

Seven Saints who found prayer difficult (and how they overcame it)

Have you ever sat down to pray, only to find your mind drifting to your to-do list, or your eyes growing heavy? If prayer feels like an uphill battle, you are in holy company. The saints did not have effortless, quiet minds, they simply had persistent hearts.

Take **St. Thérèse of Lisieux**, who famously fell asleep during her holy hours. Instead of drowning in guilt, she realized a loving Father delights in His children even when they are sleeping. She wrote, "I ought to be distressed that I fall asleep during my prayers, but I am not. I remember that little children are just as pleasing to their parents when they are asleep as when they are awake." If fatigue gets the best of you, rest in the truth that God welcomes your exhausted heart.

Then there is **St. Teresa of Avila**, a great doctor of prayer who battled severe distractions for nearly twenty years. She confessed, "For more than eighteen years, I never dared to begin to pray without a book." Her journey shows us that using spiritual books is not a sign of weak faith, but a practical way to keep our eyes on Jesus.

If you feel like your prayers are echoing in an empty room, **St. Mother Teresa** walked that same path. She endured decades of spiritual silence, yet she never stopped showing up. She once wrote, "If I ever become a Saint, I will surely be one of darkness. I will continually be absent from Heaven, to light the light of those in darkness on earth." She teaches us that real love is measured by our faithfulness, not our warm feelings.

St. John of the Cross explained that when God removes the sweet feelings of prayer, He is actually drawing us deeper to love Him for Himself, not just for His comforts. He reminded us, "If a soul is seeking God, its Beloved is seeking it much more." Dryness is not a sign of failure, it is the threshold of deeper intimacy.

For forty years, **St. Jane de Chantal** faced persistent distractions. Her remedy was simply to offer her wandering mind back to God as a quiet sacrifice, advising, "We must be patient and not think that we can cure in a day a disease of many years."

Even **St. Faustina** had moments when her heart felt completely cold. During one difficult Mass, she noted, "During holy Mass, my dryness increased, but I accepted it with love, knowing that Jesus loves such sacrifices." A dry prayer offered with love is incredibly precious to God.

Finally, **St. Francis de Sales** reminds us to be gentle with our weak human nature. He advised, "If the heart wanders, bring it back quietly, and place it gently in the presence of its Lord."

When prayer is hard, remember that your effort is a beautiful offering. He sees your heart, and He is pleased with your desire to love Him.



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