

**"The Way of Jesus is the Way of Life and the Way of Life can change the world."**

Bishop Curry

Allow yourself to be open to all kinds of spiritual disciplines.

During my first year in seminary, we were exploring different types of prayer. One of my professors spent an entire class period on centering prayer. [Centering Prayer is a method of quiet meditation in which a single symbolic word is used as a sign of one's willingness to wait on God and be available to God's presence. This word is used as a point of focus. The discipline involves setting aside twenty minutes or so for quiet prayer. Thomas Keating's *Finding Grace at the Center* (1978) encouraged the practice of [centering prayer](#).] We prepared ourselves to begin praying by selecting a symbolic/spiritual word. I selected "lamb." We were then told to focus on this one word. When our mind strayed, we returned to that word. After a few minutes, my mind was completely clear of any thought. What seemed like 2 seconds later, the professor said softly: we are done prepare for the end of our class. What I thought were a few seconds had actually been 30 minutes. It was a wonderful experience which I still do on occasion (not as much as I should).

An older priest in our Diocese told me about his prayer life (it is very similar to centering prayer). He told me of waking up before everyone else in the house. He would go to his study and begin his prayers for the day. He would begin with a very short prayer and then be still and silent. As random thoughts and images entered his mind, he would pray about them and sometimes take notes. At the end of his time with God, he would finish by praying for the people on his prayer list. Frequently during his still and silent time, a person would appear who wasn't on his prayer list. He took the time to call this person later in the day. More often than not, that person would be shocked and tell him that they had been in need of prayer but didn't want to bother anyone with their burdens.

There was another priest in our Diocese that talked about praying with such intentionality that she had visions of Christ. She would describe how the wall of her home was transformed into the Last Supper. She would feel herself moving into the scene and becoming a part of it. I used to roll my eyes skeptically but now I see this and other unfamiliar forms of prayer as ways of becoming closer to Christ.

I am constantly talking to God in my mind. If something that I think is going to be a disaster is actually helpful, I will say "I know, I know ... you told me to trust." When I get mad at another person, I will say "now why do you want me to love them also?" When a miracle happens, I will say "thank you, one day I'll learn not to fight so hard for my way but to invite your way as well."

There is not a one-size-fits-all way of prayer or any other spiritual discipline. Find something that works for you and do it consistently. Whatever you do, invite God into your life on a daily basis.