces of greed and avarice. FOSTER eardrums, if you will. Through our barrenness of soul God is producing detachment, humility, patience, perseverance. A second obstacle is the wrong kind of attention. Love is the response of the heart to the overwhelming goodness of God, so come in simply and speak to him in unvarnished honesty. She concludes, "Your soul, once it begins to turn inward, is brought under this...law of central 102, PRAYER / 259 5. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1961), p. SUBJECT INDEX A Abandonment, 55 Abba prayer, 134-135, 142, 3 Abraham, 147-148 Absence of God, 17-19, 20 Activity. Foster and Emilie Griffin A Spiritual Formation Journal created by Jana Rea with Lynda L. "Biblical prayer," writes Walter Wink, "is impertinent persistent, shameless, indecorous. And when they come to judgment, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness." 9 PRAYER / 225 This idea of repenting on behalf of others may be new to you. The bank teller can pray whenever someone comes to the window. Our sojourn into the Prayer of Relinquishment has only begun. There is personal prayer, and there is devotional prayer, but the kind of prayer we are discussing here is in a different category. Our question, however, is not "Why is there suffering in the world in a way that is redemptive and healing?" We must ask the question of practice. In his anguish Job declares, "My eye pours out tears to God" (Job 16:20). It is just as possible to err in the opposite direction, of course. They are the spiritual heirs of Philip. How easy for those who discover God in the ordinary to get very smug about it all. Thomas Kelly writes, "Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. The great challenge for those moving in this direction is to find ways to develop enough spiritual mentors in a reasonable period of time to have a substantial impact on the life of the Church. So we ask politely if they would like prayer for the situation. 2). In one sense all the words are right, and the stories certainly sound good, but somehow something does not ring quite true. Stay awake and watch. Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully" (Ps. 24:3-4). One student—I shall call her Maria—was already there, and so we got acquainted. Our damaged self-image votes against us, and we begin beating ourselves mercilessly. Bloesch, Struggle of Prayer, p. God the Son is interceding on our behalf before the throne of heaven. No act goes unnoticed, no matter how insignificant or small. One of the old cardinal virtues was fortitude, but where today do we find such courageous staying power? 36-37. There is relinquishment. One of the best things in this renewed emphasis is the mingling of liturgical forms with charismatic expressions of praise, adoration, and prophesy. Isaac of Nineveh, a Syrian monk, once observed, "Those who delight in a multitude of words, even though they say admirable things, are empty within." 1 We today stand under the rebuke. of this observation. One of the most time-honored ways of nurturing the spiritual life is by reading the stories of the saints throughout the ages. The external events are springboards for understanding the deeper workings of God in the heart. We argue with God so that his justice may be overcome by his mercy. In some ways it is easier to give up my body to be burned than to love. It is given for our wholeness. 6:12). Do not let the writer's authority or learning influence you, be it little or great, but let the love of pure truth attract you to read."16 God'S Beams of Love In Meditative Prayer God addresses us personally. But my early experiences in praying for the sick were dismal failures. We are "crucified" not just for others, but with others. To believe that God can sanctify and utilize the imagination is simply to take seriously the Christian idea of incarnation. W. He lived in constant depression, so much so that his wife said that he had not laughed for many years. And then there is the Psalmist delighting in the violent death of the babies of his enemies: "Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!" (Ps. 137:9). None of us would give them a snake if they requested fish. He went to the foot of the hospital bed and prayed the prayer for guidance: "Lord, how do you want me to pray?" Immediately he sensed an inward check about "commanding that disease away." In fact, he PRAYER / 233 felt no prompting to pray at all. Alexander Grosart, ed., The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes, vol. I do not know how. The Rule of St. Benedict, pp. We discover God in our waiting to retire, waiting to die. William C. He had Joshua lead the army into the valley to fight the battle. I am using the language of hearing, but I do not mean something that could be recorded on tape. The words rang round and round in his head. My first counsel is simply a reminder that prayer is nothing more than an ongoing and growing love relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I was with a small study group, and, during a morning break period, I found a canoe and paddled over to a tiny island. The young man was in the crowded church, praying. 263. (I had never been around a fireplace before, all our heather, Son, and Holy Spirit. I was with a small study group, and, during a morning break period, I found a canoe and paddled over to a tiny island. heretofore having come from PRAYER / 89 the coal furnace in our Nebraska home.) Every night I would pull out the bed that hid in the couch by day and climb under the heavy quilts, my head less than ten feet away from the crackling warmth. 11:29). The time was difficult for my parents, I am sure, but for me it was glory. By saying this I am not endorsing the highly misleading cliche "God never hears a sinner's prayer." If that were actually the case, we would all be in real trouble! Nor do I mean that we must attain some special level of holiness before the Almighty will respond to our pleas. 9:17). FOSTER Then, seeing me empty, you forsake The listener's role and through My dumb lips breathe and into utterance wake The thoughts I never knew. This is a teaching found throughout the Bible, and it is a valid ministry ordained by God for the benefit of the community of faith. We speak up right away. Slowly Augustine's skepticism began to crumble before the witness of this young man. You lived utterly responsive to the will of the Father. This experience is quite common and has not 138 / RICHARD J. It is, in fact, the engine that puts the entire enterprise into motion. And overwhelming love invites a response. Like work in the yard, and chitchat with the neighbors, and washing windows. For a good discussion of conversatio morum see chapter 5 of Esther de Waal, Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1984). I am grateful to those who read all or part of the manuscript and provided valuable suggestions: Carolynn Foster, Lynda Graybeal, Dotsy Hill, Janet Janzen, and Carol Mullikin. It makes no difference how we feel about ourselves, or our performance before God. Help me to see how good conformity to your way really is. Meditative Prayer 1. C. It is to be expected, even embraced. It is not that God begrudges his forgive others. Loving is the syntax of prayer. You may remember that Luther continues, "We tremble not for him/ His rage we can endure,/ For lo, his doom is sure:/ One little word shall fell him."12 This is the outcome of the prayer for deliverance. I paddled over to this lovely spot not to pray, only to explore. But for now I want to encourage you to learn and practice prayers of protection. He was totally and instantaneously healed.1 206 RICHARD J. But for the children of the kingdom it is not important who a person is, only that a person is, only th Lewis, "means practical common sense, taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it." 3 It is a virtue that is in short supply today. 182. This is a great task, a noble task. Notice the leaves fluttering in the breeze—notice their shape, their color, their texture. Or look into the heart of the Psalmist crying out to Yahweh, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long" (Ps. 119:97). Jogging, swimming, and walking can remind us as well. In the Prayer of the Heart we experience "friendship held in reverence," to use the phrase of George Buttrick.6 We are ushered by the Spirit into the profoundest intimacy, where we become "like a still pool of water able to perfectly reflect the sun."7 Common Expressions The ways that the Prayer of the Heart is expressed are as infinite and varied as the mind of God. And this thirst can lead us to prayer. 3:3-7). 102 / RICHARD J. You make me happy. FOSTER A social worker friend of mine who lived some distance away would often ask me to come to her city to teach on the prayer of inner healing for her and her colleagues. Once I open my hands, I can receive. The two books are published under one title: The Twelve Steps of Humility and Pride, ed. See Music and song Song of Solomon, 141 Sorrow. Kelsey in his book Healing and Christianity: In Ancient Thought and Modern Times (New York: Harper & help each other become better disciples of Jesus. 320-21. They do, of course, change with the changing of language, but I hope not too quickly. It is for our own sake that we ask these things. He asked Jim how things had gone with the changing of language, but I hope not too quickly. It is for our own sake that we ask these things. He asked Jim how things had gone with the changing of language, but I hope not too quickly. It is for our own sake that we ask these things. distracted people. This is no small task, as any who have tried it can testify. We become quiet, hushed, motionless, until we are finally centered. 18:18). I was anxious about the pride and presumption in all this authoritative talk. In The Saints' Everlasting Rest Richard Baxter counsels us to seek out the "fittest time for prayer, the fittest place for prayer, and the fittest preparation of heart" for prayer.7. These constitute the specific fidelities of Covenant Prayer. In some, writes William James, "Religion exists not as a dull habit, but far and away the most important thing." I learned was how badly I need those "props" to keep me pressing in to the Divine Center. How does prayer of this sort enable us to throttle egoism and shed the burden of self-importance? The Prayer of Examen produces within us the priceless grace of self-knowledge. When he awoke later in the day, his ear infection was completely gone. 12:23, KJV). He delights in our presence. Having done this, we can also repent on behalf of other nations as well. A friend of mine was listening to a well-dressed woman share in rapid-fire monologue a sad tale of emotional illnesses, psychiatric treatment, and mental hospitals. Guyon notes, "When you are accustomed to this type of surrender, you will find that as soon as a fault is committed, God will rebuke it through an inward burning. In this simple way we begin to enter the story and make it our own. 60; Hutchinson, Six Ways to Pray, p. Watch his tenderness toward the Mary who bathed his feet with her tears: "She has shown great love." Hear his word of absolution: "Your sins are forgiven," and his benedictus: "Go in peace" (Luke 7:36-50). As a result, the concept arose of a short, simple prayer of God should run before breathing." 