

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland... And then God said, "Let there be light."

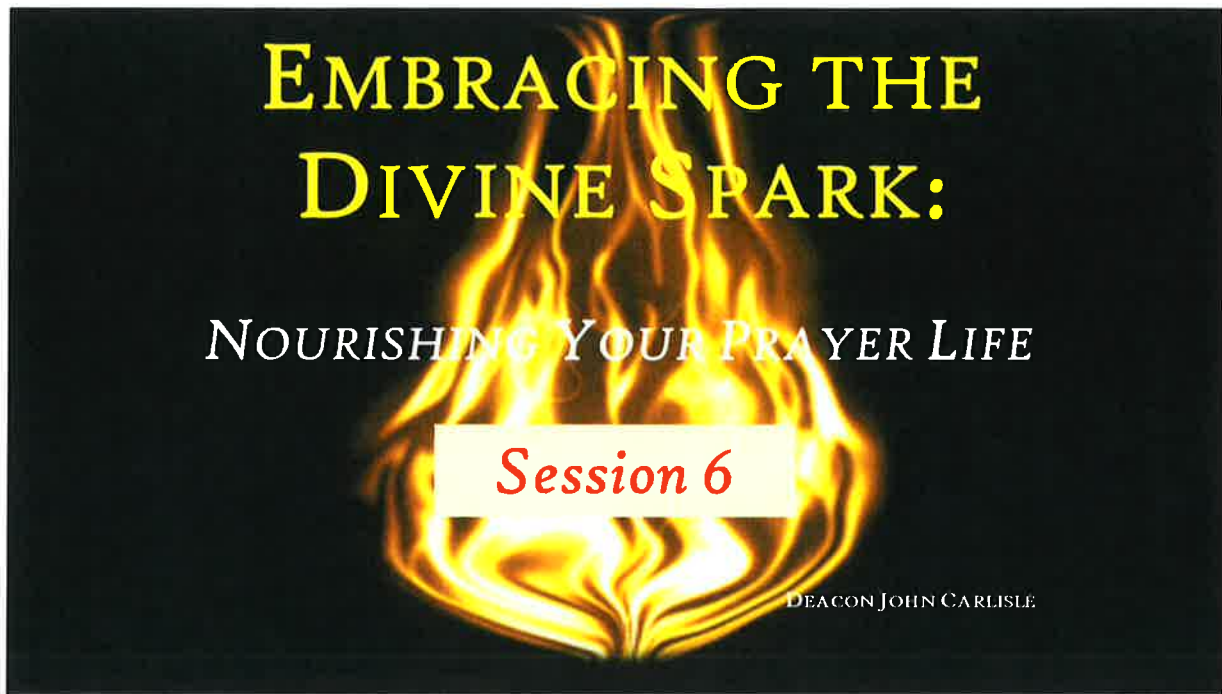
From the beginning, God created light to dispel the darkness. It is in the light that God reveals himself to us; it is in the light that God intimately connects with us. His son, Jesus Christ, is the light of the world. The light reveals truth and goodness while evil and lies flourish in the darkness.

Further, God created humanity in his image and likeness; we are set apart from all creation as something particularly his own. There is a connectedness between us, something of Him is in each of us and it, too, is good.

Mankind is endowed with an inner light – a divine spark – that unites us with our Creator. It is this divine spark that is to be nurtured and kept burning brightly, enabling us to be one with God. It is this divine spark that lights our way into a personal relationship with God so that we can begin to know Him rather than merely knowing about Him. And it is prayer that nourishes that divine spark; it is prayer that builds our relationship with God.

Faith, hope, and love form the foundation of our relationship with God, but it is prayer that fans the flame of that divine spark in each of us that forms the intimate relationship that God wants and that we need.

Embrace the divine spark – let us pray.



I want to start with a couple of quotations to sort of set the stage. (Click)

Prayer Styles

- ✧ Ignatian - The Examen - Spiritual Exercises
- ✧ Brother Lawrence - God Amongst the Pots & Pans
- ✧ Franciscan
- ✧ Dominican or Thomistic

Prayer Styles

* Franciscan Prayer

- Find a place (preferably outside), put yourself mindfully in the presence of God, read a verse (e.g., Luke 12:24, Luke 12:27, Matthew 6:26, or Matthew 6:28) slowly out loud and repeat it several times.
- **Stop!**
- Get up and slowly walk around and begin to observe the details of the environment around you. When something piques your interest,
- **Stop!**
- Observe it for a few moments and take notice of different aspects/details of the object
- Go back to where you began your prayer, sit silently for a few moments, thank God for whatever comes to your mind, and end your prayer. (Journal if you wish.)

