

The Ascension and St Agnes (ASA), DC, School of Theology and Prayer

July 12, Pentecost VI (Proper 10), 2020

‘Prayer in a Time of Pandemic and Social Unrest’: Deepening Prayer – How Do I Begin Again

When Prayer Seems Impossible?’ (Dr. Sarah Coakley and Fr. Martin L. Smith)

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Introduction to this Webinar Series (Sarah Coakley): Our main themes will be - Recovering our life of prayer in a time of anxiety and separation; starting where we are and not somewhere else; the prayer of (apparent) ‘aloneness’ as an opportunity for re-exploring the (inextricably connected) ‘mystical body of Christ’; relating through prayer to the agony of the world’s sickness and its racialized divisions; monastic prayer and its surprising application to the condition of pandemic; how prayer can go wrong (in re-establishing our ‘stuckness’), and how it can go right (through the ‘interruption’ of the Spirit); the transformations that prayer can effect in the life of communities that wish to grow (in depth as well as numbers), and to minister to the world in its troubles.

Three Crucial Themes in the Recovery of Prayer Practice: Starting Again (Fr. Martin L. Smith):

1. Beginning again: being emotionally honest with God
2. Asking, ‘Who does God want to be for us, just now?’
3. How can we be receptive to God in prayer?

Discussion (at two points in the Webinar), and application to current concerns.

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Select bibliography:

Martin L. Smith, *A Season for the Spirit* (orig. Boston, Cowley Publications, 1991; New York, Seabury, 2004)

_____, *The Word is Very Near You: A Guide to Praying With Scripture* (Boston, Cowley Publications, 1989)

_____, *Compass and Stars* (New York, Seabury, 2007)

Luigi Gioia, OSB, *Say It to God: In Search of Prayer* (London, Bloomsbury, 2017)

Maria Boulding, OSB, *Marked for Life: Prayer in the Easter Christ* (re-issue, London, SPCK, 2014)

Paul F. Bradshaw, *Two Ways of Praying* (Maryville, TN, OSL Publications, 2008)

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