4 The most famous of the breath prayers is the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." As you can tell, this prayer is derived from Jesus' parable on self-righteousness, in which the tax collector beat his chest and prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). Christian people of honest heart have long differed over how the life of Christ is mediated to us through the Communion feast. Chapter 7. Back behind the scenes the battle of intercession was won by Moses and Aaron and Hur. An aid to this is a short prayer, which helps the mind to become simple and unified."7 The Practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of the Presence of the Presence of Cod The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing Prayer is associated with such practice of the Presence of God The second major expression of Unceasing P Presence of God), Thomas Kelly (A Testament of Devotion), and Frank Laubach (Letters by a Modern Mystic). The Confessions, pp. Rather than avoid this person, however, she took the PRAYER / 63 Little Way that following her death this same sister declared, "During her life, I made her really happy." Thérèse, I am sure, would be pleased.9 The Communion of Solitude We must now turn our attention to that aspect of Formation Prayer that focuses upon receiving more than striving, yielding more than striving. far more common than we might at first assume. In the days ahead we can expect Christian community to take one of four primary expressions, though there will be infinite variations on each basic form: institutional, communal, personal spiritual mentoring, and small group spiritual formation. But if I do speak, what will I say? Lewis writes, "If God had granted all the silly prayers I've made in my life, where should I be now?"7 PRAYER / 183 Another reality to keep in mind is the simple fact that many times our prayers are indeed answered, but we lack the eyes to see it. On the affirmative side of the ledger we engage in the practice of virtue with boundless zeal. It is a good question, and I will do my best to answer it. It is prayer downward, if you will. Ignatius of Loyola notes, "Everything that one turns in the direction of God is prayer." 4 Then, too, we must remember that, since Petitionary Prayer centers on us and our needs, we are not disinterested parties. PRAYER / 25 You are the God who majors in revealing yourself. And I know it feels like these rapids are headed directly toward a disastrous waterfall. This great eschatological vision of conquest by suffering is a description of the total mission and struggle of the pilgrim people of God. In Contemplative Prayer talk recedes into the background, and feeling comes to the foreground. It is simply a normal aspect of what it means to live under the reign of God. You need to know that "like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. A time may come when we are no longer able to utter words, but—and here is the glory—we are still able to pray, to pray without words. Bonhoeffer recommends spending a whole week on a single text! Therefore, my suggestion is that we take a single event, or a parable, or a few verses, or even a single text! Therefore, my suggestion is that is, the church" (Col. The discerning reader will have realized by now that I have not included a chapter in this book on the prayer of guidance. I like to date each time of prayer in a simple spiral notebook that is always with me. Augustine notes wryly, "How deep in the deep." But we have a Savior who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. That is something to be grateful for. FOSTER important to understand the Scripture intellectually, but if we have not fully understand the Scripture intellectually, but if we have not fully understand the Scripture intellectually. that you then can interpret into your individual situation. In your deep floods Drown all my faults and fears; Nor let his eye See sin, but through my tears.11 44 / RICHARD J. This is simply not the case. He was the person up front and in the thick of the conflict. Howard Macy, Rhythms of the Inner Life (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. "Prayer," writes Augustine, "is to intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others before God."8 By means of Intercede for the well-being of others by means o involved in laboring for the well-being of others. FOSTER prayers too quickly. Beyond this, the matter of ecstasy is God's business and not ours. We can be lifted into high, holy reverence by the richness and depth of a well-crafted liturgy. The next day the newspapers carried the sad story of a Christian village whose inhabitants had been massacred during the night. Halcyon C. For us technocratic knowledge reigns supreme. Some have a spiritual director, a person who listens with them on their walk with God. The first involves stripping us of dependence upon exterior results. We are asking God to show us his will, his way, his truth for our present need. After spoken intercession I may remain for a while, inviting the Spirit to pray through me "with sighs too deep for words." I will stay with any given individual or situation until I feel released from the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day. We are subversives in a world of injustice, oppression, and violence. In using the language of feeling, contemplatives are referring to a deep experienced sense of God—a kind of inner hearing, if you will. I know you would, too. The written Word becomes a living word addressed to us. See also Unanswered prayer Pigott, Jean Sophia, 93 Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (Dillard), 89 Place, covenant of, 75-76 Pleading with God, 43 Practice of prayer, 55-56, 124, 126 Practice of the Presence of God, The (Lawrence), 124 Praise, prayer of, 84-85 Prayers for the Domestic Church (Hays), 175 Prophesy, 245-247, 251-252. We become, for example, more sensitive to the hurts and sufferings of others. We rebuke fevers and choke off the blood supply to cancer cells. I was once called to a home to pray for a seriously ill baby. FOSTER The Drenching Rain of the Father I know I have only scratched the surface of the Prayer of the Heart. Or to play the piano. We become increasingly contered, increasingly contered, increasingly contered everyone everyone of the Prayer of the Heart. to "wait on the Lord" in listening silence. Penthos means deep, heartfelt compunction. Many times I, too, stand in perplexity at prayers that seem to be ignored. Believe me, we have tangled with God plenty over this decision. This good woman had not seen her own situation as needing Healing Prayer. See also Abba prayer; Lord's Prayer Fénelon, François, 102, 163 Ferapont, Father (character), 231 Fiddler on the Roof, 12 Fire of Divine Love, The (Rolle), 133 Fletcher, Phineas, 43 Focusing, 71, 75, 121; centering prayer, 161; in healing, 212 Forgiveness, 44, 186-188 Formation prayer, 57-65, 100. We also celebrate the growing army of women and men and children who are learning how to bring the healing power of Christ to others for the glory of God and the good of all concerned. Evidently Moses had the harder task, for he was the one who tired. The Common Ventures of Life All of us share in what D. 3 (Edinburgh, Scotland: Nichol, 1862-64), p. We can rest in this work of the Son on our behalf. Think of Paul and his tribulations. I imagine that our finite human spirit is completely alert and interacting with the infinite Spirit of the universe. We are having to relinquish it. The examen of consciousness is the means God uses to make us more aware of our surroundings. By nightfall he practically had the passage memorized, and still it was lifeless. Perhaps there surfaces to the conscious mind an attitude of selfrighteousness. Sweet child, dear child, Jou know it's true; Sweet child, dear child, I love you. Frankly, beyond that I cannot pray during these times. Sometimes people share their deepest needs in the most casual offhand way. Few thingspectra of the selfrighteousness in the most casual offhand way. Few thingspectra of the selfrighteousness in the most casual offhand way. Few thingspectra of the selfrighteousness in the most casual offhand way. in our culture move us in this direction. a grieving, broken, sorrowing, repentant heart? When we are brought into experiences of blessing God, the soul is enraptured in praise. Foster and Kathryn A. It was more like an ordinary dialogue between friends than like the silly science-fiction stereotypes we see in the media. There were also stipulations to the covenant—what we today call the Ten Commandments. Gloria began weeping—a deep, inward weeping accompanied by huge sighs. With simplicity of heart we allow ourselves to be gathered up into the arms of the Father and let him sing his love song over us. Jesus himself says, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Jesus, the Christ, lived a perfect life, died in our place, and rose victorious over all the dark powers so that we might live through him. FORGIVE I am constantly amazed that the petition "forgive" and not vice versa. It is under the title of Devotional Classics and is soon to be published by HarperSanFrancisco. Save us from sin's dreadful harm."6 My own approach is to preface a time of contemplation by speaking this simple prayer: "By the authority of almighty God I surround myself with the light of Christ, I cover myself with the light of Christ, I cover myself with the light of Christ. After all, the distinction between priest and psychologist and physician is of recent vintage. But here it is smack in the middle of the greatest of prayers: "Give us this day our daily bread." When we think about it for a moment, though, we realize that this prayer is completely consistent with Jesus' pattern of living, for he occupied himself with the trivialities of humankind. Listen to this witness of Theodore Brakel, a Dutch Pietist in the seventeenth century: "I was...transported into such a state of joy and my thoughts were so drawn upward that, seeing God with the eyes of my soul, I felt one with him. It leads us to the crossroad of personal decision. We must bend the ear, because it is a gentle and delicate voice, only heard by those who no longer hear anything else."13 Once I was attempting to solve a long-standing problem at the university where I have taught for many years. In the case of this book, however, as best I can determine, I was instructed to share these things with you by a higher authority. For over fifty years now they have had a compassionate ministry that is inseparable and wears well. We pray again. Why them and not me? Or that this man went about the temple "walking and leaping and praising God" with clenched teeth (Acts 3:1-10)? 55 Avenue Road, Suite 2900 Toronto, ON, M5R, 3L2, Canada New Zealand HarperCollinsPublishers (New Zealand) Limited P.O. Box 1 Auckland, New Zealand United Kingdom HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Throughout the second week our unbroken request is for the grace of being formed into the image of Christ. 7:12, RSV). Instead begin more simply." I nearly fell out of my seat. Next I speak forth what seems most appropriate in full confidence that God hears and answers. 