

The Jesus Prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”

The Jesus prayer is short and simple, yet powerful. So powerful that it is even called “a cornerstone of the Orthodox Churches,<sup>1</sup> as it brings a person closer to God.

The Jesus Prayer also serves as a staple for the Roman Catholic Church, considered “an essential” for spiritual growth. I have found it particularly helpful during times when tempted to sin, yes, but also when feeling upset with anger or sorrow. It is an earnest, deeply felt appeal to our Lord, usually spoken repetitively.

If the prayer is used from 1-12 minutes a sweeping uplift can be felt—even to sense a natural “high” that lifts the heart above all that has troubled it. The time it takes to feel as if all is transcended depends on the individual. The more practiced we are in prayer, the quicker this “place in the Spirit” arrives.

I was taught decades ago, as a practicing Roman Catholic to tap my heart with each saying of the prayer. This serves to bringing my body—my whole being--more fully into the prayer. It can be used like “an arrow prayer” said while working or listening to a person describe something difficult she or he is managing. Using the Jesus Prayer can help us follow 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that encourages us to “pray without ceasing.”

Here is a quote from Saint Sophrony, a Christian monk of the twentieth century, also known as Elder or Father Sophrony, “Prayer requires super-human courage, given the atmosphere of the world today. The whole ensemble of natural energies is in opposition.”<sup>2</sup> How much more true this is for us who live one hundred years later.

The Jesus prayer humbles us and reckons us with the Scripture in Romans 3:23-24<sup>a</sup>, “. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace . . .”

A future article prepared for Today’s News-Herald I will address the topic of “natural highs” that happen when people pray and meditate.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.learnreligions.com/the-jesuso-prayer-542660](http://www.learnreligions.com/the-jesuso-prayer-542660) (Accessed January 14, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.svots.edu/saying-jesus-prayer> (Accessed January 14, 2021).