

# St. Joseph Society



**Objective:** A rule of life helps a person to start to build habits for holiness. The mission of the St. Joseph Society to help men “To Order All Things to Christ” by becoming strong in mind, body, and spirit. In the next few months, we will break down the rule of life by discussing what it means to be strong in body, mind, and spirit. Last month, we discussed why a man must become strong in mind in order to become a faithful disciple of our Lord in this day and age. This month, we are going to turn our attention to the most important part of our rule of life, namely, being strong in spirit.

## **Podcast Schedule**

- Episode #9 – Strong in Spirit
- Episode #10 – Vocal & Mental Prayer
- Episode #11 – The Efficacy of Prayer
- Episode #12 – Pray Without Ceasing

## **Monthly Meeting: Strong in Spirit**

### **I. Episode #9 – Strong in Spirit**

1. What is prayer? – Prayer is “an elevation of our soul to God to offer Him our homage (worship) and ask His favors (petition), in order to grow in holiness for His glory . . . the sanctifying power of prayer is such that the Saints never tired of saying that he lives well who prays well.” (Tanqueray, 243, 251-252)
2. A.C.T.S – The twofold end of prayer is worship and petition is clearly expressed through the acronym ACTS: **A**doration, **C**ontrition, & **T**hanksgiving (Worship) and **S**upplication (Petition).

### **II. Episode #10 – Vocal & Mental Prayer**

1. Vocal Prayer – “Vocal prayer, or prayer pronounced by the lips, is very pleasing to God because by it the endless Majesty of God is acknowledged and glorified” (*The Twelve Steps of Holiness and Salvation*, 169).
2. Mental Prayer – “Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, as we know, loves us” (St. Teresa of Avila, *The Book of My Life*, chap. 8).

### III. Episode #11 – The Efficacy of Prayer

1. What is the efficacy of prayer? The efficacy of prayer refers to the fact that prayer can produce a certain desired or intended result.
  - a. Luke 11:9-10 – Jesus said, “And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”
  - b. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange – “Prayer is not, then, a weak force with its first principle in us. The source of its efficacy is in God and the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. It descends from an eternal decree of God; it springs from redeeming love, and it reascends to the divine mercy” (*Christian Perfection and Contemplation*, 202-203).
2. Prayer Produces Three Effects
  - a. Prayer detaches us from creatures – “In order to be raised up to God we must first loosen the bonds that fasten us to creatures . . . We hate mortal sin more and more, for it would turn us away altogether from God. We detest venial sin because it would impede our ascent towards Him, and we deplore even imperfections, since they would cool our intimacy with Him” (Adolphe Tanquerey, 518).
  - b. Prayer makes our union with God more complete and more perfect day by day. Prayer makes our union with God **more complete** because it engages our mind, body, and spirit. Prayer makes our union with God **more perfect** because our prayers are acts of faith, sustained by hope, and animated by love of God.
  - c. Through prayer, the soul is gradually transformed into God. We offer to God worship and our petitions, and he stoops down and offers us grace.

### IV. Episode #12 – Pray Without Ceasing

1. Scriptural Precedent
  - a. Jesus Christ – “[You] ought always to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1).
  - b. St. Paul – “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
2. How can we transform our actions into prayer?
  - a. Spiritual Exercises – “In order to foster a life of prayer, first of all, a certain number of spiritual exercises are necessary, the extent and duration of which will vary in accordance with our duties of state” (Tanquerey, 523).
  - b. Turn Ordinary Actions into Prayer – “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).