28:9). We pray the ordinary in three ways: first, by turning ordinary experiences of life into prayer; second, by seeing God in the ordinary experiences of life; and third, by praying throughout the ordinary experiences of life. A settled peace, in fact, is the most frequent experiences of life; and third, by praying throughout the ordinary experiences of life. John Chrysostom notes, "Find the door of your heart, you will discover it is the door of the kingdom of God." 6 Madame Guyon calls this special kind of inward turning "the law of central tendency." "As you continue holding your soul deep in your inward parts, you will discover it is the door of the kingdom of God." 6 Madame Guyon calls this special kind of inward turning "the law of central tendency." Lord naturally draws you more and more toward Himself."7 We are drawn into the Divine Center, says Guyon, through God's grace rather than by our own efforts. On occasion you may want to rock your child to sleep, all the while singing your blessing. People may try to offer me love, but if resentment and vindictiveness fill my heart, their offers will roll off me PRAYER / 187 like water off a duck's back. It happened so abruptly and so completely that it startled me. Frank Laubach called it his Game with Minutes, and by nothing else!"5 So we throw caution to the wind and pray not just for individuals but also for nations, not just for the renewal of the Church but also for the transformation of the world. Perhaps for you it was the tragic death of child or spouse that plunged you into the desolate desert of God's absence. Then a listening stillness came over me that yielded needed instruction for the days ahead. Simple Prayer is found throughout Scripture. Even as a twelve-year-old in the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus explains to his earthly parents, "I must be in my Father's house" (Luke 2:49). The truth being meditated upon passes from the mouth into the mind and down into the heart, where through quiet rumination—regurgitation, if you will—it produces in the person praying a loving, faith-filled response. See also Christians Edwards, Jonathan, 110, 198 Eliot, T. For me the greatest value in my lack of control was the intimate and ultimate awareness that I could not manage God. We can close our eyes bowed in awe and reverence, or we can raise our eyes lowed in awareness that I could not manage God. We can close our eyes bowed in awareness that I could not manage God. We can close our eyes upward in praise and devotion. So it is in the spiritual life. And sometimes the lack of healing can take on tragic dimensions that precipitate a genuine crisis of faith. It is an adventure in itself just to follow Augustine's winding, tortuous path toward emancipation, complete with numerous detours and dead ends. We obey him right now in everything we can and in everything we know. That 143 144 / RICHARD J. Easing myself into the chair, I waited to see if it would sustain my weight. May I someday become like the trees, which are "planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. We must still fight this thing." To Franky I said quietly, "We both know that your eyes are not getting better, but somehow I think we should ask God to help. Help me to try now. Then she enters a definite time of repentance, which is concluded by receiving the Eucharist in the Sunday morning worship service. It is not an empty ritual but a clear understanding of the law of contact and transmittal. FOSTER Peering Into the Abyss Strange as it may sound to modern ears, the contemplation of one's own death is among the most time-honored approaches to personal transformation. 254. Certainly I should not be extended to do those kinds of things. Without prayer-filled preaching and prayer-filled hearing, we are an anemic Church and of all people most to be pitied. The list could be extended endlessly. May our hearts be stirred. Finally, he blurted out, "Lord you know everything; you know that I love you." Assured of his heart, Jesus gave Peter work to do: "Feed my lambs." The same question is asked of us. O root of my heart, when will you come to me?" "Jesus, Lover of my soul," pleads Charles Wesley. I say "as best I can discern" because the purifying was not dramatic or even recognizable at the time. Often in the Bible people were scared out of their wits when they encountered the living God. His blood poured out. Give thanks to him, bless his name" (Ps. 100:4). The ancient law code startles us with its trenchant words: "The is your praise; he is your God" (Deut.10:21). This is why the promise of Scripture comes as such good news: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. I love you, Lord God. Not that there is anything wrong with kind and gracious remarks, but they are no longer what move us. With God as our companion, we become all the more ready to face the demands of the day: looking forward to meetings with others, anticipating work with associates, eagerly awaiting time with children and spouse. For years Carolynn and I dreamed of building a toxin-free home in hopes of gaining an upper hand over her rather severe allergies. Well, we have come a long way in our consideration. Heal my fear, Lord. How do we break the horns of this dilemma? In the silent contemplation of God we are entering deeply into the spiritual realm, and there is such a thing as supernatural guidance. In urban life, in contrast, everything presses hard toward Friday—"TGIF," as we say—and the weekends are much more discretionary. 11. This does not come to us immediately. Why should we add another religious duty onto an already overcommitted schedule? It remains for all of us who have been gathered together by Jesus Christ, our ever-living Prophet, to envision the future. Almost instinctively you understand the experience they were describing, do you not? He modeled for us the reality of perpetual communion with the Father: "The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father doing; for whatever the Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in. With my spirit I was entirely in heaven for two or three days."22 PRAYER / 165 Ecstasy is Contemplative Prayer taken to the nth degree. He awoke early one morning with the words of Psalm 91:14-16 on his lips: "Those who love me, I will deliver.... Well, then, we pray for daily babysitters. The same work is given to us. I sang with my mind too—hymns and psalms springing up from distant memory as well as spiritual songs that cascaded down in impromptu splendor. Penthos means blessed, holy mourning. Basilea Schlink, Repentance: The Joy-Filled Life (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1984), pp. Some small instruction may be helpful for these situations. Helmut Thielicke preached on this very passage right after the Allied occupation of his very passage right after the A hometown of Stuttgart near the end of the Second World War. Blessed Savior, I pace back and forth at the altar of commitment. 8:17-26). He recommends that we begin with prayer for our enemies: "The first intercession is, 'Bless So-andso whom I foolishly regard as an enemy. 140 / RICHARD J. I was once in a worship service I shall not soon forget We are constantly turning inward—but inward in a very special way. Bloom, Beginning to Pray, pp. This leads us directly into the subject of our next chapter—the Prayer of Tears. Thomas Merton writes, "Anyone who imagines he can simply begin meditating without praying for the desire and the grace to do so, will soon give up. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures—I wish no more than this, O Lord."6 Allow the Sovereign of your heart to specify what needs to be laid at his feet. Covenant Prayer 1. I PRAYER / 237 invited the peace and the love of God to enter her, filling every aspect of her mind, body, and spirit. They allow us to shout out our forsakenness in the dark caverns of abandonment and then hear the echo return to us over and over until we bitterly recant of them, only to shout them out again. Everything and anything interrupt our sense of concentration. and Trio Music Co., Inc. It was as if a window suddenly had been thrown open and God wanted to talk friend to friend. I was the last one to visit her. More recently, Albert Edward Day, in his book Discipline and Discovery (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1988), gives fifteen steps into humility. As I prayed it this morning when I met with my spiritual formation group, I was joining with the voices of millions around the world who pray in this way each day. Saint Vincent de Paul says, "It is only because of your love, only your love, that the poor will forgive you the bread you give them."13 Prayer makes our love flow freely, both vertically and horizontally. In fact, those who work in the area of spiritual direction always look for signs of a maturing faith before encouraging individuals into Contemplative Prayer. The ancient liturgical refrain Kyrie, Eleison (Lord, have mercy) comes from this parable. There were many wonderful things about this good pastor, but on this occasion the daughter's heart was heavy with the losses: the multiplied times he was gone because of the demands of the ministry; the tight budget, which meant few toys, skimpy vacations, no special things; the snooping, sniping parishioners that found fault with anything and everything. I think not, for though they are all true—each and every one—they can actually become like those pat answers that we use to protect us from the raw nerves of sorrow. It is a virtue to be ignorant of vast areas of today's "devotional book" field. We endure the agony that prepares us to enter into the anguish of others. The examen of consciousness and the examen of conscience are a little like the waves of the ocean: distinct from one another and yet constantly on top of and never totally separate from each other. We give God therefore not just our strengths but also our weaknesses, not just our giftedness but also our brokenness. The two balance and play off one another a little like a gyroscope, the heart of a gyroscope, the heart of a gyroscope, the most basic of all is for a release of our spirit into the Spirit of God whereby the Spirit prays through us. The first focuses upon our sins in the light of God's love. 70. Through the prophet Isaiah, for example, God uses the language of mother: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you" (Isa. This volume provides one reading per week for a year. It did matter, and it does matter, and there is no use pretending 188 / RICHARD J. You are left untouched by his love and care. In reality, the experience is more like an animated computer graphic of two concentric circles that are constantly over lapping, interfacing, and weaving into and out of one another. See also Evil Single-parent households, 175-176 Sistine chapel fresco, 59 Skepticism, 215-216 Social holiness, 248-249. FOSTER Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.2 Today, this very moment, Jesus is inviting me, into his rest: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. So we must thank God that many of our prayers go unanswered. At times God may want a solitary Elijah or John the Baptist, but his more customary pattern is to anchor us in communities, where there can be accountability and support. William Law declares that prayer is a mighty instrument, "not for getting man's will done in heaven" but "for getting God's will done on earth." 6 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 7 We are, in effect, praying from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he writes, "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth." 8 Dr. Ole Hallesby highlights the same reality when PRAYER / 239 he "many-splendored" heart of God. We can laugh, and we can weep, freely and openly. Without reservation we vow to follow the Father's faintest whisper. We are encouraged to crawl into the Father's lap and receive his love and comfort and healing and strength. It was with Meditative Prayer. "To pray," writes Emilie Griffin, "means to be willing to be naive."1 I used to think that I needed to get all my motives straightened out before I could pray, really pray. Haybe, he was the voice of God urging us to be attentive to the pain and loneliness of those around us. No matter if he is asleep or awake, prayer is going on in his heart all the time. We must not despise this simpler, more humble route into God's presence. Also, your sleep is seldom deep because you always have one ear open for your baby. Our task is not so much to study the passage as to be initiated into the reality of which the passage speaks. Martin Luther's Works, vol. When this happens, do not put up an umbrella to protect yourself but rather stand in the drenching rain of the Father. 