

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

PART FOUR CHRISTIAN PRAYER

SECTION ONE PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

CHAPTER THREE THE LIFE OF PRAYER

ARTICLE 2 THE BATTLE OF PRAYER

II. HUMBLE VIGILANCE OF HEART

Facing difficulties in prayer

2729 The habitual difficulty in prayer is *distraction*. It can affect words and their meaning in vocal prayer; it can concern, more profoundly, him to whom we are praying, in vocal prayer (liturgical or personal), meditation, and contemplative prayer. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve.

2730 In positive terms, the battle against the possessive and dominating self requires vigilance, sobriety of heart. When Jesus insists on *vigilance*, he always relates it to himself, to his coming on the last day and every day: *today*. The bridegroom comes in the middle of the night; the light that must not be extinguished is that of faith: "'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'"