

Prayer in a Recontextualising Catholic Dialogue School

Loving God

Christian prayer emerges from a belief in a loving God who we can experience through various ways including human experience, scripture and creation. Prayer offers opportunities to deepen our connection with God who is the ground of our being and the source of all life. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are those to whom prayer is addressed. Therefore, they form the essential foundation of Christian prayer.

Inviting Participation

Catholic prayer provides a meaning making space that is invitational and respectful of all. It encourages everyone to participate from their own faith perspective and experience. Prayer invites everyone to be respectfully present whilst acknowledging the particular contribution Catholics can make to this space of spirituality and grace.

Dialogue with Diversity

Dialogue and diversity are core elements of Catholic prayer. It is hoped that this inclusive experience will lead to meaning making for all individuals who celebrate their faith culture, belief in God and religious rituals during prayer. This deeply respectful relationship of reciprocity encourages a humble discernment of one's personal faith and spirituality.

Open Hearts

For everyone who has a different starting point, it is essential to prepare our hearts, minds and bodies for prayer. Such an experience of inner centering before prayer, enables individuals to slow down, enter the silence and acknowledge their own story. Preparing for prayer invites everyone towards an awareness of interiority where the Sacred resides and personal spirituality finds its home.

Seeking Mystery

Authentic prayer acknowledges a Trinitarian God who is deeply present in all life experience and the cosmos. This includes moments of joy, spiritual abundance and consolation alongside mystery, suffering, confusion and tragedy. As the ultimate goal of prayer is to reorient oneself towards God and know mystery, prayer needs to acknowledge the comfortable and difficult moments and emotions that life offers us all.

Celebrating Catholic

Catholic prayer celebrates Christ's story and the Catholic faith tradition. It invites participants to engage in a spiritual, reflective experience that is distinctly Catholic. Prayer in Catholic education cultivates a spirituality that is enriching, life giving and essential for building religious identity.

Hospitality for All

Individuals of other faiths and those with no faith are invited to participate in the prayer culture of a Catholic school. This experience honours dialogue and reflection of all faith perspectives that reveal the face of God. It is hoped that this experience of openness will enhance and strengthen the Catholic identity of the school and its participants.

Celebrating Difference

Particular elements of all faiths and philosophical traditions are to be celebrated and honoured in their own right. A merging of difference is discouraged in the context of prayer to avoid presenting all faiths as having the same beginning and the same end. This has a tendency to weaken all faith positions present. In particular, the Catholic faith will become watered down as a result of such an approach.

Spiritual Transformation

Catholic prayer that is meaningful, relevant and dialogical invites spiritual interaction between contemporary culture and the dynamic richness of our faith tradition. This can lead to spiritual transformation and an openness to interior growth alongside a shift in how one views and experiences life.

Sacred Space

The ritual of Catholic prayer requires careful thought and planning to make it a priority. The age, context and circumstance of participants must be considered if prayer is to make room for the emergence of new meaning. How, when and where prayer is experienced will depend upon particular variables. The provision and creation of a sacred space to accompany prayer makes a vital contribution to this experience.