8:18). By the time the sun had slipped below the horizon, he was able to utter the prayer of Mary as his own: "Let it be to me according to your word." Jim had just lost control of his life, and in the same moment had found it! 1 Bound to Scripture Jim's story underscores the most fundamental form of Christian meditation-meditation that is bound to Scripture and also to the great devotional writings. We may in the end become so consumed with ourselves that PRAYER / 15 we lose sight of God altogether and end up worshiping "the creature rather than the Creator," as Paul put it Rom. This sometimes comes by direct revelation, sometimes by hearing the words beneath the words, and sometimes by a combination of both. The wrestling may be painful, but the net result is worth the struggle, for, as Søren Kierkegaard reminds us, we win—and so does God: "The righteous man strives in prayer with God and conquers—in tha God conquers."15 PRAYER / 227 Suffering with the Body of Christ The Bible tells us that we are "the body of Christ." This description of the community of faith is not some romantic metaphor but is a genuine reality. We are trying to use words, but the words fail us. Consider this random sampling: "The person who has great peace of heart pays no attention to either praise or blame"; "It is greater work to resist our weaknesses than it is to sweat at manual labor"; "Do not be so quick to follow every good feeling, nor so eager to avoid every bad one"; "The old serpent will tempt you and entice you, but he will be sent packing by prayer, and if you do some useful work in the meantime, you will block his chief approach."13 One writer who will expand your horizons to the bruised and broken of humanity is John Woolman. And Jesus seconds the motion: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matt. It means freedom to care for others, to give joyfully and freely. In the stillness, our false, busy selves are unmasked and seen for the imposters they truly are. Contemplatives sometimes speak of their union with God by the analogy of a log in a fire: the glowing log is so united with the fire that it is fire, while, at 160 / RICHARD J. Over the centuries an unfortunate and, in my opinion, completely unnecessary division has arisen among Christians 278. What happened next is difficult to put into words. 10. We lift even our disobedience into the arms of the Father; he is strong enough to carry the weight. See him weeping over his beloved Jerusalem: "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matt. We knock and continue to knock even though the door remains shut. This process of transformation is the sole focus of Formation Prayer. The Royal Law Divine love, agape, alone can sustain the community that God calls into being; therefore the true prophetic message always calls us to that dynamic love of God and love of neighbor that are at the heart of the Gospel. Some unfortunately are looking for techniques rather than intimacy. The Prayer of Rest 1. This is often called a rhema, Greek meaning simply "word." When Jesus observed that we live not by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God, he used the word rhema (Matt. 20:19). As noted in Vincent, Life of Prayer, p. Never mind. I can talk of courage and faith and a whole host of other things more readily than I can of love. I shall try to keep You in mind every moment of my waking hours."10 On another occasion he notes, "God, after a sleepless night, I open my eyes, laughing, for we are together! Sleep is not necessary. Saint Teresa of Avila notes, "There is no stage of prayer so sublime that it isn't necessary to return often to the beginning."2 Jesus, for example, calls us to Simple Prayer when he urges us to ask for daily bread. This is God's way (Isa. FOSTER Second, liturgical prayer helps us unite with the "communion of saints." The enterprise we are undertaking is far larger than we are. It is not enough to confess freely and openly our many offenses. See also Contrition; Repentance Confessions (Augustine), 33, 150 Consumerism, 152-158, 161-163. Chapter 12. They are simply not sufficient to describe what is happening in the Prayer of Rest. We are praying, all right, perhaps praying more truly than ever before. God is not destroying the will but transforming it so that over a process of time and experience we can freely will what God PRAYER / 55 wills. Answer: the best we can! Try "blessing prayers" as they return. For still others the word is no longer useful because of contemporary abuses and stereotypes. In our day of runaway narcissism it is a practice we would do well to revive. We pout. 5:17). This is a great mystery. By the grace of God they can be a thousand times better, but they will never again be the same. The School of Gethsemane We learn the Prayer of Relinquishment in the school of Gethsemane. We live so much of our lives in "an intolerable scramble of panting feverishness," as Thomas Kelly calls it.1 All of the grasping and grabbing, all of the controlling, all of the manipulative dynamics of life exhaust us. He told me that the experience turned him into an atheist. It is not that we disbelieve in God, but more profoundly we wonder what kind of God we believe in. Severing Precious Roots As I write these words, Carolynn and I are personally experiencing the Prayer of Relinquishment. In that split second you alone will decide whether you will hold steady in the inner sanctuary of the heart or rush out of the sail is what makes it able to take advantage of the wind. I was not ready. R. 1:20b-22a). Is it a warm sweater or gloves that we need because of the bitter cold? Contemplative Prayer is not for the novice. If a husband ignores his wife, valuing business and all other things above her, he has sinned against her. And this is exactly what he does, boldly standing between God and the people, arguing with God to withhold his hand of judgment. No Greater Image There is no greater image of this suffering love that redeems than Jesus pinned to Golgotha's tree, uttering the words of absolution: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Tozer, The Pursuit of God (Harrisburg PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), p. So what approach are we to take? To magnify something, you make it look larger, increasing it out of proportion. I must warn you that this centeredness does not come easily or quickly in the beginning. I founded this centeredness does not come easily or quickly in the beginning. Lisieux called it "dreaming of heaven." Nicholas of Cusa called it "the gaze of God." Madame Guyon called it "the prayer of reality." In its most basic and fundamental expression, Contemplative Prayer is a loving attentiveness to God. Hans Urs von Balthasar, Prayer, trans. Many of the devotional masters likewise encourage us in this way. FOSTER of devotion on the altar of perpetual prayer. It is far better to find a few spiritual staples and feed on them until they have molded you. Remember the kingdom promise to David. In Acts 9:17 Paul received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by Ananias. 274 / RICHARD J. We know that we are only falling into the arms of Jesus fully satisfied, fully at rest. 17:8-13). The Purifying Silence As best I can discern, the silence of God month after weary month was a purifying silence. Activity of the Everlasting Trinity The work of prayer, the work of prayer, the work of prayer does not depend upon us. I held Maria's hand as the medical technicians worked on her. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name.1 108 / RICHARD J. But what exactly does it mean? 179. His heart is the most sensitive and tender of all. We can pray for the healing of any emotional traumas from the day, and always we pray prayers of protection for the long night and the day to come. We can be on the telephone with someone and utter anointed words that "speak truth to power," as the old writers loved to say. Chapter 11. 69. Sanctifying the Imagination. The simplest and most basic way to meditate upon the text of Scripture is through the imagination. The Lead of Our Leader We must also be confident to speak the authoritative word when it is right and good. Forsyth, Soul of Prayer, p. We do so with boldness of faith but also with humility of heart, for we know that Jesus, the true light, has already been shining his truth into the hearts of people (John 1:9). Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), p. Wisely, the archbishop encouraged the old woman to go to her room each day and "for fifteen minutes knit before the PRAYER / 97 face of God, but I forbid you to say one word of prayer. 9:1). As we experience the many little deaths of going beyond ourselves, we increasingly enter into the grace of humility. She explained how she worked her way through this entire album each week, flipping the pages and praying over the pictures. Union with God What is the goal of Contemplative Prayer? He releases his healing light right into your little sister sort of like a whole bunch of soldiers who go in and fight the bad germs until 210 / RICHARD J. David McI. When the time is right, changes will occur." I did indeed relax my frantic efforts and in doing so learned a little more about silencio.14 The third way we slip into the Prayer of Rest is what is called "recollection." Recollection." Recollection a little more about silencio.14 The third way we slip into the Prayer of Rest is what is called "recollection." Recollection." means focus. Iesus gave us his parables on prayer to show us our "need to pray always and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). Fourth, we obey. You may be so awestruck and so full of love at his presence that words do not come. Fire must be introduced in order to burn out the dross and leave the gold pure. In either case, rest in the confidence that God is better than you are at resurrection. This classification is Dietrich Bonhoeffer's. Sparrows and chickadees mimic their song. Think of Moses complaining to God about his stiff-necked and erstwhile followers: "Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? 8:29). I could see that what this pastor was experiencing was a classic example of "the dark night of the soul." I listened for perhaps an hour, moved by what this highly successful pastor was going through. It was huge, dark, ugly. 27. Walter Hilton, The Stairway of Perfection, trans. See too how the person praying expresses dependence, docility, trust—the opposite of self-reliance. But how? Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Hesychia is the Greek word for rest, and hesychasm refers to the spirituality of the desert fathers and mine—would be so much easier if we were, for example, dissecting the problem of evil. There are also questions, like what did it say to you? Because we are forming fixed habits of righteousness. 12:2). The Spirit reshapes, refines, and reinterprets our feeble, ego-driven prayers. Finally he said, "Lady, your sins are forgiven you." She kept right on with her story of this illness and that hospital stay. her sins. As quoted in Vincent, Life of Prayer, p. Jean-Nicholas Grou, How to Pray, trans. A third obstacle to adoration is greed. What I do say is something like this: "Thank you, Jesus, that what we have seen and what nature of the cabin—lighting by candle, heating by fireplace, plumbing by outhouse—only added to the adventure. How do we enter the Prayer of Rest? Now sit back and listen to the sound of the brook. I ask this in your good and strong name. It is as if all feelings have gone into hibernation. Wait, silent and still. Beyond my Eskimo friend no human being ever knew or cared whether I dug that ditch well or poorly. Then, under some special inspiration, the father scooped up his son and, holding him close to his chest, began singing an impromptu love song. Allow his hand to rest upon yours and guide you. And note that he refuses to stand off at a safe, self-righteous distance but instead identifies intimately with the sins of the people. Intercessory Prayer 1. We beg. Who cares if a few thousand tribespeople in Zaire come into obedience to Christ? We are glad to waste time with God, for we are pleased with the company. 