

Heart to Heart eSeminar Live Stream - Thursday 20 April

Hello everybody. I'm Archbishop Christopher prayers from Canberra here and lovely to have you back if you were with us last Tuesday, if you're here for the first time, welcome to the journey, and that's what it's about. It's a journey it's a pilgrimage we've called these human has Heart to Heart. He's seminar because during this coronavirus pandemic as we all know with so many of us are confined to our homes.

And what we need to do is to sort of say well we can't go outside. Maybe we can go inside. I mean on a pilgrimage inside. So we made a start last week last Tuesday some introductory comments. But today we're going to make a start on the journey what's required both inside internally and externally. So today we'll be focusing on the external aspects of the journey.

I want to remind you to of that beautiful passage from Matthew 28 that we mentioned the other day - *Come and See, Go and Tell*. That's what it's all about. A movement in words so that there can be a missionary movement outwards Christian mysticism is always something that's within but it's also expressed in the christian perspective at least as a missionary endeavour. So let's begin and let's get ready for the pilgrimage.

Now by looking at the externals I was thinking this morning of a lovely passage from the early church fathers the 4th Century where Christian mysticism really started to become articulated and I came across this beautiful quote from St. Gregory of Nyssa. He was born 335 and died in 395 and this is true of what we doing here. He said finding God consists in endlessly seeking God.

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I think if we can meditate on that a little bit, I think that's a great mentality to have now as we begin our second of ten episodes or moments together on the journey within the pilgrimage within. We will focus now on the externals, how can they help us focus on God, I immediately think of our Psalms again. I have this book on the Psalms.

It's compiled with wonderful commentary by Gregory J. Polan, OSB, a Benedictine and he draws attention to Psalm 19, which talks in a sense about the externals of creation helping us to see the beauty of God within. so from Psalm 19 a few verses

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the

The work of His Hands Day unto day conveys the message night unto night imparts the knowledge.

Their God has placed a tent for the sun.

It comes forth like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,

Like a champion to run the course.

At the end of the heavens is the rising of the Sun.

To its furthest end it runs its course.

There is nothing concealed from it's burning heat.

We capture that last part in one of the Eucharistic prayers

From the rising of the sun to its setting a perfect offering will be made to You O Lord

God So creation the ecological the cosmic dimension of our faith, beauty and creation reflects the God who created it in beauty. Let's pause for a moment in silence as we begin our time together in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We say glory be to God in the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end Amen.

And all Christian prayer is Trinitarian in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. That beautiful sign shouldn't be done in a mechanical way. It's a wonderful creedal statement, baptismal statement and says about Christian pilgrimage and

mysticism and its heart. It's always the companionship of the Father Son and the Holy Spirit.

So dear friends, I think first of all on the things that we need to bring to a pilgrimage on the external side of first of all our time.

Finding time to pray

Is it the Americans had coined the term 'time poor' when we pray we have to make time for God. It was interesting talking to somebody recently. He was telling me that now that he's at home because he's working from home. He's got a lot more flexibility and he said I've got a bit more time to pray. But for most of my life, he said, I've been using the excuse that I'm too busy to pray and I've forgotten how to and he laughed.

So that's why these seminars are really important to find some time now not - any time but some quality time where we're going to put aside.

Mother Teresa was a busy woman and was asked how do you find time to pray and she said "I'm too busy not to pray."

It seems a strange way of saying that I'm too busy not to pray. I'm so busy I have to pray more is basically what you're saying. She said the busier she is the more time needed for prayer. Otherwise, we end up like a machine the days just drift on one by one. Our time can be frittered away.

Personally, I pray most in the early morning. So after breakfast and when I've got myself ready I sit down - this is my time for the Lord because once the day gets it can be unmanageable. Secondly, we need to find days. I mean, how often do you pray? So not only time but the date that you're going to pray.

Going to pray every second day. I mean you almost have to put it in your diary if you're a busy person. No. No, I'm sorry. I'm busy at this time. You don't have to tell people but you're doing what you're busy with but you're actually having your appointment with God and it's on these days. I think it's really important. If you can to pray everyday that pray there's a lovely expression that goes if you can't pray as you ought then pray as you can.

I mean it's easy enough for me, but I'm not married with children as many of you are you've got all sorts of pressures on you and you might say well I wanted to but this happened and that happened. Well, if you can't pray as you ought then just pray as you can and I think that's a good little expression that helps others that helps me to find time.

Finding a place to pray

Now I know some people actually dedicated a spare room in their house as their prayer room and they're lucky aren't they? They've got a spare room and they've set it up as a like a prayer room and it's only used for that and others were they don't have the luxury of having a spare room, but they've cordoned off a section of a room. That's a bit of a neutral room. Can you do that that it's often good to find a place?

With this is my prayer place. And of course, it shouldn't be too near your mobile phone because you better place your mobile phone elsewhere. If you can and please during this prayer time don't be answering emails or not. Even as you're now listening to the Archbishop. I hope you're not doing office work now. I'm looking at you and it's a few of you doing it.

No, let's do one thing at a time and do it. Well, we're not listening to the Archbishop at the same time doing office work. Hand this time over to the Lord where we can have our time of meeting Jesus twice a week. Let's start so we can move into habits now. We also need of course we Christians when we pray we have the Bible here is what we say when we go to mass the readings from the Bible.

