

*“The Teacher is here,  
asking for you” (Jn 11:28)*

In defining friendship or love, we often limit ourselves to a description of the feelings and actions of one of the parties involved. This is an error to be found in many works dealing with mental prayer. They confine themselves to man’s activity, whereas mental prayer is an encounter and a loving exchange between God and man.

When we go to mental prayer, we need to be convinced that we are expected, that God is there waiting for us.

1. *You are expected*—God is indeed everywhere. But it is at the heart of our being that he invites us to join him in the dialogue of love that is mental prayer.

2. *In the house of the Lord*—Let us learn how to express our feelings and thoughts spontaneously, simply to the One who is welcoming us.

3. *Speak to Him*—Our underlying attitudes are even more important than our words. And first among them is man’s loving response to God’s love, a response that consists in a stripping of self, in placing oneself totally at the Lord’s service.

4. *The advice of the old parish priest*—There is authentic self-giving only when it is done here and now. There must be eager attention, a presence to God of our whole being, of all of our fully energized faculties.

5. *Being present to God*—But if our words and interior attitudes are to be pleasing to God, we must first ask him what he wants to tell us and what response he is expecting from us.

6. *“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (I S 3:9)*—Then, like any encounter of love, our mental prayer will be new and original each day, providing we bring to it an attentive and inventive heart.

7. *An invention of love*—For all our good intentions, our mental prayer often fails to come up to our expectations. It has not become a turning of all our faculties toward the Lord to be gathered into himself. But by the very fact that our innermost self is turned toward God, our prayer is already genuine. It may even be quite advanced.

8. *The essential*—Do we need to make use of methods when mental prayer is difficult for us? In a certain sense, mental prayer is recalcitrant to methods, just like love. Be this as it may, certain laws govern dialogue. In our relations with God as well as with other humans, it is very important to know these laws.

9. *The practice of mental prayer*—But in the last analysis, the important thing is to bear in mind that prior to any initiative or industry on man’s part, mental prayer is a gift from God.

10. *Mental prayer, a gift from God*