Alternatively, think of a person that you least like of all of your acquaintances. Try to see something of God's goodness, love, life, truth, and/or beauty in that person. Try to see them as God sees them and write in your journal.

Prayer Styles

- * Dominican or Thomistic Prayer
 - This type of prayer is useful when reflecting upon a virtue or a fault to discover how to practice the virtue or overcome the fault.
 - It is not meant to be an exclusively intellectual exercise, but it does require using intellect and common sense.
 - It also requires using our heart to get in touch with our feelings and emotions.
 - ❖ *Unless we are attracted to a teaching in the Bible, we will not be motivated to put it into practice.*
 - ❖ *Two other elements – God’s grace and our love and desire – are essential to pursuing it. This requires prayerful dialogue with God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) and should arouse our feelings of love so that we are willing to put forth the needed energy to carry out our resolutions.*
 - Ask, “What, why, how, when, where, or who” during your meditations on Scripture.
 - ❖ *Consider Matthew 5:3; Matthew 8:20; Wisdom 11:24-25; or James 2:14-17.*

Five Specific Kinds of Prayer Forms

- ✧ **Blessing and Adoration**
- ✧ **Petition**
- ✧ **Intercessory**
- ✧ **Thanksgiving**
- ✧ **Praise**

Blessing and Adoration

- ✧ In this prayer form the person praying takes the blessing he or she has received from God and returns it to God.
 - Such prayers are our human attempt to bless God who we also acknowledge to be the source of all our own blessings.
- ✧ The Divine Praises are an example
 - “Blessed be God. Blessed be His Holy Name. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Blessed be the name of Jesus. Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.”

Petition

- ✧ Each time we turn to God with personal needs we are saying a prayer of petition, addressing God and asking for his help or guidance.
 - Petitions can speak to any human need but often include a request that God forgive us for our sins or direct us as we go about our daily lives seeking the kingdom of God.
 - In the Lord's Prayer we ask for "our daily bread", that God might "forgive us our trespasses", and that he might "deliver us from evil". Each phrase is seen as a single petition or request for help.

Intercessory

- ✧ An important aspect of this prayer form is that we can ask Christ for assistance not just for ourselves but also on behalf of others.
 - The Prayers of the Faithful in Mass is a good example of prayer of intercession.
 - At Mass, prior to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest, deacon or lay lector calls the community to the Prayers of the Faithful and together they intercede on behalf of the needs of others.

The Prayers of the Faithful

- ✧ The Prayers of the Faithful brings before the Lord in prayer the needs of the:
 - Poor, the church, government leaders, those serving in the armed service, or the concerns of others who the faith community chooses to recognize.
 - Although much of prayer can be “me centered,” prayers of the faithful invites us to consider in our prayer the needs and concerns of others.

Thanksgiving

- ✧ In St. Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians 5:18,
 - Our need to give thanks is constant for our blessings are continuous. Therefore every day and in every circumstance, we are called upon to give thanks.
 - We are often like the 9 lepers in the New Testament who though cured of their leprosy by Jesus, neglected to return and give thanks.
 - We are called to follow the example of the one leper who faithfully returned to Jesus to give thanks for the cure he had received.

Thanksgiving

- ✧ The expression of thanks can be rendered by the simple prayer over a family meal or a much more extended form of thanksgiving as one experiences at Catholic Mass but the point is always the same.
- ✧ Catholics are called upon to regularly express in prayers of Thanksgiving their appreciation for all that fills and comprises their lives.

Praise

- ✧ Many hymns and psalms provide Catholics with a vehicle to praise God simply for being God.
- ✧ As human beings our prayers of praise help us reflect on the majesty of the Almighty and remind us of our own need for humility.
 - God does not need our praise or that he is waiting for our praise or would be less without it.
 - We sing and pray our praise as a reminder to ourselves of just who God is and why God is deserving of our words of praise.

Other Aids

- ❖ Reflections upon
 - Scripture
 - Writings from Church Fathers
 - Other Scriptural Scholars
- ❖ Silence
- ❖ Nature
- ❖ Journaling

Positions

- ✧ Standing
 - Orans
 - Hands Folded
 - Walking
- ✧ Kneeling
- ✧ Prostrate



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