

Dear Padre,

When I'm trying to pray, I can't stop thinking about my to-do list. How do I keep my mind from racing when I pray?

Most spiritual directors encourage a person to enter gently into solitude and prayer. Real conversation with any friend begins with warm acknowledgment of that friend's presence, so as you sit or kneel, acknowledge that you are in a sacred place and that God is present.

Several techniques can help us find interior silence and solitude. Many people find it helps to sit in a comfortable position and pay close attention to their breathing. Taking slow, deep breaths relaxes our minds and hearts.

When repeated, a sacred word like *Jesus* or *Abba* can focus our attention and help us let go of the distractions that can so easily crowd our consciousness.

Another technique is to take a few moments to find quiet, then read a passage from Scripture. Many people choose the Gospel passage of the day; others read a Gospel through from beginning to end by reading a short passage each day. Other excellent techniques to focus your praying include the Church traditions of *lectio divina* as well as the imaginative prayer method advocated by

St. Ignatius.

True conversation goes both ways. One way God speaks to us is through the word. Reading Scripture as part of our conversation with God is a good way to be sure we don't do all the talking.

Fr. Michael Brehl, CSSR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Prayer often coexists with distraction. Indeed, the human mind struggles to dwell for long on a single thought. We all experience this constant whirlwind of images and illusions in perpetual motion, which accompanies us even during sleep. And we all know that it is not good to follow this inclination toward disorder.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, MAY 19, 2021

Calendar

Monday

MARCH 28

Lenten Weekday

Is 65:17–21

Jn 4:43–54

Tuesday

MARCH 29

Lenten Weekday

Ez 47:1–9, 12

Jn 5:1–16

Wednesday

MARCH 30

Lenten Weekday

Is 49:8–15

Jn 5:17–30

Thursday

MARCH 31

Lenten Weekday

Ex 32:7–14

Jn 5:31–47

Friday

APRIL 1

Lenten Weekday

Wis 2:1a, 12–22

Jn 7:1–2, 10, 25–30

Saturday

APRIL 2

Lenten Weekday

Jer 11:18–20

Jn 7:40–53

Sunday

APRIL 3

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Is 43:16–21

Phil 3:8–14

Jn 8:1–11

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