

DEAR GOD

I know that I am not perfect, I know sometimes I forget to pray, I know I have questioned my faith, I know sometimes I lose my temper,

But thank you for loving me, unconditionally and giving me another day to start over again!!!!



Thoughts on Praying Simply

Persevering in prayer
is like rowing a boat upstream;
if you do not persevere,
you will be carried downstream
by the current.



PERSIST IN PRAYER

Thoughts on Praying Simply

From Jim Van Vurst, OFM - Father Jim Van Vurst, OFM, has been a Franciscan friary for 62 years and a priest for 54 years. He received his graduate degree in psychology and taught for 18 years in his Province's college seminary.

Probably one of the most commonly used words in our Catholic faith is prayer. It's a word that describes the reality of our relationship with the Lord. But the term is deeper than that and, ironically, simpler. Prayer can be shared within a group, it can formal, and it can be stripped down.

Prayer can be in three different forms:

- There are liturgical prayers, which are used by the Church in all its celebrations of the sacraments and other occasions.
- There are many devotional prayers, such as the rosary and litanies.
- Finally, there are personal prayers, which are simple conversations with God.

I want to touch on personal prayers rather than formal ones. Through the years, a few people have told me they feel somewhat at a loss in personal prayer. They think they need to be more traditional or formal in their praying. People have felt envious when seeing others in church, seemingly lost in prayer.

Let me share a bit of my own prayer with you. Every day, I make a practice of saying a little prayer of thanks whenever something good occurs in my life or ministry. It's as simple as can be. I say, "Thank you, Lord." And when I sense a difficult situation, I pray, "Help me, Lord." It's a real prayer because it is

Here are other short-form prayers: "I love you," "I need you," "I embrace you," and "I give you myself." I can assure you in 55 years of ministry, I have had many occasions when I have said aloud with all my heart, "Lord, I need you." Those prayerful expressions reminded me that I was not walking alone. The Lord was with me.

Another prayer I say often during the day is, "Lord, I am yours; you are mine; and that's all that matters." You'll have to admit those words cover a lot of personal territory!

I suspect that many people are praying for their own loved ones—those who are sick or dying; those who have wandered away from the faith. I recommend the simple prayer, "Lord, I give them to you. Please take care of them." God is, after all, seeking them all the time.

I am aware of elderly people who feel uneasy with the thought of approaching death, even though they might be perfectly healthy. I pray in the morning and at night, "Lord, come when you are ready. Please help me to be ready when you come." What could be more simple than those words?

We can turn to one Gospel passage for assurance and truth: "In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words" (Mt 6:7).

