

7 Steps to Peace with Saint Alphonsus Liguori

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Liguori

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Introduction

THIS BOOKLET WILL introduce you to a spiritual practice that incorporates meditation and prayer and which will aid you as you seek to enter a dynamic relationship with God. Although this practice may be a new experience for you, it is firmly rooted in the spiritual tradition of the Church. Originally proposed by Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787), bishop and doctor of the Church, this practice and the method has been successfully used for generations by people who, like you, seek to deepen their relationship with God.

Forgiveness is the central focus of this spiritual practice. However, as proposed and outlined, this practice can also be used for any difficulty or spiritual endeavor: inner healing, discernment, easing of guilty feelings and anxiety—all of these can be used as the central focus when practicing this particular method.

There are seven essential steps to this method:

- Inner Quieting
- Scripture Reading
- Silence
- Reflection
- Petition
- Resolution
- Closing prayer

1. Inner Quieting

With this step, we use our breathing to slow down, to try to focus on what we are about to do with the help of God's grace. This important step helps us develop a listening posture that is necessary in order to pay attention to the Word of God as it comes to us in the Scripture.

2. Scripture Reading

In this step, we slowly and meditatively read the Word of God and permit the Word to speak to us.

We read the selected Scripture two times: once quietly to ourselves and the second time aloud. The different dynamic often produces a slightly different result, enabling us to hear the Word of God with all of the grace and the power that the Word brings to us.

3. Silence

Silence is an integral part of prayer. In the silence, we try to hear what God wants to tell us. Instead of putting our words and thoughts and solutions into the prayer, silence provides the necessary space that we need in order to listen to what God has to say.

4. Reflection

After a period of silence, it is often helpful to read a particular reflection of one of the saints or perhaps a selection from a book recommended to you for your spiritual reading. (In this booklet, sample reflections are provided, but feel free to use other selections.)

5. Petition

The prayer of petition is a powerful prayer, because it helps us to identify what we understand God is asking of us. Prayers of petition do not offer God an insight into our needs or desires, since God already knows what is required. Prayers of petition help us to accept and acknowledge the beginning workings of the gift of grace that we have received from God.

6. Resolution

This enables us to form an action step that helps put into motion the grace that we have experienced. In a very real sense, it “acknowledges and claims” the grace that we have received by inviting us to respond positively.

7. Closing Prayer

We conclude our spiritual practice by praying the Our Father, the prayer taught to us by Jesus. This prayer is important because it joins our individual voice to the voices of the countless men and women of faith in our own time and place, as well as with the voices of the angels and saints in heaven.



Each chapter in this booklet is a self-contained unit that can be used as part of the spiritual practice or, on occasions when it may be appropriate to do so, independently. It is my hope that this spiritual practice will bring God's light and healing to that part of your life in which you experience hurt and where forgiveness is necessary.

CHAPTER ONE

Uncovering the Stone: Becoming Aware

Inner Quieting

We begin our journey into forgiveness by quieting and centering ourselves. (Playing soft instrumental music is sometimes helpful during this quieting exercise.) As the music plays, slowly allow yourself to relax. Imagine the music as soft, flowing, warm water that is surrounding you and comforting you. Pay careful attention to your breathing. Try to slow it down. Become aware that as you breathe inward, you are bringing in the fresh air of God's creation. As you breathe outward, you are letting go of the stale, used air. As you breathe inward, you are renewing yourself. As you breathe outward, you are letting go of tensions, worries, anxieties, and frustrations. You breathe in the power of God's