



The Jesus Prayer

The Jesus Prayer:

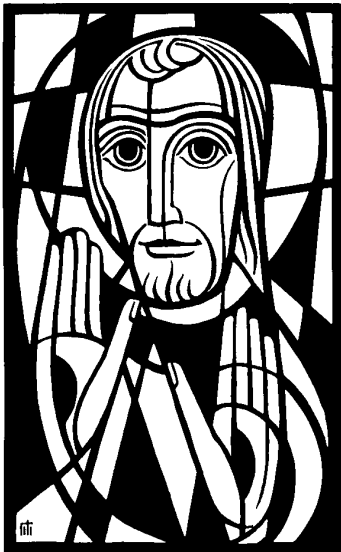
“Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner ”

The Jesus Prayer stems from the Orthodox Tradition and it is a prayer of the heart. It is founded on the principle to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:17) .

Diadochos in the 6th Century taught that repetition of prayer leads to inner stillness and therefore allows you to become more open to God and His desires for you.

The Jesus Prayer allows the mind and the heart to become one and therefore make it more likely for the person to be able to feel the presence of God within their lives.

The aspect of developing an inner is one of the main reasons to use the Jesus prayer as silence within tends to be only achieved by substituting one thought for another and the Jesus Prayer over-rides this and sometimes enables the individual to enter into wordless silent prayer.



Similar meditative forms of prayer

Instead of using the Jesus Prayer it is possible to use a Psalm verse or a bible quote or another type of prayer as well as the possibility of using an appropriate word to reflect on and pray them in a similar repetitive manner.

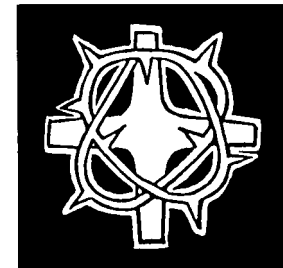
The purpose is to enable individuals to become still and open their hearts more freely to the presence of God.

One such example is to sit before a crucifix and pray:

“By your wounds I am healed”

This is adapted from **1 Peter 2:24** and by inserting “**I**” instead of “**we**” allows the individual to gain a personal relationship with Christ through the wounded ness of Christ on the Cross.

Through the repetition there is an opportunity for them to feel the love of Christ and be more present with their heart than their head when in prayer- similarly to that of the Jesus Prayer .



Variations of Jesus Prayer

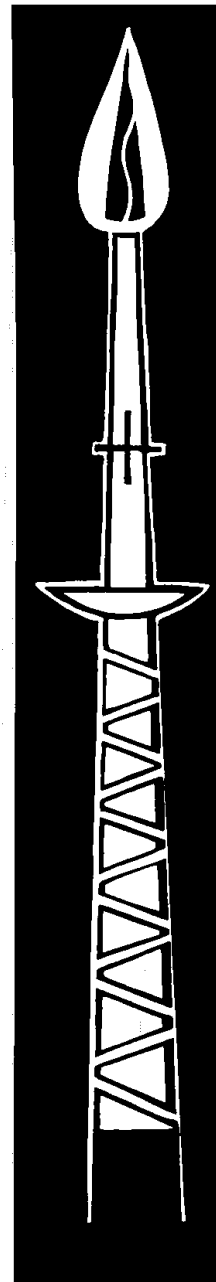
Other versions that you may prefer to use of the Jesus Prayer are :

“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me”

“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner”

“Lord Jesus have mercy”

You can use these in the same way as described as over leaf.



The Russian 19th Century Spiritual Writer Theophan the Recluse identifies three distinct levels when saying the prayer.

- **Oral Prayer**
 - external and therefore only first step.
- **Enter more deeply without distraction**
 - the mind is focussed on the word of the prayer and they become like our own.
- **Prayer of the Heart**
 - No longer something we do but who we are.
 - It is a gift of returning to the Father like the story of the prodigal son.
 - Returning to the Father is the aim of Christian Spirituality. A good example of this is in the story of “The Way of the Pilgrim”.
 - The change in relationship with material world.
 - The change in relationship with fellow human.

There are different ways in which it is possible to pray the Jesus Prayer.

The first method is described as the 'formal' method where an individual sets a specific time to pray the 'Jesus Prayer' for 10—15 minutes— this is usually best done in the morning but if this is not possible sometime before noon or in the early evening.

The second method of praying the Jesus Prayer is described as the "free" use of the prayer. This means it can be prayed at any other times and usually a good opportunity is during automatic tasks such as walking, driving or being unable to sleep.

You can pray the Jesus Prayer internally to yourself or aloud.



A Method:

Stilling:

Take time to relax

Start saying The Jesus Prayer remembering that God is with you.

***“Lord Jesus , Son of God, have mercy on me,
a sinner”***

As you inhale say

“Lord Jesus, Son of God.....”

As you exhale say :

“....have mercy on me a sinner.”

Repeat this over and over again until the words become the only thing that is being focussed on.

Then if possible you may experience that you are no longer aware of the words but are in silent prayer with God.

It may take practice to get to that stage but with every form of prayer there is the possibility of endless growth.