

THEOLOGY for CATECHESIS



The Hours of God

God's Invitation to Relationship

REFLECTION: LORD TEACH US TO PRAY

Take time to reflect on the following passage from Luke's Gospel.

"The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers" St Thomas of Aquinas.

Now once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said:

'Lord teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'

He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

'Father, may your name be held holy,

Your kingdom come;

Give us each day our daily bread,

And forgive us our sins,

For we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.

And do not put us to the test.'

Luke 11 1-4

Imagine yourself at the scene and describe it.

What do the disciples notice about Jesus as He is praying?

What stands out for you in Jesus' reply?

REVISIT this passage of scripture.

EXPLORE other times and places in the Gospels that Jesus goes away to pray – what do you notice about Him when He does this?

PRAYER

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." St. John Damascene

Prayer is a **covenant relationship, a living relationship** between God and you:

- ❖ God who is Father good beyond measure
- ❖ God who is Son, the way the truth and the life
- ❖ God the Holy Spirit who is our Advocate with the Father and the Son and will lead us in the way of all truth.

Jesus invites us to seek and to knock since He himself is the door and the Way. *Matthew 7:7*

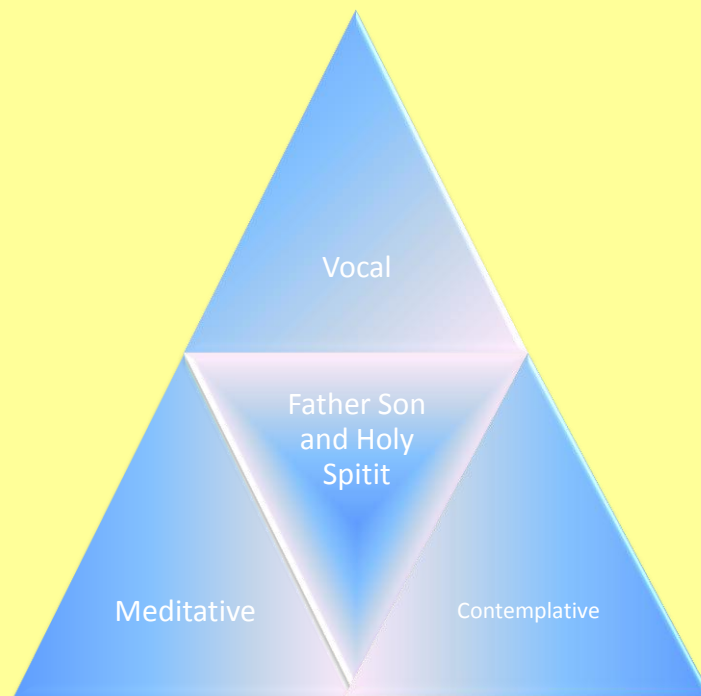
How do we do this? Through our heart, our hidden centre – according to Scripture it is the heart that prays.

To love God with all your heart *Mark 12:33* Did not our hearts burn within us? *Luke 24:32*
God's love has been poured into our hearts. *Romans 5: 5*

"Heart speaks unto Heart" *Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman*

Catholic Tradition tells us that we can **express** our **relationship** in:

- ❖ **Vocal Prayer** - an essential element in the Christian life – Jesus taught His disciples Vocal Prayer.
- ❖ **Meditative Prayer** - that engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire.
- ❖ **Contemplative Prayer** - that is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us. *(St Therese of Avila)*
It is a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus; I look at him and he looks as me. *(St Ignatius of Loyola).*