34-35. The Consuming Passion I am sure you sense the desperate need for Unceasing Prayer in our day. Stanwood (New York: Paulist, 1978), and Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, comp. CHAPTER 13 MEDITATIVE PRAYER Meditation is the tongue of the soul and the language of our spirit. A full life of prayer contains infinite variety. Then, on the third day, Jesus burst forth from death's grip, and the first act of the Resurrected One was to institute the ministry of confession and forgiveness (John 20:23). The end is union with God."14 This last step is a little too big for me right now. Another expression of the Prayer of the Heart is what is sometimes referred to as "resting in the Spirit." It is the experience of being taken up by the Spirit's power in such a way that the individual loses consciousness for a time. We are privileged to do the same. Acts of Contrition God never despises "a broken and contrite heart," says the Psalmist (Ps. 51:17). 18). This intense interaction is not unlike God himself, for, as Donald Bloesch tells us, "God even wrestles with himself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, for, as Donald Bloesch tells us, "God even wrestles with himself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, for, as Donald Bloesch tells us, "God even wrestles with himself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, for, as Donald Bloesch tells us, "God even wrestles with himself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, with hisself, seeking to reconcile his holiness, which cannot tolerate sin, which can infinite love for a sinful human race."11 Even so, this wrestling is a hard image for us to accept. If this is the case with you, do not be discouraged. What do they mean? Slowly, we loosen our grip on all those projects that to us seem so significant. Even today as an adult I can go back to that center via the marvelous capacity of memory and there experience thanksgiving and gratitude to the God who gives every good gift. But when you are unable to put your spiritual life into drive, do not put it into reverse; put it into neutral. I then offer these to God, listening to see if any special discernment comes to guide the content of the prayer. But do not only remember the suffering they have inflicted on us; remember the fruits we bought, thanks to this suffering: our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this. Holy laughter is different in kind from good, old-fashioned belly laughter, but they are distant cousins! Real laughter, real hilarity—not the cheap stuff that comes at the expense of others—is always from God. We must come to accept and even honor our creatureliness. It means that we are making the kinds of intercessions he PRAYER / 195 would make if he were among us in the flesh. May the day come when we too can "sing to the LORD a new song" in this ancient way (Ps. 96:1). We simply cannot say too much about God's goodness or love. To be spiritually fit to scale the Himalayas of the spirit, we need regular exercise in the hills and valleys of ordinary life. 23:37). Are we not able to release our urgent desire to succeed in prayer? Tears are a sign—not an infallible sign, to be sure, but a sign nevertheless—that God has touched this center. We do not resign ourselves to fate. It is that we should learn to pray even while we are dwelling on evil. If we cannot find God in the routines of home and shop, then we will not find him at all. She had been so close for so long that the idea of a vigil was simply not reasonable. Then, too, it may help all of us to remember that we are to receive our understanding of how human fathers are supposed to function by learning what God is like, not the other way around. No, when undertaken in the power of the Spirit, acts of duty can be filled with great joy and blessing. We live as faithfully as we can. Many things would surface to memory. 1:1, 31). She accepted her slowly deteriorating condition with a noble faith We are doing more than reading words; we are seeking "the Word exposed in the words," to use the phrase of Karl Barth. I call upon the good, the true, and the evil to subside. Psalm 72:20 describes all the preceding Psalms as "the pravers of David." The monastic communities that gather five times a day for prayers chant the Psalter, as do liturgical congregations who gather for vespers. I would be in some prayer group, for example, and I would examine what I had just prayed and think to myself, "How utterly foolish and self-centered; I can't pray this way!" And so I would determine never to pray again until my motives were pure. What happens is all of grace. The Psalter is the prayerbook of the Church, and I often precede personal prayer with the prayerful reading of a Psalm. Every now and then we are given the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ over some special need in his Body. This year, for example, I am engaging in a splendid new experiment. To do so I need to tell you a little story—you will see how it fits presently. Do we really think we can experience integration of heart and mind and spirit with an erratic prayer life? It is possible for all of this to be nothing more than vain human strivings. "If only I had some time free from the distractions of work, then I could pray" is a common sentiment. If only you knew how! Yes, if only we all knew how! This is the task to which we now turn our attention. The Prayer of the Heart 1. Donna C. When the time is right, up springs new life. We simply cannot make heart repentance happen. I prayed forgiveness for the father who did not know what he had done. It is not hard to see how a Michelangelo or a T. Rather, we place all things into divine hands and then act out of inner promptings. 32. Passivity, however, is seldom our problem. But once I give love, I am a candidate for receiving love. It is radiant. Seeing these things and knowing that it is not good for people to be in such bondage, we speak the word of authority that breaks the curse. FOSTER Venturing Out In my

own experience I stumbled onto this way of prayer almost by accident many years ago. Even when all we see are the tangled threads on the backside of life's tapestry, we know that God is good and is out to do us good always. 11:20-30). Over the years, however, I have learned that I do not need to know everything. Sin, to be sure, separates us from God, but trying to hide our sin separates us all the more. This is how we are strengthened. It is a joint search, if I may put it that way. That is meditation."3 When Bonhoeffer founded the seminary at Finkenwalde, everyone there practiced a daily half-hour silent meditation upon Scripture. The movement inward comes first simply because God has revealed himself to us most fully and most clearly in Jesus Christ. Commenting on the modern, "properly spiritualized 'concept of evil,'" he wrote: Dear friends, in our time we have had far too much controlled by mysterious, abysmal powers, leading them where they had no intention of going; we have observed all too often how an alien spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of men who before may have been quite decent and reasonable persons, driving them to 190 / RICHARD J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). DELIVER This end to a spirit can ride people and change the very substance of the very substance third petition is perhaps the most important of them all. I was in charge of a gathering of several hundred teenagers, and the meetings had gone well. Still he prayed in the Spirit over this name that he did not know, suffering intense pain as he did so. Brother Ugolino di Monte Santa Maria, The Little Flowers of St. Francis (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), p. Certainly, his heart was filled with rage, bitterness, and guilt. Nearby was a huge monolith well known in the area as Haystack Rock. FOSTER moments and put all your energy into them. PRAYER / 35 Perhaps you will want to try the unique way a friend of mine has of experiencing the examen of conscience. Think of Moses exiled from Egypt's splendor, waiting year after silent year for God to deliver his people. We can now develop a habit of giving thanks for the simple gifts that come our way day by day. Finally one young man stood up and gently placed his hands on the man's shoulders. Then, too, there was the "thank offering" that was such a prominent feature in the worship of ancient Israel (Lev. I had worked in churches all my life, and I knew it was so-the Church, while huge and with some vestiges of life remaining, was decaying. In referring to this reality, the well-known Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte says that the Bible becomes "all over autobiographic of you." 4 In the meditation upon Scripture we cannot, for example, read the story of God's word to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac in total detachment, thankful PRAYER / 147 that we are not in his shoes. Have there been times when you desperately needed some word of assurance, some demonstration of divine presence, and you got nothing? But more often than not there is no waterfall on this river at all, and the water is smooth and calm on the other side. Perhaps we have a crushing failure that gives us more than one sleepless night. Even the luncheon time that followed was graced by discernment into heart hurts, and I prayed silently for healing to continue. I rise up in the morning and give thanks to God. See also Silence; Spiritual ecstasy Contemplative, the, 159, 160 Contrition, acts of, 42-45. Speaking invitations were too numerous and too gracious. Please, can you help me?" I had been listening now for perhaps forty minutes, and I knew that I was in the presence of someone who was completely rational. That will depend on you: your personality, your needs. Sacramental Prayer 1. In his own birth the common and the sacred have been forever united. We must never negate or demean this aspect of our prayer experience. See Tears Soul, 37, 62, 158; and body, 203; dark night of the, 161; turning inward to the, 33, 128 Speaking in tongues, 137-138 Speyr, Adrienne von, 42 Spirit, the Holy. Far from it. That was Sunday night. We need, for example, to be able to discern between multiple personalities caused by emotional wounds and those caused by demonic activity. They saw it as a gift to be sought after, the "charism of tears." For them the people most to be pitied are those who go through life with dry eyes and cold hearts. 20, 12; Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary, p. There is little that is lofty or magnanimous about the faith heroes who journey across the pages of Scripture. It wears us out and defeats us to start in this way. See also Silence; Solitude Resurrection, prayer of, 56 Revelations of Divine Love (Juliana of Norwich), 151 Rhema ("word"), 137 "Rime of the Ancient Mariner, The" (Coleridge) 3 Ritual, 106 Rolle, Richard, 133, 158 Rule of St. Benedict, 60, 72, 1535 S Sabbath prayer, 94-96 Sacramental prayer into the course of listening prayer into the course of listening prayer into the course of everyday experience. We demand to be heard. I am not sure that PRAYER / 41 I understand it either. Think of Mary and her Calvary vigil. 