

## Mental Prayer

The great saint and doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus, in his work The Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection, said, “All the saints became saints because of mental prayer...We know from experience that it is far from easy for a person who practices mental prayer to fall into mortal sin.” Mental prayer is talking to God from your heart, in your mind.

The following is a *general guide* to help one make mental prayer.

The **preparation** is simple: Acknowledge **God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, Our Lady, St. Joseph**, most chaste spouse of Our Lady, your **guardian angel**, and your **patron saints**.

1. **Faith in Presence of God:** “My God, I believe that I am in Thy Presence and from the depths of my nothingness I adore Thy Majesty.”
2. **Humility:** “Lord, because of my sins I should be suffering the pains for hell right now. I am sorry for having offended Thee. In Thy Mercy, please forgive me.”
3. **Guidance:** “Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus and Mary, give me Thy light during this prayer, so that it will be profitable for me.” Then you say a Hail Mary in honor of Our Lady, and a Glory be in honor of St. Joseph, our Guardian Angel, and our Patron Saint.

Next is the **meditation**, the main part of the mental prayer.

1. **Read:** Using either a book or a holy image or crucifix, go slowly, stop when something strikes you to consider it. Some good subjects: the Goodness of God, the four last things, the Life and Passion of Our Lord.
2. **Affections:** Acts of the will, not emotions. Talk to God from your heart. Acts of affection, faith, thanksgiving, adoration, praise, humility, love, and sorrow.
  - a. Examples: “My God, I esteem Thee above everything else. I love Thee with all my heart. I wish that every man on earth loved Thee. I conform myself entirely to Thy Will. Do with me according to Thy Will.”  
“I am happy because Thou art God, the Highest Good, lacking in absolutely nothing.”
  - b. If you get distracted, don’t lose peace, but calmly pray: “O God, come to my aid. O Lord, make haste to help me.”
3. **Petitions:** It is of greatest importance to make many acts of petition. He is God. We are not. Humbly and confidently we should ask for:
  - a. Guidance
  - b. Forgiveness of sin
  - c. Perseverance in Grace
  - d. A good death
  - e. Heaven
  - f. The gift of loving Him
4. **Resolutions:** Near the end, propose to do something. For example: to avoid deliberate faults, submit to God’s Will. Be specific: a fault to avoid, virtue to practice with family members, co-workers, etc. Never finish mental prayer without making a particular resolution.

The last part is the conclusion, which has three acts:

1. **Thank God:** for the lights received in prayer
2. **Resolve:** To follow the resolutions made during meditation
3. **Grace:** Ask God the Father, through Jesus and Mary, for grace to keep our promises.

Finally, pray an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the souls in Purgatory, the Church, our families, friends, and enemies.