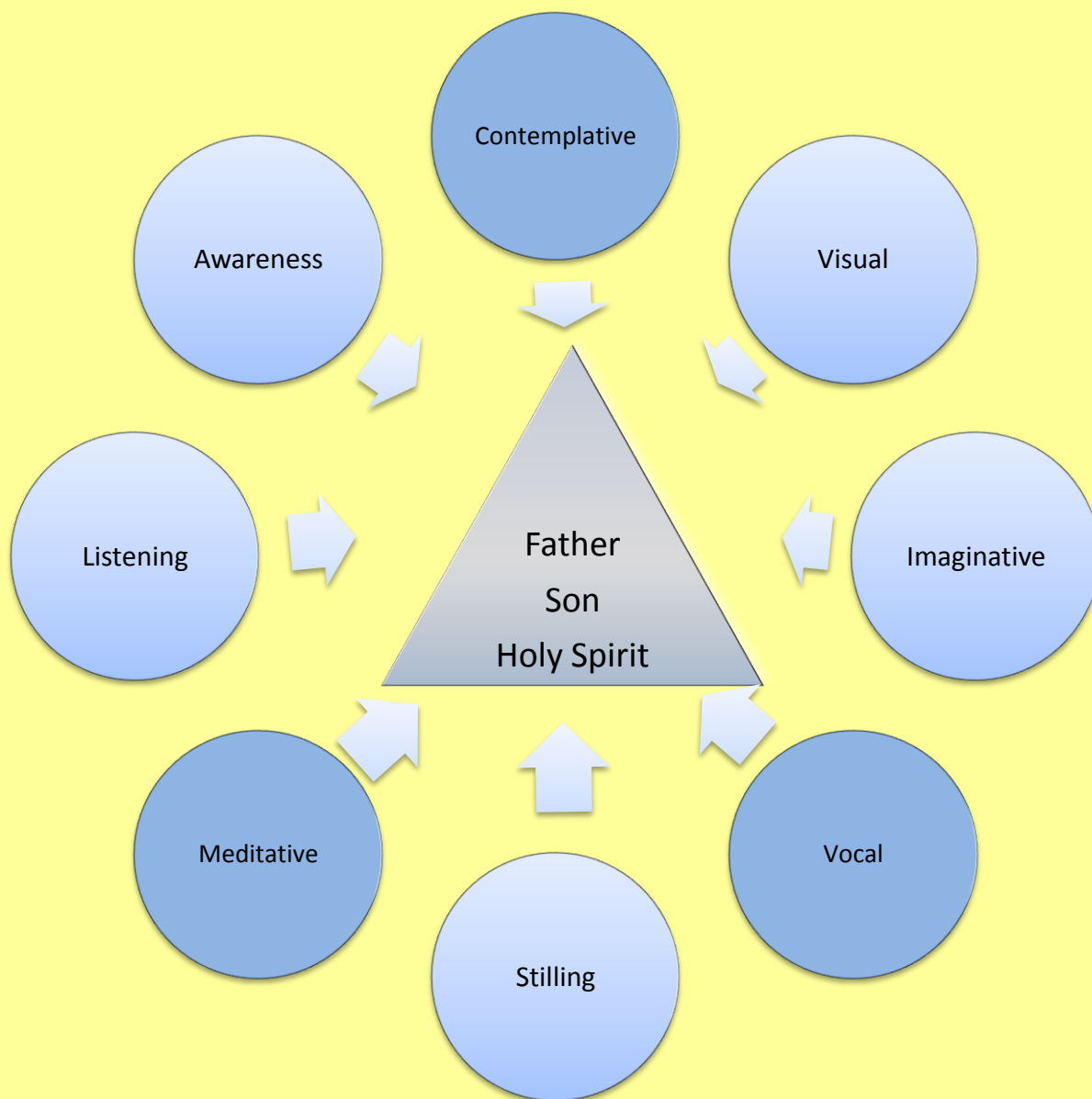


We invite you to re-read this page and circle words that strike you or feel strange to you.

APPROACHES to PRAYER

Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with our thirst... a personal relationship, a gift, a grace...

We can encounter God in various ways - pathways shared with us down the ages by the Saints, as they encountered God in their lives.

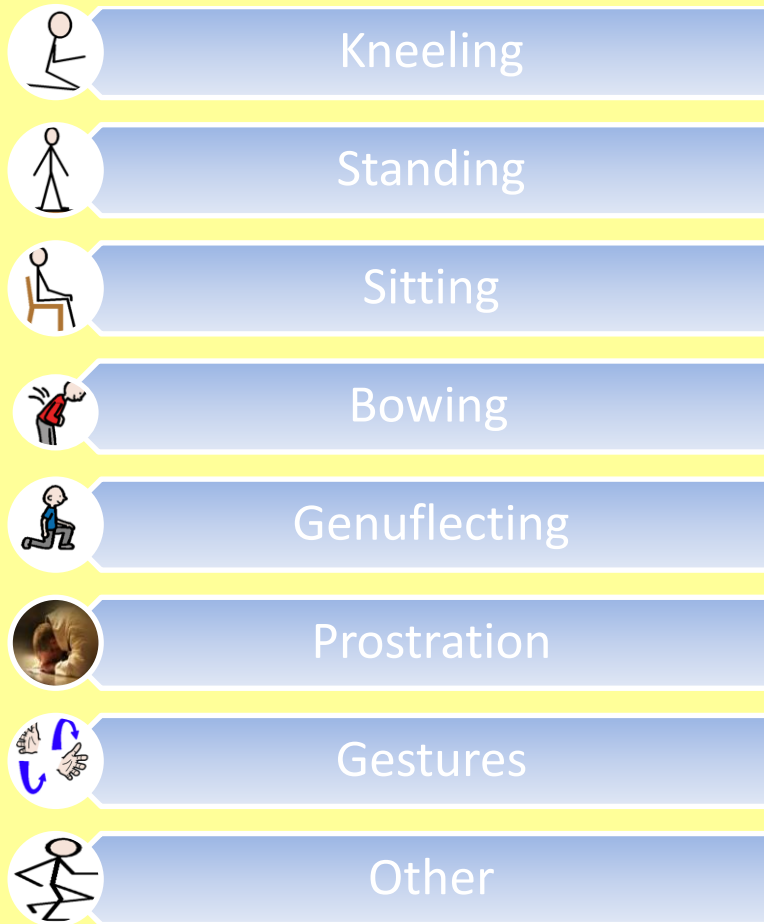


What way of prayer are you drawn to?