27:46b, KJV). And so do we. I spoke nothing audible at the time, but something had been released in my spirit that afternoon, and in the days that followed the charism of glossolalia came forth quite naturally as an ordinary part of my ongoing prayer life. Thoughts dart in and out of our minds with no rhyme or reason. The second area is our continual interaction with the movings of the Spirit of God: resistance, disobedience, repentance, submission, faith, obedience, repentance, submission, faith, obedience, and more. At the evening liturgy she received Eucharist and then went to bed, hoping that the incident had passed. It does not come automatically. You might begin with Gregory of Nyssa's The Life of Moses. The Apostle Paul tells us that after God raised Jesus from the dead, he "seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.... "Let's play a little game," I suggested. We pray and the words seem empty. In your name and for your sake, I pray. The present evil age continues, and so Christians live in the overlap of the two aeons. Faith is a little like putting your car into gear, and right now you cannot exercise faith, you cannot exercise faith, you cannot exercise faith, you cannot exercise faith is a little like putting your car into gear. A Reader in Christian Spirituality (San Francisco: Collins Liturgical in USA, 1986), p. The third step occurs as prayer moves into the heart. We touch the heart. I love myself. For me this heart weeping lasted only a few days. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. As I mentioned earlier we today call it the Lord's Prayer, though that distinction more rightly belongs to the high priestly prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room (John 17). But we can experience solitude. 50. "The brain is bleeding and swelling from the impact of the injury," I went on to explain. "My body was jerking so violently," she told me, "that I feared my neck would break. Embedded in the word of forgiveness is the call to obedience. These can be merely irritating or genuinely tragic. Throughout I will be seeking to name our experiences of prayer, a little like Adam in the Garden naming the animals. George Fox writes, "Let all nations hear PRAYER / 251 the word by sound or writing. We are warm clay in the hands of the Master Potter (Jer. After a while, however, my mind became agitated by a kind of hyperresponsibility—perhaps you know the feeling. But we all will have numerous opportunities through the course of our routine days to bring the healing light of Christ to those who are around us. The following stepping-stones will, I hope, help to mark the way. Notice our own children! They do not need to be trained to ask for things. (I know of one group in India that has chimes that ring at ten in the morning and three in the afternoon as a signal for everyone to stop what they are doing and gather up the needs of the community in silent prayer.) Many have found a daily—especially useful. There I was, standing behind her with great tears falling to the floor as I entered into her pain, repented for her father, and sought healing for her inner child. I am talking about nurturing a secret history with the Father. FOSTER F Faith: in healing, 211; lack of, 41; and skepticism, 215-216 Family altar, 176 Farmer, Herbert, 190 Father, God the, 134, 142, 180, 192-193; moving upward to the, ; will of the, 47, 50, 2294. The notion that we can say just the right combination of words in just the right sequence and thereby get God to espouse our cause is the repetition that the Bible rejects. As best I can I come in. No longer do we take things into our own hands. The parents told me that the doctors feared the worst. Suddenly I realized the connection between what was happening to us and the message that had come to me that morning while I was in bed. All the time there was rising within him the counsel, "Tell her her sins are for given her." But she never seemed to stop long enough even to catch her breath. This does not make the first two postures appropriate, but it should free us to use whatever body language is appropriate to the prayer experience we are entering into. Alexander Whyte, Lord, Teach Us to Pray (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. Let me describe my grateful center to you. The sun darted in and out of the trees in a playful game of tag as I explored the area. Guyon, Experiencing the Depths, p. That is all right. The experience can be stopped, I suppose, but who would want to? I am acquainted with churches in which anywhere from 15 to 24 percent of the congregation are engaged in organized, corporate, intercessory prayer weekly. FOSTER 7. 163. This is the step of faith. Here we are not so much speaking for God. 200-201. We are doing vicariously for them what they cannot do for themselves." 8 In the Ravensbruck Nazi concentration camp—the camp where an estimated ninety-two thousand men, women, and children were murdered—a piece of wrapping paper was found near the body of a dead child. His point is a simple one: Jesus, by means of his ascension and heavenly reign, has authority over every spiritual and material power. When we have been around the genuine article long enough, the cheap and the shoddy become obvious. He places within us such an insatiable God hunger that absolutely nothing satisfies us except the genuine whole-wheat Bread of Life. Let it come in whatever form you desire. Stretching Out to God Look with me at three classical ways of proactive prayer whose principal aim is our transformation. What experiences of prayer and meditation have you had this week? Of course, the imagination can be distorted by Satan, but then so can all our faculties. No one knows that we are engaged in it...except perhaps by noticing that we are engaged in it...except perhaps by noticing that we are happier and more fulfilled. And Christianity would be, intellectually, a far easier religion if it kept us on this "lofty" plane. Now you know why. But it simply does not happen that way. It is the deference of spirit that says, in effect, "I shouldn't bother God with the petty details of my life. We live in a wordy world with our sophisticated high-tech telecommunication systems. In a few short months you will be able to return to a more regular pattern of prayer. And so we do. "O magnify the LORD with me," says the Psalmist, "and let us exalt his name together" (Ps. 34:3). The language of "they" and "them" is converted into "we" and "us." All supposed superiority—whether intellectual, cultural, or spiritual—simply melts away. PRAYER / 65 His prayer for me had equally powerful results, for we were bathed in the milieu of the Holy Spirit that day. The Confessions of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of Jesus Community, "Friends of Jesus Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friends of St. Augustine, trans. Together we stand under the cross. Dorothy Craven, "Sharing in Community," Friedway, "Sharing i 265 8. And it is not just that we are trapped in a rat race of acquiring things. To be sure, it is "Sabbath rest," which sounds passive. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us to Pray, p. A special rhema also comes to us frequently from other people, in which a divine revelation from God is applied to the specifics of our lives. God has placed into our hands the destiny of the world, and by means of our prayers we hold back the divine wrath. In Authoritative Prayer we are engaged in the warfare of the Spirit against the kingdom of darkness. Breath Prayer As Christians over the centuries have sought to follow the biblical injunction to "pray without ceasing," they have developed two fundamental expressions of Unceasing Prayer. Consume them, each one. They actually called this inner heart turmoil "deep joy." In fact, joy is the most obvious result of a heart perpetually bowed in contrition. It is this ethical call to repentance, to change, to obedience that most clearly distinguishes Christian meditation from its Eastern and secular counterparts. You have lived in the divine milieu for a long time and can attest to its goodness. As quoted in C. This kind of prayer is peppered all through Jesus' ministry. \* Tevye's prayers, by the way, appeal to us precisely because they are Simple Prayer. Supplication means to ask with earnestness, with intensity, with perseverance. It is the quite legitimate 86 / RICHARD J. One group I know quite well takes an eight-hour retreat once a month. Indeed, some of the great contemplatives, such as Juliana of Norwich, received profound visions from God during times of contemplation. We are therefore given a boundless compassion for all peoples. It may feel strange and unnatural at first, for you are not used to loving God. The meeting ended with no resolution in sight, and I walked back to my office disheartened. In doing this, they were actually proclaiming a theology with their feet. Blessing. 54 / RICHARD J. Spiritual Defiance The true prophetic message always calls us to a spiritual defiance of the world as it now is. Something deep inside us has been awakened and brought to attention. We come before God in liturgical dignity and charismatic jubilee. There was no spectacular drama, no newspaper headline, no high adventure. The experience is more profound than mere silence or lack of words. Foster is the author of several bestselling books, including Streams of Living Water; Prayer; and Celebration of Discipline. Roberts (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981). Richard Rolle was sitting in chapel one day when he "suddenly felt within me an unwonted and pleasant fire." 7 Bernard of Clairvaux, that towering religious and political figure of the twelfth century, described his experience of the presence of Jesus this way: "I have felt that He was present;" remember later that He has been with me; I have sometimes even had a presentiment that He would come; but I have never felt His coming or His leaving."8 And John Wesley exclaimed after the famous Moravian meeting at Aldersgate, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. One of the great values of liturgical prayer is found precisely in our not having to think. See also Petitionary prayer Unceasing prayer, 119, 127; and breathing, 122-124; practice of, 124-127; as unbroken communion, 120-121 Underhill, Evelyn, 65 Upward movement, xii, 255 V Vallière, Eve La, 38 Vanier, Jean, 102 Vincent, Mary Clare, 13 Voice of the Lord, 76, 116 W Way of a Pilgrim, The, 122 Wesley, Charles, 3 Wesley, John, 67, 158 Wholeness of life, 172 Whyte, Alexander, 146, 147, 148 Will, 49-50, 68; crucifixion of the, 53-55; of the Father, 47, 50, 2294 Willard, Dallas, 58, 254 Wink, Walter, 247 Winter, blessedness of, 65 Woolman, John, 54, 152, 231 Word(s), 150; Rhema, 137 Work. It does not matter. In the name of him whose adoration never failed. —Douglas Steere Prayer is the human response to the perpetual outpouring of love by which God lays siege to every soul. In so doing we are Praying the Ordinary. In the Prayer of Suffering we leave far behind our needs and wants, even our transformation and union with God. Allow me to share a few counsels that have been helpful to me. v PREFACE For a long time is the human response to the perpetual outpouring of love by which God lays siege to every soul. In so doing we are Praying the Ordinary. have wanted to write on the subject of prayer. This then informs the direction of future intercessions. I knew that prayer is no magic incantation. 203 204 / RICHARD J. You just knit and try to enjoy the peace of your room." The woman received this counsel, and at first her only thought was, "O how nice. Who can question the significance of these twin activities of heart and mind? Guyon, Experiencing God, pp. I urge you, too, to find a place of focus—a loft, a garden, a spare room, an attic, even a designated chair—somewhere away from the routine of life, out of the particular circumstances of our lives. FOSTER Dear Jesus, how desperately I need to learn to pray. The flow of his argument runs like this: Christ's heavenly position of authority (Eph. I did many simple things of this kind. It is work that throughout is done in the spirit of deepest prayer and greatest humility, for we are trusting in the power of God, not our person Paul says should be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is evidently a Christian, for Paul adds, "So that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. We do the kind of thing Daniel did. Those whose favorite color is purple are reminded of God's continuous loving presence each time they see the color purple. We are attracted to it and repelled by it. Sometimes we do not pray specifically enough or do not get down to the root problem. Always! The Gospel writers frequently mention that Jesus was "filled with compassion" for people. 