Twitter Thread by akath■■



akath■■
@akathrosary

Catholic prayer

An explanation of the first levels of prayer, some of their purposes, and how to get started if you haven't already.

Even though prayer has 9 levels, the first 3 are more like phases. 1/25

The first phase is vocal prayer, which is all traditional written prayers like basic prayers, litanies, novenas, rosary, chaplets, etc. 2/

This phase is learning how to talk to God by way of these structured prayers. Many of us are reluctant to pray because we're unsure how to approach God, and these prayers guide us to develop the language of prayer. 3/

Next is meditation. Catholics who pray the Rosary mysteries have already been praying a type of meditation. Its purpose is to change our mental visions and thoughts from worldly things to things of God. This method also helps us develop the virtues and detach from this world. 4/

Last is contemplation. Once we have practiced meditation for a time, we will get to a point where we will no longer be able to visualize during meditation. This phase sets up the higher levels of prayer by teaching us to rest in God and to love Him alone. 5/

No prayers should be done without also adding in spiritual reading to learn about the virtues, prayer, and detachment. 6/

Starting vocal prayer.

Commit to praying at least three times a day to begin. It doesn't have to be long at first, we just want to get into a habit. An easy way to make a habit is to associate it with something else you already do every day. 7/

Before starting your prayers, you should place yourself in the presence of God (such as picturing Jesus is standing with you), do an act of contrition ("O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me" is a good one), thank God for bringing you safely to a new day. 8/

The first prayer of the day should be said immediately upon waking up. The morning offering prayer is the common morning vocal prayer, and it is an extremely important prayer. You offer up everything you will be doing that day to God. 9/

The next prayer might be at noon when you eat lunch or on a break at work or after dinner or something else you do every day. I personally recommend the Rosary, as we have been asked to say the Rosary by Our Lady and it's one most people already say and know. 10/

The last prayer would be before going to bed. This prayer should be an examination of conscience of the faults or sins you committed that day, saying an act of contrition, and ending with a thanksgiving prayer. 11/

(If unsure of your faults or other reasons the examine of conscience doesn't work, at least do a thanksgiving prayer listing all the things you are thankful that God gives you. Going to Confession often really helps those who have a hard time examining their conscience.) 12/

Once we have these down as habits (most habits take up to 30 days to develop) then you should add more vocal prayers during the day. Such as a litany or a chaplet or novenas. I recommend the Litany of Humility as humility is important. 13/

(Missing your prayers happens at first because they aren't a habit. God isn't worried about these little faults. He only cares that you are dedicated to loving Him and continuing the process the next day and not quitting) 14/

After it becomes easier to pray the vocal prayers and you aren't skipping them anymore, you should move on to meditation. Meditating should first be at least 15 minutes.

Catholic meditation is not the same as new age meditation, so don't do that type of meditation. 16/

Catholic meditation is this:
- pick a topic
- say an opening prayer (thank God and ask for your sins to be forgiven. You could also say some vocal prayers if you aren't feeling peaceful enough to meditate at first)... 17/

- picture in your imagination something about the topic (it can be like a movie or even a still picture. If you can't picture things in your head consider the topic in an intellectual way like breaking it down or expanding on it), ... 18/

- when you lose focus or @ 15 make a firm resolution to work on virtues, or eradicate vices, or include short prayers during the day (such as saying Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, or Glory to You Oh Lord, or other type prayers) or things like this,
- then end with a closing prayer. 19/

Picking a topic: many resources help us pick topics. Like a sentence in Scripture, breaking down the Our Father or the Hail Mary, or use the liturgy calendar, or use sentences from spiritual books, etc. It just must be something you can use your imagination on for 15 minutes. 20/

The point of prayers is to learn to love God. It's not to perfect the prayers. Nor to speed from one phase to the next. It's not to be more holy than anyone else.

It’s solely to learn to love God. No matter how long it takes or how painful or uncomfortable it might become. 21/

We are detaching ourselves from this world and attaching ourselves to God. The process is going to include pain and discomfort, but if you love God and are dedicated to Him, you will keep going. God will provide all the grace you need. 22/

Next, at some point, you will not be able to use your imagination. When trying to imagine a scene in your head, it will go black. Here, you must be careful that it’s not because you are unable to focus or because you are in a sinful state or something that is not from God. 23/

If you think it's from God, then you should sit in silence (no vocal prayers or mental images) for as long as it’s black in your mind. If you can’t maintain this or if images or sounds enter your head and you lose focus all the time, you should go back to meditation. 24/

This phase of prayer is hard. We must be prepared for it, so if you get to this point you should have read or listened to audio books of the Saints on prayer.

Speaking to a Priest or a religious who understands these levels of prayers is usually necessary at this point. 25/end

For anyone who wants a resource, this book set: "Meditations for all the days of the year
by Hamon, Andre Jean Marie, 1795-1874" (linked is one in the pd) provides good morning and evening prayers and meditations for the liturgical year.

https://t.co/7pHrKtLxkm