

A READING LIST ON PRAYER

Updated May 2024

There are many thousands of books on prayer. What follows is simply a personal selection, listed alphabetically by author.

*'There is nothing the devil fears so much,
or so much tries to hinder, as prayer.'*

St Philip Neri (1515-1595)

The Meaning of Prayer by Louis Colin CSSR. (1962) Translated from the French. Chapters include: *An Interview with God, In the Presence of God, Lord, I am not worthy, Defective Prayer, The Mass-A Prayer*, and many more.

On Prayer by John Pierre de Caussade SJ (1675-1751) Translated from the French. Presented in the form of a catechism or dialogue, the author looks at practical advice as well as the theology of prayer.

Spiritual Letters by Dom John Chapman OSB (1865-1933), one time Abbot of Downside, which includes the maxims, *'Pray as you can, and do not try to pray as you can't,'* and *'The more you pray, the better it goes'* (which implies, of course, *'the less you pray, the worse it goes'*).

Prayer for All Times by Pierre Charles SJ (1929). Translated from the French. A series of beautiful, short meditations (about three pages each) on numerous quotations from Scripture.

Prayer in Practice by Romano Guardini. (1957) Translated from the German. Chapters include: *Life and Practice of Prayer, The Need for Preparation, Collectedness in the Divine Presence, Forms of Repetitive Prayer, Character of Contemplative Prayer, Forms of Popular Devotion*, and many more.

The Lord's Prayer by Romano Guardini. (1957) Translated from the German. Chapters on each of the invocations of the Our Father.

The Prayer of the Presence of God by Dom Augustin Guillerand, a Carthusian Monk. Original published in French in 1956. Recent translations available. Chapters include: *Recognize your dependence on God, Use forms of prayer that draw you towards God, Assist your prayer with various means, Persevere in prayer, Avoid lengthy prayers, Be sorry for your sins*, and many others.

Prayer for Beginners by Peter Kreeft (2000). Chapters include: *Why praying is more important than eating, Methods: why we need none, What should I say when I pray? Mental Obstacles to Prayer, and Forgiving Ourselves for Failure.*

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection (1614-1691). Several editions available but the 1994 edition by the Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS) is recommended.

Methods of Mental Prayer by Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro (1891-1976), one time Archbishop of Bologna. The idea of ‘methods’ in prayer is not popular these days but many still find them helpful. The Cardinal looks at Ignatian meditation, Salesian meditation, the prayer of St Alphonsus, Sulpician prayer, the prayer of St John Baptiste de la Salle, and Carmelite prayer.

Progress Through Mental Prayer by Edward Leen CSSp (1935). Chapters include: *The Aim of Mental Prayer, Spiritual Reading, and Silence: A Means to Recollection.*

The Art of Prayer by Martial Lekeux OFM. (1959) Translated from the French. Chapters include, *Why we do not know how to pray, What is Prayer? How to Meditate, The Divine Friend,* and many more.

Sacramental Prayer by Conrad Pepler OP. (1958) Chapters include: *Prayer and Penance, The Lenten Training Course, The Feast of Feasts, and The Sacrament of Prayer.*

Finding God Through Meditation by St Peter of Alcantara (1499-1562) edited by Daniel Burke for Emmaus Road Publishing in 2015. Chapters include: *The Way of Meditation, Counsels for Meditation, Common Temptations in Meditation and Their Remedies,* and many others.

Prayer vol 1: Living with God by Simon Tugwell OP. (1974) Chapters include: *Remembering God, The Way of Trust, Wrestling a Jabbok, Forgiveness, My God and My All,* and many others.

Prayer vol 2: Prayer in Practice by Simon Tugwell OP (1974). Chapters include: *God’s Gift of Prayer, Saying our Prayers, Feelings in Prayer,* and many others.