

PRAYER WITHOUT WORDS - Lecture 1

Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662): “All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

Cardinal Robert Sarah, *The Power of Silence*: “As long as a man has not come to recognize the great silence of God in the depths of his heart and to understand this mysterious place of the Eternal *in his flesh*, he cannot get to a true spiritual and human transformation. The true sound of silence is here: we cannot hear the Word if we have not been previously transformed by God's silence.”

From the Desert Fathers

“The victory over all the afflictions that befall you is to keep silence.”

“Whoever you may be, always have God before your eyes”

“Meditate on the Gospels and the other Scriptures, and if an alien thought arises within you, never look at it but always look upwards, and the Lord will come at once to your help.”

John Cassian [365 - 435] – *italics mine LH*

“... such a union that *our breathing* and our thinking and our talking will be 'God' ”

“When our thoughts slip away from spiritual contemplation and run here and there, we turn to ourselves as though coming from a sleep of forgetfulness. We wake up and *look for the formula by which to revive* our vanished spiritual thinking. The looking is a delay for us and before we have even found it we lapse a second time and before a contemplative gaze opens up and what our heart wishes for is vanished.”

“The reason for this confusion is quite evident. It is that we had nothing settled, *no special formula* which we could hold constantly before our eyes, *one to which the wandering mind could return after many wanderings and travels*, one that the mind could enter, as into a haven of peace after long shipwreck.”

“Hence our anxiety to find a *formula* which will enable us to think of God and to hold incessantly to that thought so that, as we keep it in view, we may have *something to return to immediately* whenever we find that we have somehow slipped away from it. It will be there for us to take up once more without wasting time in searches or in painful detours.”

“The soul must grab fiercely onto this *formula* so that after saying it over and over again, after meditating upon it without pause, it has the strength to reject and to refuse all the abundant riches of thought. *Grasping the poverty of this little verse* it will come all the more easily to that first of all the gospel beatitudes, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.”