



The Jesus Prayer – a method

Stilling

Take time to relax and be calm. 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 Christ , 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 are being focused upon. As you say the prayer each time move your fingers to the next bead or knot in the prayer rope. After a while 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 continual growth.

Variations of the Jesus Prayer

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

“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me”

“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.”

“Lord Jesus have mercy”

Similar forms of prayer

Instead of using the Jesus Prayer one can also use a verse from the psalms or a Bible quote or another prayer or word to reflect upon and pray through repetition. The purpose is to enable us to become still and open our 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”* it unites us personally with Christ through his suffering on the Cross. Through repetition there is an opportunity for us to feel the love of Christ and to be present more with our hearts than with our heads - similar to when we say the Jesus Prayer .

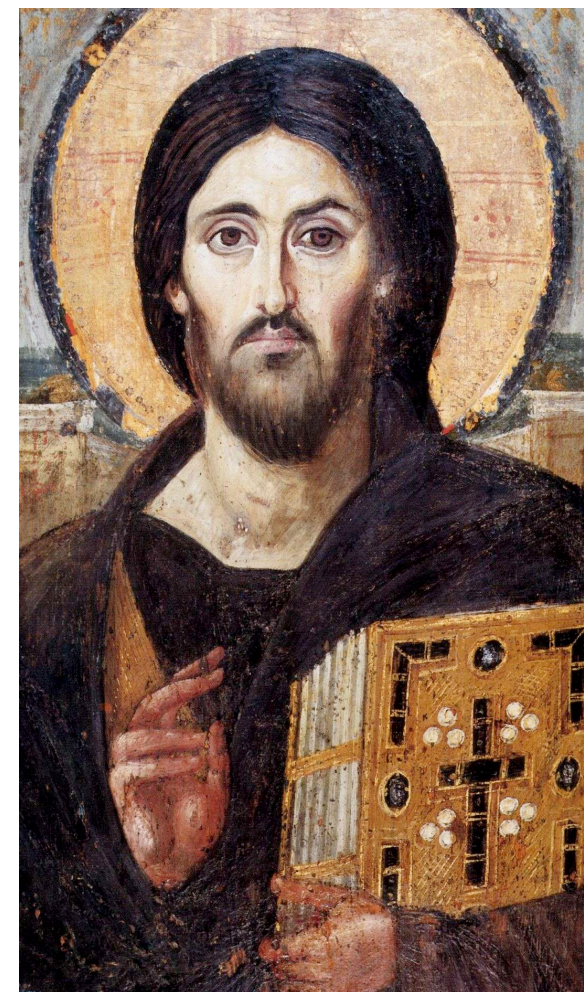


st columbia's church, ennis,
with christ church,
spanish point
and kilnasoolagh

Bindon St, Ennis, County Clare

THE JESUS PRAYER

Pray without ceasing





LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME

The Origins of the Prayer

The Jesus Prayer stems from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition and it is a prayer of the heart. It is founded on the principle to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). Diadochos in the 6th Century taught that repetition of prayer leads to inner stillness and allows us to become more open to God and his will for us. Reciting the Jesus Prayer encourages the mind and the heart to become one and for us to feel more keenly the presence of God within our hearts.

The aim is to promote a calm and peaceful inner life, so that instead of our thoughts and words continually tumbling over one another, we break free of self distraction and learn to concentrate and attend to God’s silent call at the very core of our being.

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 dedicates a specific time to pray the ‘Jesus Prayer’ for 10-15 minutes or so. This is usually best done in the morning but if that is not possible, then some other regular time should be set aside.

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 time. A good opportunity could be during automatic tasks such as walking, or doing housework or being unable to sleep. You can pray the Jesus Prayer internally to yourself or aloud.

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

Oral Prayer

External and therefore only a first step.

More deeply without distraction

The mind is focused on the words of the prayer and they become like our own.

A Prayer of the Heart

No longer something we do but who we are. It is a gift of returning to the Father as in the story of the prodigal son. Returning to the Father is a core aim of Christian spirituality, a good example of this is in the Orthodox story of “The Way of the Pilgrim”. The prayer leads us into a change in relationship with the material world and with our fellow man.

