

mind and heart aroused and upheld by verbal prayer. The prayer of the lips is spiritually fruitful when it is united with inner attention. The masters of the spiritual life stress that if one's attention is distracted from the words of prayer, one should bring it back to the place where it was lost and repeat the words of the prayer until we are able to recite the whole prayer from beginning to end without distraction.⁴⁵³ Distraction may be caused by lack of experience or by an external temptation. If we are insistent, even temptations will not impair our prayer. Those who pray vocally are similar to the angels and together with them participate in the praise of God.

691 Throughout their lives, the Holy Fathers and Mothers joined vocal prayer to prayer of the mind and heart. This kind of union causes prayer to permeate the soul and body of the one who prays. When the heart is joined to the mind in prayer, the words truly communicate their meaning and the heart feels that which the mind is pondering.

5. The Role of Silence in Prayer

Pay heed, Job, listen to me; be silent, and' will speak.

(Job 33:31)

692 A prerequisite for prayer is the silence that we achieve with God's help once we have rebuffed troubling thoughts. Achieving silence within us is a requirement for hearing God and conversing with him. The closer God is to us, the deeper our prayer becomes. there comes a moment when our remaining, or dwelling, in God's presence no longer requires words. We fall silent once again, though this silence indicates the kind of communication that transcends words and concepts.⁴⁵⁴ Such remaining, or dwelling, in God's presence is called authentic, vigilant devotion. As the Holy Fathers teach,⁴⁵⁵ silence is both the beginning of our prayer and an expression of a prayerful contemplation of God.

⁴⁵³ See JOHN CLIMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 28: PG 88, 1132.

⁴⁵⁴ See PSEUDO-DIONYSUS THE AREOPAGITE, *On the Divine Names*, 11, 1: PG 3, 949.

⁴⁵⁵ See JOHN CLJMACUS, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 27: PG 88, 1096.

6. The Jesus Prayer and Prayer on the Rosary

*There is no other name under heaven
given among mortals by which we must be saved
(Acts 4:12)*

*Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you
(see Lk 1.28)*

- 693 Down through the ages and to our own day our spiritual tradition has transmitted the experience of a profound and yet simple prayer. It consists in a continual repetition of the words, "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." It is called the Jesus Prayer because of the continual invocation of the name of Jesus Christ. The practice of the Jesus Prayer aims at rooting within us, within our heart, a continual and vivid consciousness of God's presence.⁴⁵⁶
- 694 The Jesus Prayer is recited on a prayer cord (the Ukrainian *vervytsia* comes from the Slavonic *very* meaning a cord), which frequently comprises a circle of one hundred knots for a hundredfold repetition of the words, "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The Jesus Prayer on the prayer cord begins, as do the Daily Prayers, with the Usual Beginning (Heavenly King, the Thrice-Holy Hymn, Most Holy Trinity, Our Father) up to and including the Creed. After this beginning, we start the first hundred prayers (or century). One may recite a single century, or two or more. Every century concludes with the hymn to the Mother of God, "It is truly right to bless you, O God-bearing one." The subsequent century begins with "Come, let us bow in worship." However, the number of repetitions is not an aim in itself; it is a means to implant in the heart an awareness of the Saviour's presence.
- 695 Together with the Jesus Prayer, some in our Church also pray the Marian Rosary. The Rosary, or Psalter of the Most Pure Virgin Mary is a pious form of prayer to God, easy and accessible to all. It consists in extolling the most holy Mother of God through the repetition of the prayer "Rejoice, Mother of God, Virgin Mary" 150 times. This is the number of the Psalms of David. Within these 150 prayers, every decade is measured off by the "Our Father" and by appropriate meditations on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (or mysteries).⁴⁵⁷ The Roman Pontiff Saint John Paul II added to the traditional fifteen mysteries of the Rosary five more Luminous Mysteries.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ See *Beneath the Mantle of your Mercy Prayerbook*, On the Jesus Prayer, 239.

⁴⁵⁷ Pius V, *Consueverunt Romani* [Call to Prayer].

⁴⁵⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* [On the Most Holy Rosary]. 21.