



More than once I have been asked by people how to pray. From the horse farmer I once met on a plane in Mexico, to the homeless man I cooked a meal for in New York City, to the many youth I have preached retreats to, and countless men and women from every corner of the earth I have encountered. All of these aforementioned people, in one way or another, asked me how they could pray, or how they could pray better. Moreover, that short list I just gave, contained not only practicing Catholics, but lapsed Catholics, Protestants, atheists, and even a few English to name a few. It is clear to me therefore, that this question of prayer is not foreign to the heart of man, as all men have a desire to come into contact with their Father and Creator.

Experiencing the Ordinary Supernaturally

The first step in prayer, sadly enough, does not often start with thunderbolts and lightning, or by levitating in ecstasy and contemplating in total serenity on the beatific vision; **prayer often first starts with a sense of God in the ordinary.** For if I cannot see God around me in all that I see, how will I be able to see and converse with him in a spiritual and supernatural way? God's hand is in all creation, and all creation can lead us to God. Every experience, every moment of "ordinary life" is a moment to encounter God. Through our joy, pain, wonder, sorrow, accomplishments, and failures, **God is waiting in these ordinary moments for us to see his loving hand.** This is seeing God in the ordinary; to have a soul sensitized to God's handiwork in everything around us! In a world which tries to make man into an object of individual sensual pleasure, ideology, or glory, we are given an opportunity in every moment to turn the ordinary into an encounter with God.

Treading the Waters of Prayer

Taking an encounter with God's greatest creation, Man, we can easily be brought to reflect on God and his singular love for each individual. Every moment can be transformed into a prayer, because in every moment we can unite ourselves to the Lord. Normally, we see people every day of our lives, but do we ever stop to reflect on what man really is; that **when I gaze into the eyes of another, I gaze into a child of God**

who was created to be with God in total happiness for all eternity. If we truly knew the wonder and profound beauty of this fact of the immortality of each man, this would significantly change our interaction with every individual, for we would understand an encounter, as coming into contact and interacting with something singular; and immortal soul. How easy it is to look at another as if I were looking through a sheet of glass; not seeing what is truly there. However, just as with Man, glass is made with care, and the slightest mishandling makes it fall apart. Both man and glass need to be formed and purified to reach what they are intended to be; for without the purifying heat of fire, glass could never be melted and molded into its desired shape, and man too requires this purification and formation in order to form him into the best he can be. As with man, when we look at glass, we can look beyond from what is there, seeing all of the hard work and toil that has gone into its creation and formation, and both clearly show stains, to a keen eye, if handled incorrectly. Both were fashioned for a purpose, mission, and specific task, and neither are superfluous. Finally, both were created with care, and made by a master craftsman; who out of his wisdom, only desires what is best for his creation. In this way, just by looking at a window, one can reflect on the beauty of man and his loving creator. **This is the first step in prayer, not just a supernatural experience, but experiencing the ordinary supernaturally.**