

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
We Are Built for Prayer

*Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb  
he named me.*

Isaiah 49:1

## Insight

It was the most intense, exhausting, and exhilarating experience of her life—Marci delivered her first baby. Her little girl, Amelia, was healthy, beautiful, and resting peacefully in her arms. Marci cooed over the baby as she nestled in and nuzzled her.

Marci and her husband, Eddie, marveled that Amelia responded so soon to the sound of their voices. One of the nurses mentioned that studies have shown an increase in a fetus' heart rate when the mother speaks.

Amelia watched as her mother softly talked to her. Marci couldn't get over how attentive Amelia was. Eddie spoke softly to his new daughter, telling her how beautiful she was. Amelia smiled at her daddy.

What a loving bond they both felt with their little daughter, Amelia! Marci sensed that so much was being communicated among all three of them, most of it without words. Marci's spirits soared.

## For Reflection . . .

Jesus Christ taught his disciples to address God as Father in prayer. He invites us to share with God our innermost being.

*As best as you can describe it, what animates, drives, or calls you in your innermost self?*

*What are the enduring examples of others' prayer that help fuel your own prayer?*

## Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 2559–2622

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 463–467

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 534–549

## Church Teaching

### *Communing with God*

Prayer is a form of communication that does not always rely on the spoken word. Because prayer expresses one's relationship with God, there are a number of things that can be said about reverent prayer.

First, prayer arises out of a stance of *humility*: the creature before the Creator. God himself, whom we will never completely understand, remains veiled in mystery. We hardly understand ourselves, yet God knows us perfectly. Though we may not know what to say, God is always present with us in prayer. Prayer opens us as humble petitioners before our loving Father.

And so from the stance of humility, we are prepared to receive the gift that is prayer. God gives us a means to communicate with him. In other words, our own first steps in prayer are always a response to the initiative of God's grace and love for us.

### *The Ongoing Drama of Prayer*

Sacred Scripture details God's continuing initiative and call to us, his children. God seeks a relationship of love expressed in prayer and action, and he has done so from the time of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

In the fullness of time, Jesus Christ, the eternal and incarnate Word, reaches out to "speak" God's most dramatic calling to humanity. Jesus, Savior and Teacher, is the One who "tells" us how to pray by his own example.