Jesus was a Jew. Mary was a Jewess and so was Joseph. We are descendants from Judaism and Christ has brought us into the fullness of the encounter with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. We also therefore need what's happened over the last 2,000 years and this is a great summary of it the catechism of the Catholic Church.

If the Bible is the word of God, I suppose you could sort of say this summary of our sacred tradition are the words of the Lord. We've just come in at the end of a real golden age of summations of Catholic Doctrine and faith. And this is a wonderful

summation. The fourth part of it is on Christian prayer, which I think is fantastic for what we want to do. Now. This is online you can download it and it's on Christian prayer.

The opening quote here is from everybody's favourite saint the Little Flower who died of tuberculosis at the age was a 24 and her relics made a pilgrimage in Australia in recent times. And she has this great quote which is the quote here about what prayer is about here.

"For me prayer is a surge of the heart. It is the simple look turned towards heaven. It is a cry of recognition and love embracing both trial and joy.

" Saint Therese of Lisieux

She says prayer is a surge of the heart.

Heart to Heart.

Catholic Catechism

Heart to heart so the Bible word of God and a summation of Catholic teaching Catholic catechism words of God. If the Catholic catechism is a bit too complicated for you. Then we have wonderful popular versions of it. YouCAT. It's called and it's put together by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna in Austria and his theological team

Cardinal Schönborn was the main editor of the catechism and when he went back home, he got a theological team to popularise it mainly for young people and this is fantastic as well. And there's about six different types of editions of this now for young people for the different sacraments for a confirmation. So there's no excuse for not plumbing in to what people over the last 2,000 years have been saying about prayer and and the journey of the pilgrimage within. We've got it there.

Let's take both Catholics take both word scripture and tradition. We breathe the two lungs not just one. You don't just catapult over from the scripture to this year now. So what do you do with the last 2,000 years of people pondering on the Living Word of God, we have that summations in our catechisms as well as the word of God together.

Repetitive prayer

Now, of course another way is the rosary. Repetitive prayer is very important, We pray the same prayer over and over again and but we're thinking of deeper language. So repetitive prayer rosaries is most popular Catholic devotion, and I'll talk about this in the times ahead repetitive prayer and how they can help us stay focused and to dispel distractions, but that's for a perhaps next time we meet.

Journaling

On the external side of things we need to have some book or some magazine or some exercise where you write things down. It can help you to get rid of distractions. This is something I'll tend to later or you make a summary of what you think's happening. Maybe you're taking notes even as I'm speaking. I think the journal is good. I've had journals since I became a priest so I'm at volume 12, I think now so there I don't write them everyday just write it every now and again. Things that I think oh, I must remember that and I write it down and it's actually helping me now to share with you some of these insights.

The crucifix

The Christian symbol is the crucifix. So this is the main one the crucifix.

You can go into a religious house a retreat center and you might go into a rather austere room, but there will always be a crucifix there because this is the pain during the pilgrimage the link between Heaven and Earth is the cross Jesus bringing down to us the love of the Father and bringing us up to the love of the Father horizontal and vertical dimensions.

So the crucifix there's a lovely expression. It's from a Christian hymn. Not a Catholic hymn as the Protestant hymn. I think it's from a couple of hundred years ago. And the English Protestant man Augustine Toplady, I think his name is if I remember correctly. He was in England and it was a big storm coming up and he went and he hid himself in rocks.

It's over the side of a mountain and so the storm went past and whilst he was in there. He was thinking about the psalm. I think it's might be some 92 was something about the

God Is My Rock My Shelter my firm Fortress and then he went home and he was a musician. He wrote a very famous hymn [Rock of Ages](#) and the third verse goes like this;

Nothing in my hand. I bring simply to thy cross I cling.

That's a beautiful expression. Nothing in my hand. I cling simply to the cross. If you find it's almost impossible to pray because of difficulties in your life. Just hold on to a cross.

That's a beautiful prayer when I'm going through a bad day. I just hang on to the cross and my body is saying something that I hope my inside will catch up with later on. Hang on to the Cross. Nothing in my hand. I bring simply to your cross. Oh Lord, I cling.

Another one our icons. These are something that are becoming as it were rediscovered in recent times, but this particular icon.

Andrei Rublev from the from many centuries ago. It's the 15th century different icons. This is a very popular one an icon is a way of encountering God. It's not so much we look at icons or icons. Look at us. Windows of the soul through the eyes. There's a whole theology behind icons being rediscovered. It's really coming from our eastern world but now being rediscovered a fresh at the moment in the Western Catholic World of which we are part of. Having an icon in front of you can either help you to focus.

Of course there are other things like music and incense. I'll finish up at that but listen, I'm only giving you the buffet and I don't want you to go out and start buying all these things that that would be ridiculous. If you're about to have a meal and you got a buffet in front of you don't eat everything you take a selection what helps you. So if you wouldn't mind you might want to think about what those externals that I've just said, they can help you to focus on things that are internal and I'll talk about that next Tuesday.

But I think I'll leave it at that. I will bring up now the three key questions. So as you know, there's three parts to here. The first part is an input by me for a 15- 20 minutes second part. We focus on some key questions and the third part which is entirely up to you to form little Zoom groups or Facebook groups and have a chat together with a few others. I'm already here in since few days ago that some of you are making small groups Zoom groups, and that's fantastic.