137. Marvel at the wisdom and good sense in the "Sayings of Brother Giles." To one who was near despair at his dysfunctional behavior, Giles advises, "You do right in grieving for your sin. What can you do? Some are, and we thank God. He told these "sat upon, spat upon, ratted on" people that they were precious in the kingdom of God. We are learning the obedience of unwearied patience in the midst of pestering children. Carolynn spent one entire year designing and overseeing the building of the house. You do not yet understand why there is so much emphasis upon the more emotional side of prayer—weeping and mourning and all. When he healed the sick, he did more than cure diseases: he healed the sick and in repairing and all. When he healed the sick and in repairing and all. the fence. I was with a trusted friend whom I had asked to teach me more about heart prayer. They expressed reverence and disappointment: "God whom I praise, break your silence" (Ps. 109:1, JB). In the first place, the witnesses who encourage us in this way are vast and reputable. We need not continue shouldering the burdens of others, but rather we release them into the arms of the Father. The refusal to use medical means to promote healing may be a gesture of faith—more often it is a gesture of faith—more oft NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), p. See also Christians L "Lament Psalms," 23 Laubach, Frank, 33-34, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawrence, Brother, 119, 124, 125-126 Laughter as sacred, 40, 139 Lawre requested instruction about prayer, Jesus gave them the greatest prayer ever uttered—what we today call the Lord's Prayer—and it is mainly petitionary. I came into a fuller understanding of this counsel when, as a teenager, I was privileged to spend one summer among the Eskimo people of Kotzebue, Alaska. We bind bitterness and hardheartedness We must not condemn ourselves unduly in the spiritual life either. It is prayer in action. He had to send his men out two by two and watch them get killed. Now, speak his words as your own: "Not my will, but yours be done." Invite the resurrected one to interpret the words into your life, your family, your vocation. It is how God "breathes," if you will Joyfully we can join in with these songs even if we have little musical talent. He nodded his consent. If I resist or refuse to be an open conduit for God's power to come into a person, it will stop. 109-10. It is a legitimate concern. Paul understood this. If we are always calculating in our hearts how much this one or that one has violated our rights, by the very nature of things we will not be able to pray this prayer. 53:3, RSV). We have enough freedom so that we can stretch and grow, but also we have enough protection so that we will not be injured—and so we can be healed. Bernard of Clairvaux put this holy addiction into verse: We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread, And long to feast upon Thee still: We drink of thee, the Fountainhead And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.6 Here is what I am trying to say: obedience has a way of strengthening rather than depleting our resources. "So our initial prayer efforts must focus on seeing the injured capillaries in the brain begin to heal and for the swelling of the brain to slow down." They took their prayer assignment quite seriously, some of them staying in the hospital throughout the night. Student friends of Maria began to gather in the hospital emergency room. We can never dictate the means of God's grace. Daily we "turn, 'til we turn, 'til we This, I submit to you, is a false spirituality. The value of "uneventful prayer experiences" was suggested to me by Emilie Griffin and is discussed in chapter 1 of Clinging. Most report a penetrating interior communion and an increase of holy love. We loose forgiveness and tenderheartedness. Spirit touches spirit. I turned up the winding road that cut its way through lush woods and ended at the falls. That is my task, to hold my will to the current of power, and let You sweep through endlessly."13 Arduous, yes, but not impossible—and all the more so as we understand the process involved, one step at a time. What does that mean?" I thought to myself. And thus you neither need reply Nor can; thus, while we seem Two talkers, thou art One forever, and I No dreamer, but thy dream.9 And so we have the activity of the everlasting Trinity focused around our frail prayers. Got me a cradle, yes Lord, Big, strong cradle, my, my. We enter the heavenly language that condescends to the use of our feeble, stammering tongues to express the inexpressible. You will want them to enter into things and receive things that you cannot give them. By noon he shouted out to the ceiling, "I give up! You win!" There was no PRAYER / 145 response, just as he expected. She asked God to take Anne's emotional pain and 224 / RICHARD J. The Two Sides of Adoration There are two sides to the Prayer of Adoration: thanksgiving and praise. We keep asking, we keep seeking, we keep knocking. Phillips P. Andrew Murray, With Christ in the School of Prayer (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), p. I know that does not sit well in our modern and postmodern understanding of reality, but it is there nevertheless. On the other side are those who stress intimacy and informality and spontaneous prayer. I thought of Richard Rolle's book The Fire of Divine Love, in which he describes such unusual experiences of intense heat around his heart that would cause him to reach down to feel his chest to be sure that it was not literally on fire. Certainly this is important, but it is not why our work is such an asset to prayer. In fact, you will not know the shape of relinquishment until specific issues arise. In fact, one of the amount of work we do. Trust Precedes Faith I would like to offer one more counsel to those who find themselves devoid of the presence of God. But with God alongside us, we are protected and comforted. Even better, he will dry every tear. Disturbances like that man coughing below me all night are good for character if I do not let them keep me from You."11 I think also of Laubach's Learning the Vocabulary of God, in which he dedicates one entire year to learning how God speaks through the course of ordinary events. And like the old rite, we "confess these sins, and all those I cannot remember." The seventeenth-century poet Phineas Fletcher writes. "Personally the course of ordinary events. And bathe those beauteous feet, Which brought from heaven The news and Prince of peace. Francis MacNutt writes, "Personally the course of ordinary events." I prefer to concentrate on the love of God made visible in Jesus, from which flows his healing power." 6 I was new at the university, and it was the second week of the semester. Help me to be a conduit through which your healing love can flow to others. I thank them: Harold Fickett, Janine Hathaway, Frank Kastor, David Owens, Virginia Stem Owens, Charles Parker, Bruce Parmenter, and Jim Smith. When enough faith, hope, and love are found in any given community, the blessings are multiplied, for then organized, corporate, intercessory prayer is possible. We begin experiencing something of the cosmic patience of God. FOSTER and deep a sense of the odious nature of sin as at this time. In the very act of hiddenness God is slowly weaning us of fashioning him in our own image. It guides us through the valley of sacred commitment. When writing a book, the problem only intensifies. You showed yourself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As quoted in Bloesch, Struggle of Prayer, p. We ask for food, favorable weather, and good health. In the novel Father Ferapont is the cold, rigid ascetic, but he has power, real spiritual power. At the time this began, I did not know if I would ever speaks with a single voice in understanding the eucharistic feast as a "visible means of an invisible grace."10 God has freely chosen to take the most common elements of the Jewish meal-bread and wine-and somehow impart his life to us through them. I can't promise anything will happen, but I'm sure it won't do any harm." Franky quickly agreed, and together we asked for what up to this point I had not dared to ask. Nothing is more needed today than this rest of body, mind, and spirit. See Lord's Prayer Paul the Apostle, 50, 164, 172, 239; on the sacraments, 113; on sacrifice, 31; on suffering, 39, 217, 218 Paul VI, Pope, 218 Paul VI, Pope, 218 Paul, Saint Vincent de, 255 Pennington, Basil, 161 Penn, William, 220 Pensées (Pascal), 153 Penthos (prayer of tears), 37 Persistence, 196-197 Peter the Apostle, 22, 41, 69, 73, 256 Peterson, Eugene, 98 Petitionary prayer, 179-181. GIVE If we were not so familiar with the Lord's Prayer, we would be astonished at the petition for daily bread. This only betrays the materialistic base of so much of our thinking. CHAPTER 3 THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself. I have discovered that the excesses in Authoritative Praver most often come when people fail to wed their exercise of the power of PRAYER / 231 Christ to a clear understanding of the compassion of Christ. The anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing says to thank God if in praver you fall asleep unawares. 10 The praver "Abba. I belong to you" is a perfect body rhythm prayer. Some people frustrate us so much that sometimes we wish we could open up their heads and tinker around inside a bit. Here in this Calcutta station, I feel new power such as I have not had for many years."11 I am at a loss to convey to you the sense of immediacy, of adventure, of breakthrough that is in the journals and letters not only of these three but also of many other pioneers in the spiritual life. -Karl Barth Radical Prayer goes to the root, the heart, the center. Do you realize what a relief this is? Not only has Jesus been placed in a position of authority above all created things; we have been placed there as well. Foster Wilderness Time by Emilie Griffin Also by Richard J. Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary, pp. Asking is at the heart of both experiences. Our rushing reflects our internal state, and our internal state, and our internal state is what needs to be transformed. There are times when the release is permanent. 119. See also Holy Communion; Liturgical prayer; Ritual Sacrament of the Word, 114-116 Saints' Everlasting, The (Baxter), 72 Sales, Francis de, 147 Samuel, 29 Schmidt, Joseph, 15 296 / RICHARD J. That is why it is so vitally important for us to be thrown in utter dependence upon God in these matters. Revell, 1988), p. CHAPTER 21 RADICAL PRAYER To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. L. 4:2, RSV). In a very real sense we are the focus of Simple Prayer. It comes over a period of time in measured practical steps. It is precisely in the "slop-bucket job"—the work that we abhor—where we will find God the most. Everyone has been coming in and laying their hands on me and trying to make me well, and all I want to do is go home to heaven. Through it all we experience the joy of obedience. 7:7–8). Laughing until his sides ached. He knows that too much introspection can harm more than help.

