

Prayer of the Heart

One can encounter among spiritual writers various uses of the term (i.e. even at times to simply denote interior prayer).

Some particular ways that the term *Prayer of the Heart* gets used in the *Charterhouse*:

1. To refer in general to an intimate loving prayer.

We should never be satisfied with a life that is pious, just in a rather general way. Persevere, specially, in contact with Our Lord through intimate prayer of the heart, for this is the soul of all our external observances. ~ A Carthusian, *First Initiation into Carthusian* Life* pg. 54

Enter into your heart as into a peaceful haven, full of gentle light, where the Lord waits for you and wants to hold intimate conversation with you. It is of no importance that you feel nothing on the sensible level for it is a question of an objective spiritual reality to be lived in faith and love. ~ a Carthusian, *First Initiation into Carthusian Life* pg. 34-35

"The place of prayer is the heart; and ...the aim 'of our patience, and of our assiduous meditation of the Scriptures, is to introduce us, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, into the depths of our heart: there we can not only serve God, but also cleave to him in love' (1.3.2). ~ A Carthusian, *The wound of Love* pg. 216

"In the sanctuary of our heart, he is there, waiting for us. One look, one second, suffices to meet him in the reciprocity of a simple profound friendship." ~ A Carthusian. *Interior Prayer* pg. 135

The élan of our heart reaches out, directly, to the Person of Christ. Our striving for recollection, becomes a constant effort to dwell in Christ's presence, to converse with him in our hearts, to live in his presence, to share all our joys and sufferings with Him, and to share in His too; to open wide our hearts in imitation of Him. Even while we are engaged in other occupations a brief élan of the heart is always possible...Love is the great secret of keeping up an abiding contact with Christ. ~ A Carthusian, *First Initiation into Carthusian Life* pg. 47

2. As another term for *affective prayer* and for *prayer of simplicity* (prayer of simple regard). See *Interior Prayer*, a Carthusian, chapters 18 and 19. (See also *Graces of Interior Prayer*, Poulan, chapter 2, and *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, Lehodey Chapter 8 and 9)

3. A particular ancient monastic practice of retaining or repeating a verse of Scripture or an ejaculatory prayer.

"In practice, one can retain or repeat some verse drawn from the mornings reading or from the liturgy, ruminates on it or make a repeated prayer of it. Or

*indeed, one can prefer the greater intensity of a short prayer, always the same". "This practice is as old as monastic life itself, and offers a very direct way of turning continually towards the Lord and of keeping from forgetting his presence." ~ A Carthusian, *The Wound of Love* pg 208*

*"Just a simple turning of the will towards God, a movement of the heart instantly leaping up to God, like a spark from the coal: we are always capable of that, and it is something which binds us powerfully and gently to the Lord. This is the great monastic tradition of the prayer of the heart...ardent prayers which unite us to God in our heart, and which are there ready to surge up at any time. It is a habit we have to cultivate with great care, and which quickly becomes second nature." ~ a Carthusian, *Interior Prayer* pg. 135*

*"During the day when you read, work, walk to church, etc., a spark of love for the Lord, will en-kindle at times in your heart. It is good to cultivate the spontaneous uplifting of the heart by brief prayers, which, without need for discursive thought, can awaken a deep attitude of the heart and nourish it." ~ a Carthusian, *First Initiation into Carthusian Life* pg. 39*

*"...at a practical and ordinary level, but realistically and effectively, the monastic tradition teaches the use of short prayers, ejaculations, whose repetition does not require a lot of intellectual effort, but is enough, during the tasks of the day, to nourish the flame of our love and to keep our heart turned towards God." ~ A Carthusian, *Way of Silent Love* pg. 11*

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Contributed by a friend of the Quies project, who looks to St. Bruno and the Carthusians.