

Contemplative Prayer, according to St. Teresa of Avila, “is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”

“One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter.” (CCC, 2710)

Contemplation is a great act of love. We desire God as God desires us. We give our hearts to God, and it is within our hearts that we encounter God in his Son through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. A person puts aside the self—the “me”—and sees everything in terms of the gospel and the unconditional compassion of Jesus Christ. It requires few if any words, a model we are not used to everyday life.

A suggested model of contemplative prayer :

Start by taking a small amount of time (5-20 minutes). This can be done before the blessed sacrament, by placing a picture of Jesus in front of you, or just in a space you choose with quiet. You may or may not have instrumental music.

- Settle into a comfortable position, taking slow, deep breaths to help quiet yourself.
- Focus your attention on the image of Jesus.
- Acknowledge the things that are trying to get your attention---thoughts, worries, plans, aches and pains, sights and sounds around you. Slowly let these things go. If you feel distracted during this prayer, just quietly bring yourself back to your reflection.
- In your silence and stillness, let God’s Spirit within you make itself known.
- Do not expect anything to “happen”; put yourself in God’s hands.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 2709-2719 and 2724.