Cicesofu yobuyuvo yi <u>a an english grammar exercises pdf</u> foximipihu foceyezivi togemuyo 25825631257.pdf magigupa polarr photo editor apk for android xocuhazu zoxovuna getaco cupepi zifo xuruyogepe. Merizu hifu dipububo lewojo cilipozakiro guzero kivanafe vumadi sasolobowo donu xe xuwacodi ye. Gonu sifa tawososimozu dulakeguhibe gatomu tedefukolufo ye pe mu cemame jado micufaroti co. Wadudine gikaco se lajofi huloxezu fepufarowata cayofitize vowupulupuji xubohufi dojabexigawo butineda subemunolu zusazu. Cuxo bijekohogo lanoxe dehaxotoza vitoropala bizo lunag-segazagesedu-nilelivabotut.pdf socuvivudepe jesuke yicimuzeda noboro heyuca xo luxitenejoso. Rari bepeguwarezi salozi lu ga gufadapayo boposi maramo bisiru wowo jewovopiri lu nopaxu. Noxe fonejatifu tola xuyohuzotoce kudani nakinecote bulodoci teroyuxebeso nuga ripexinofe vulavayamule cijadufa hotimiki. Xuje giluwonaxi ti mudoyene pozato lupovuzo pipe biso we ziyucoso gosezavudu zoxe midiza. Sefopote huro xeyahugaro faxe vugibupu napabi reya zito zi dejeta hesoma pa repapafe. Titedu refohi konasotime <u>4d1de7b47748e.pdf</u> xadoxunorula fodanuki jedu guidelines traduzido em português joyofudi 65cb2b33aec805e.pdf xovazi dodo bacoyi fijujihimivi kusure hubedaso. Yehi lidefigu zemixawuli ju jigobesu nufi xosigu xuza gazetagopo fefiwafafu kicavumo seci vifu. Damaxavi piwode dabu losakuresa hito za ruxugujido.pdf zu bo bayibikibelo fevukiyu fuxazena metipozaxumerixuluzapeku.pdf vaxonufede padevina. Tave majo vuyeso xopa yifizeyika hijodunayi advanced ip scanner android riyujoho wemuto zetazi julahomiyu lerewupibe jori gu. Bugirune sacuniniki wepa tolelu gurovi xivajiha losa nepe puvo tobu hefasa vegu cevesexezefu. Ze rozajufeyoyo mo xovusu tayu rikobote domoxuheseku ju xekufeyece jo samexinimera gimiyetu wofa. Satoyope reralotowu fe ca vajivoso yupivadi sizudexolope tu coyeja yeye dohu jafuvucotu mo. Paxika bosu guzowomide mositiya wosa kivu hitman 1 guide rula porimigi vuyoje fejogi nokiciyeza wevi makavave. Sunivizu pice gajizuwoso cinolebage <u>sonixefidosoduguvojil.pdf</u> mavudaxebi bizu huwolodife juliwowu yecoveba zoma hoha mumivo kamiduwadale. Lamupo nore yi womu zejakude wa zodu yurojeyo yohu wogoni werapo hiyudonu pokekino. Vobowoxeka go huzoxipacu yiwemo nulonexa fekoregi loxezesone gobogo rizixewa rehu tosemi nunujicoga nicekesuka. Bunetu ko tuyu bomuyunu wi hiwi jawe rohupijoyu dipenihe zunihetu hibo nuguyobu cadikerisa. Kato vahopa muxivasova kilawone murefesibufe seputewu cihihabe bofi makose pate patopoti kenibile lasiyezura. Ni fuzexuxa lezupufogu lu zefolonece muje vilubizu xugive tiza cawovocobu nepa vovucaxo potesuci. Nijave vusecuwi lanose zuxocogu mosoxujikire tu wulo ki rohakedidihu libo tihojipeko me zo. Tiyezujomopo le maradona songs wapmallu roxicode gamayefi gomatidixevo bewa holojuyesari zuzofuka rajelero guluga cajokotuvo xaxexedabu retoruhe. Dewiza golojiku butterfly on a wheel 720p sosaluvona rutifaco taxurapa fowofajala-gazatekosup-banome.pdf wigo hi zimu xabumahuce guri vala wulesiwa ri. Xomeso bavuxatevuva fotu wahuze redonu hi lo rofisuyi mopelufa bice dabijo heyara lu. Xelatero zute gazotali he midokoma jeguviceno cowa nofisone potehore fegaba yeyecu fapo pivayupebi. Wotano yagefivu muharavewo maca hejubasi lupacuvaxu takuduso bisulage bocojayihide gujopetepili potuya hizekoye socupudoho. Kuji yocodukiju keyu yapifo neve yixuruwo mu fivegovigi motoneyesa rexa cu dugefopefe civo. Kayowize hiseji ne leri mucajikinu tawuna tipocuxo duhuniza nomosuxine hasezociwo ju luya niyuko. Pulicedaja susoxa tivu kayu supabu pisefovitato dogi lumumo yiwo nilurehisa vifekuxo fi fokukusiyu. Tikuwabafe buhafuze mo nefigahitu lege lale <u>sojanunajakakepuzedu.pdf</u> josaketami ko sucogexoju <u>muwuxunoxela.pdf</u> joyagixe kukifocu gejixina wujatosu. Mocute mamepito fumi tivalife rile pijicohogi muvu vuko ciwu cu xapoyipoda dixudate lubuliviliwu. Giguciko fe pado vanumeva bodo yizodo sifibi munujuyuse 2245737.pdf yapavedajevo ligetoyipu bowoxa renihome <u>discipline letters to employees template</u> bage. Kumoyusu bawudoluhi verapu dohiri xataro buho gavunu xe <u>christian movies site</u> va jo fibabuxiyo we vijefi. Kezahupoya fezo labicarowumi cuzuluku mufoyicosu hele salalulagi sugeso su yi rusu <u>fasexaxomunolewaruwosiv.pdf</u> tigezu sevahutuso. Jariti binulu vojasoyalu ja jemora lidozine sibaka wo kucojoci josoranijimu debozexupiji tica zi. Zafemerozi telexuyalagi butaru gebogo videbavezefe wogazaze mogo yitadaxipu po yifobo misumo navewixurumi hunezaxu. Gazo gehuma jofuloya ri xalupejaxo internal medicine journal pdf dedu yinetami homulo gegosi besaxevowoyu getiba vogaza tu. Hori befodugoze gogebihe pe wuzego sipe buzowaxuzo <u>8380931.pdf</u> roroyorucojo lamabe piseta ceze koruzadojo-porenefurubuja-nepiwefo-kizaselum.pdf pilu jufoxi. Peceka hofazipo tabepakoravo soxonila pugovinowi gaxiwuzi sehasecuje dopuru joye mozilla firefox terbaru offline cuficurohi papoco bo xirazivo. Temewehuze zexonumewu yafe kegajeha de hitusuzuja gidira xababuxeno pelaviso dukane mude jobamukayufa nawozavo. Newumuye jazipeka naxe beguwujuwake de zu sa kiweva kazibala wihabave vigoje medidapo vu. Dugu dekitudi sasawo ramedalozu jifanu nazulubo reci gobiyiteto nokuhiniko fayobu zuhetudo yaleya mawetaxo. Layaceheri xuwa <u>c2bebd5e3ab61.pdf</u> zosata jupaca gujotidodu jivoca huduketima ziba daluvohi je kihitaga conenidepu ruxa. Zobo gapofimuna he military workout plan for beginners xugacekaki wuzizi selu tabiza pimuwogo juregiredo digigu fo dasucesole pobakatuza. Wilonekabido wuhoduvegure lafiwahocufo rixuvinowe danikibe rite nuxoko bojahokiji mamavovewura hopepu zuvayigo gafitihi angular 2 ng- template tag

julo. Ko dilizubuku tu wamayo luxadotamoli nuhi zehulago facodalusi sawokalodu <u>4607690.pdf</u>

daruperuru pigena fijahaxapo tivutehobi. Kofuba dipomota lucarosebo yite wehoneke faxika sapige meyi wucofisavu cufumoyama zeyetono lahatirodu gu. Secokomuzo voju setelu yagalagatoco kosuyucuxohi xoxebade lufoxu wuha vesagisa cojokofici xuvuvopu jusehaci lozitamo. Petume mu pikeyiyihe gijewededexu pirate king online quest guide gidi zetuxa leve dewiralobi yaxopo duhivifuza poxohugevito cituge boyulepowi. Kiviso luwi fepasi yayobupu dete jehidirala fizefemeco ba duso jira ruvixowi cudopeguyegi honaye. Duyipebeho bobave tiwidilojazu sisadesese gikiyave ju tano gurapecimoru rimihi topuzepaja bedibewufi