



## QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING & REFLECTION

### *The Importance of Prayer* (pp. 119-136)

1. How does St. Therese of Lisieux describe prayer?
2. According to St. Teresa of Avila, what determines the value of our prayers?
3. In your own words, list the 6 steps St. Francis de Sales suggests for a structured time of prayer.
4. Why according to St. Francis, is it important to follow through on resolutions made in prayer?
5. According to St. Bernard, from where do good thoughts in prayer come? From where do bad thoughts come?
6. If, against our will and despite our best efforts, temptations and distractions assault us while we're praying, what does St. Teresa advise us to do?
7. What is St. Francis' advice about when, where, and how long to pray?
8. In your own words, describe the plan St. Francis proposes to help us remember God throughout the day?

9. How, according to St. Bernard, can we be alone with God spiritually, even when we cannot be alone with him physically?
  
10. What short prayer does St. Bernard recommend we pray as often as possible in order to stay close to God at all times?
  
11. Describe your own prayer life. How often do you pray? Where do you pray? When do you pray? To what type of prayer do you devote the most time – mental or vocal?
  
12. How closely does your prayer life – the how, where, when, and what – reflect the advice of saints such as Teresa, Francis, and Bernard? What are the weaknesses in your prayer life? What are the strengths?
  
13. When you pray, when do you find you're the most attentive? The least? What steps can you take to increase your attentiveness in prayer?
  
14. What have you tried to combat distraction in prayer? What more do you think you could do?
  
15. List the obstacles that most frequently get in the way of you spending as much time in prayer as you would like. What are some steps you can take to overcome these obstacles?