



# Prayer in the Christian Tradition

Throughout the Christian tradition there has been a diverse expression of prayer that has emerged.

For Example:

- Contemplation
- Spirituality
- Monasticism
- Mysticism



*These different expressions arose within a specific cultural context and in response to specific needs.*

Often a way of praying has emerged as a spirituality which relates to a particular ministry or work in the Church.

For example:

- Benedictine
- Carmelite
- Dominican
- Cistercian
- Franciscan

*Based on the spirit and works of these great movements a corresponding prayer form has emerged.*



### Activity

*Find an example of a prayer form that has emerged from one of these spiritualities.*



**Contemplative Prayer** does not require words; rather it is about getting in touch with the presence of God.

**Monastic prayer** includes keeping up the official prayer of the Church – the Divine office. It also included private prayer; mental prayer especially plays an important role in the life of a monk or nun.

**“Mysticism** is either a religious tendency and desire of the human soul towards an intimate union with God, or a system growing out of such a tendency and desire. As a philosophical system, Mysticism considers as the end of philosophy the direct union of the human soul with God through contemplation and love, and attempts to determine the processes and the means of realising this end.”

From the Catholic Encyclopaedia



### Activity

*Research a day in the prayer life of a monk or nun.  
What prayers do they pray?  
When do they pray?  
How long do they pray?*

**“Mysticism** is the ‘knowledge of God arrived at through the embrace of unifying love’. A disciplined life given over to long periods of contemplation sets the stage for, though it does not ensure, an intimate knowledge and experience of God that He bestows through a special grace. Detachment, purification, and cultivation of stillness are fundamental in focusing the person’s gaze on God.”

From Catholic Dictionary

