

Come Follow Me: A Seminarian's Journey

Installment 7 – A Seminarian's Prayer Life

1. An Overview

- I wanted to conclude by giving a picture of what a seminarian's prayer life looks like. At its heart, prayer is about an intimate relationship with our loving God. It is crucial that priests and seminarians draw life from their prayer each day.
- I just want to highlight a few methods or ways of praying.

2. Sacraments

- A seminarian will perhaps go to confession twice a month or so. Even without any mortal sin, frequent confession helps us grow in virtue and love of God.
- Seminarians go to Mass every day, drawing strength from the Eucharist and seeking that petition of the Our Father: "give us this day our daily bread."

3. Daily Holy Hour

- Daily personal prayer often takes the form of a "Holy Hour," a tradition from Jesus' words to Peter in Gethsemane: "Could you not watch (stay awake) one hour?" (Mk 14:37).
- This hour is best spent in a Church before the Eucharistic presence of Jesus in the tabernacle or exposed in a monstrance (Eucharistic Adoration).
- This hour may be spent in different ways—mental prayer, spiritual reading, the rosary, etc.

4. Lectio Divina – Mental Prayer

- *Lectio Divina* is an ancient method of praying with Scripture. It involves encountering and hearing God through the words of Scripture. It is a conversation with God, a back-and-forth dialogue.
Lectio Divina has four "movements:" 1) Reading the Scripture passage, 2) Meditating and speaking with God about what struck you in the passage, 3) Responding to God in a sincere conversation, and 4) Contemplating and resting with God, seeking conversion of heart.
- Mental prayer can take other forms: speaking freely with God, engaging the imagination, or expressing your thoughts, feelings and desires to God while listening for His response.

5. Spiritual Reading

- Prayer can be deepened by reading spiritual books. It may be a book on prayer, on a saint, or on the life of Christ. By reading slowly and thoughtfully, prayer can arise by pausing and speaking with God about what strikes us in the reading.
- In this Year of St. Joseph, I am starting the book, *Consecration to St. Joseph*.

6. Marian Devotions

- Marian devotion is important in the life of a seminarian and priest. The Rosary is an especially powerful prayer in deepening one's relationship with Jesus and Mary. I pray the Rosary every day.

7. The Breviary

- Priests and seminarians pray the "Liturgy of the Hours" from the breviary. This is the prayer of the Church consisting in 5 "hours" of prayer throughout the day (~15 mins. each): Office of Readings, Morning, Daytime, Evening, and Night Prayer.
- Each "hour" is structured by the praying of Psalms and Scripture readings. Pausing to pray these prayers throughout the day helps to sanctify the day and "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:16).
- You can download the app "*iBreviary*" if you'd like to learn how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

This is the "Last" installment for now. God bless! ~Matt Kensok