



# St. Bartholomew Catholic Faith Community

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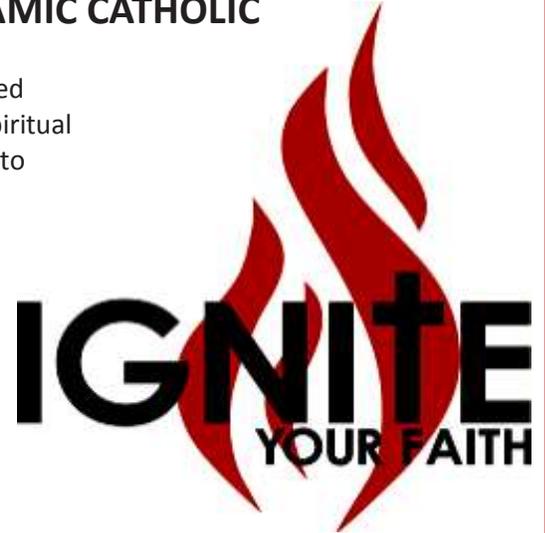
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OCTOBER 2, 2016 ~ 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## PRAYER: THE FIRST SIGN OF A DYNAMIC CATHOLIC

The *Ignite Your Faith* spiritual initiative is underway. None of us have achieved the heights of holiness. Every single one of us has plenty of room to make spiritual headway. This two-year process is a blessed time to grow closer to God and to become more dynamic Catholics.

**Prayer** is the **first sign** of a **dynamic Catholic**. It is discussed in Chapter Two of Matthew Kelly's book, *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic*. It is entitled, "Are You Spiritually Healthy?" It begins on page 39 and continues to page 71. In our exceedingly busy world, 32 pages may seem like an ambitious project. The material is not technical or complicated. It reads quickly and easily. If 32 pages are too much, consider breaking it into smaller segments of four or five pages, or spend five or ten minutes a day. It will be well worth the time and effort.



**Prayer** is the single **most important distinguishing trait** of a **dynamic Catholic**. Active, engaged Catholics make daily prayer a high priority. Prayer is a habit, not something done occasionally. Prayer is the focal point of the day, usually done to begin the day. Prayer has a routine: a regular time, a regular place, and a regular method. Prayer is done in silence, away from activity and noise, in a quiet private place. Prayer is a conversation with God, and each day there is much to talk about.

**Every person's prayer life can improve.** We all find ourselves at a different place on the prayer continuum. Maybe we do not pray at all. Or, maybe our prayer is erratic, occasional, or mechanical. Some have a firmly established daily prayer routine. On the ten-point scale, we might be a 1, a 9, or somewhere in between, but we all can get better.

The first step is to **reserve time**. We chase around so much. We are so busy. Often we operate at breakneck speed. Life is full of urgent tasks that keep us from doing the most important things. We need to slow down, pause, and carve out a segment of time, preferably at the same time slot every day. The goal is ten minutes, but if that seems like too much, start with one minute, and increase one minute each week for ten weeks.

Next, find a **quiet place**. It is imperative to get away from all of the commotion and racket. It might be an easy chair, the study, the porch, the deck, or a walking path outside. It is in silence that God speaks to us, and in silence that we are able to hear God's voice. Silence can be excruciating at first, particularly if we have not taken quiet time previously, but if we discipline ourselves, it will get progressively more comfortable.

Establish a **prayer routine**. The Church constantly tells people to pray but has not done much to explain how to pray. Many Catholics have found a prayer routine that works for them: the morning offering, the gospel assigned for the Mass of the day, the daily meditation in a pamphlet like *Magnificat*, a chapter of the Bible, or reading from a devotional book – all combined with conversation with God.

**The Prayer Process.** Matthew Kelly offers a prayer routine. If you read only one page of Chapter Two, read page 61. The steps are gratitude, awareness, significant moments, peace, freedom, others, and the Our Father. The process is about stimulating conversation with God.