

BEWARE:

Let those, then, who are singularly active, who think they can win the world with their preaching and exterior works, observe here that they would profit the Church and please God much more, not to mention the good example they would give, were they to spend at least half of this time with God in prayer.... They would then certainly accomplish more, and with less labor, by one work than they otherwise would by a thousand. For through their prayer they would merit this result, and themselves be spiritually strengthened. *Without prayer they would do a great deal of hammering but accomplish little, and sometimes nothing, and even at times cause harm* (italics mine). God forbid that the salt should begin to lose its savor [Matthew 5:13]. However much they may appear to achieve externally, they will in substance be accomplishing nothing; it is beyond doubt that good works can be performed only by the power of God.

+ St. John of the Cross

The Spiritual Canticle 29:3

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT:

...to taste in our hearts and experience in our minds, not only after death but even during this mortal life, something of the power of the divine presence, and the bliss of heavenly glory. And this is to drink from the brook of the enjoyment of God....

■ The Book of the Institution of the First Monks
(cf. I Kings 17:2-6)

CENTERING PRAYER

Prayer should be understood not so much as an exercise but as being present to God.

The Idea Is to open to the mystery of God's presence beyond thoughts, Images, & emotions.

It Is the prayer of MARY OF BETHANY (cf. Luke 10:38-42): moving beyond words to the Person.

It Is to turn off the ordinary flow of thoughts to open ourselves to a new reality.

Centering prayer is practiced not for the experience, but for the positive fruits in our life: peace, humility, charity, etc.

Stream of consciousness: don't pick up the branches and leaves, but watch them float by.

SACRED WORD—chosen for Intent, not content

Examples: God, Jesus, Spirit, Abba, amen, peace, silence, open, glory, love, presence, trust