What forms of prayer would you like to develop further?
How?

BODY PRAYER – Postures

We pray with our whole being, body and spirit. Our senses and our feelings, how we are in our prayer, are expressed externally through our body posture.



Philippians
2:9
Every knee shall bow at
the name of Jesus

Exodus
3:4
Take off your sandals, for
the place you are standing
is holy ground

Ephesians
3:1
This then is what I pray,
kneeling before the
Father.

When do you personally use any of the above postures in prayer?

How do these postures help you to pray?

PERSONAL JOURNEY in PRAYER

Prayer is gift, covenant, communion ...

'For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.' *St. Therese of Lisieux,*

Movement in personal prayer

Each one of us is called to a personal relationship with God. In Matthew 6:6 you are invited to “go to your room and shut the door and pray to your Father ...’ from the heart.


Spiritual Consolation and Desolation

God is always at work in us, through the Holy Spirit, calling us to intimacy and friendship with God and one another. We need to be attentive to our deepest feelings, the movement within.


When we are turned towards God, God drawing us to Himself, we experience God’s peace and are also turned out to others; this is known as **Spiritual Consolation**. John 14:18 “I will not leave you desolate...” 14:27 “... Peace I leave you, my peace I give you” 14:1 “... let not your hearts be troubled.”


When we turn our backs on God (consciously or unconsciously) we can feel disturbed and are turned in on ourselves. This is known as **Spiritual Desolation**. St Ignatius, who founded the Society of Jesus, described the movement of the Holy Spirit in detail in his Spiritual Exercises.

Movement of the Holy Spirit



Towards God





Away from God

Peaceful, full of energy, joy, life giving, patient, generous, compassionate, faithful, humble, free, forgiving, whole, creative, able to pray and praise, outward looking to neighbour; closeness to God in sorrow and suffering

Discerning God's Voice Daily – Deepening My Relationship

What gift is God offering me today?

How can I be faithful to the covenant I have made with God?

How do I know if I am in communion with God?

Listening to God's voice ...

Recognising God's voice ...

Responding from my heart ...



The Tradition of the Church has called this the **Examination of Conscience**, The Examen or The Review of the Day. This is a **KEY** tool in recognising God's voice.

Ask yourself at the end of each day:

Where have I heard God's voice today in the events, in people, in prayer?

- Where did I feel drawn to God in peace, joy, energy, life, patience, compassion, freedom and was turned out towards others? Or close to God in suffering, trials or pain?

Where have I noticed God's absence today in the events, the people, in prayer?

- Where did I feel driven, pride, fear, anxiety, hopelessness, slothful, drained of energy and was turned in on myself? Or when I could not pray?

Suggested Reflections:

I drew them with human
cords, with bands of love; I
fostered them like one who
raises an infant to his cheeks;
yet, though I stooped to feed
my child, they did not know
that I was their healer.
Hosea 11: 2

When Samuel went to sleep in his
place, the LORD came and
revealed his presence, calling out
as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"
Samuel answered, "Speak, for
your servant is listening."
1 Samuel 3: 1

I am going to lure her; I lead her
into the wilderness to speak to
her heart.
Hosea 2: 16



Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find; knock
and the door will be opened
to you.
Matthew 7: 13-14

He walks ahead of them, and the
sheep follow him, because they
recognize his voice.
Matthew 10:3

PRAYER and LITURGY

Liturgy is the covenant between heaven and earth, the bond which makes God's people one community in Christ all the world over.' Abbot Constantine Basschaerts; Founder of Vita and Pax Monastries.

Liturgy is active. Liturgy is action; the interaction of God and the people of God. By means of visible things we come to love the invisible. The people of God gather, hear, see, touch, taste and smell. They receive, respond and discover God-with-us..." *For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.*" (Matt 18; 20)

The Eucharist

Sundays are centred on the Eucharist and are kept holy primarily by prayer.

There are many different prayer movements....



Other Forms of Liturgy

Liturgy of the Hours

From the Monastic Tradition
seven times a day
Uses psalms and readings

Service of the Word and Holy Communion

To enable us to listen to the
word... and receive The Word

The Sacraments

Baptism

Praying with and for the sick
and dying

Exposition and Benediction

Reconciliation

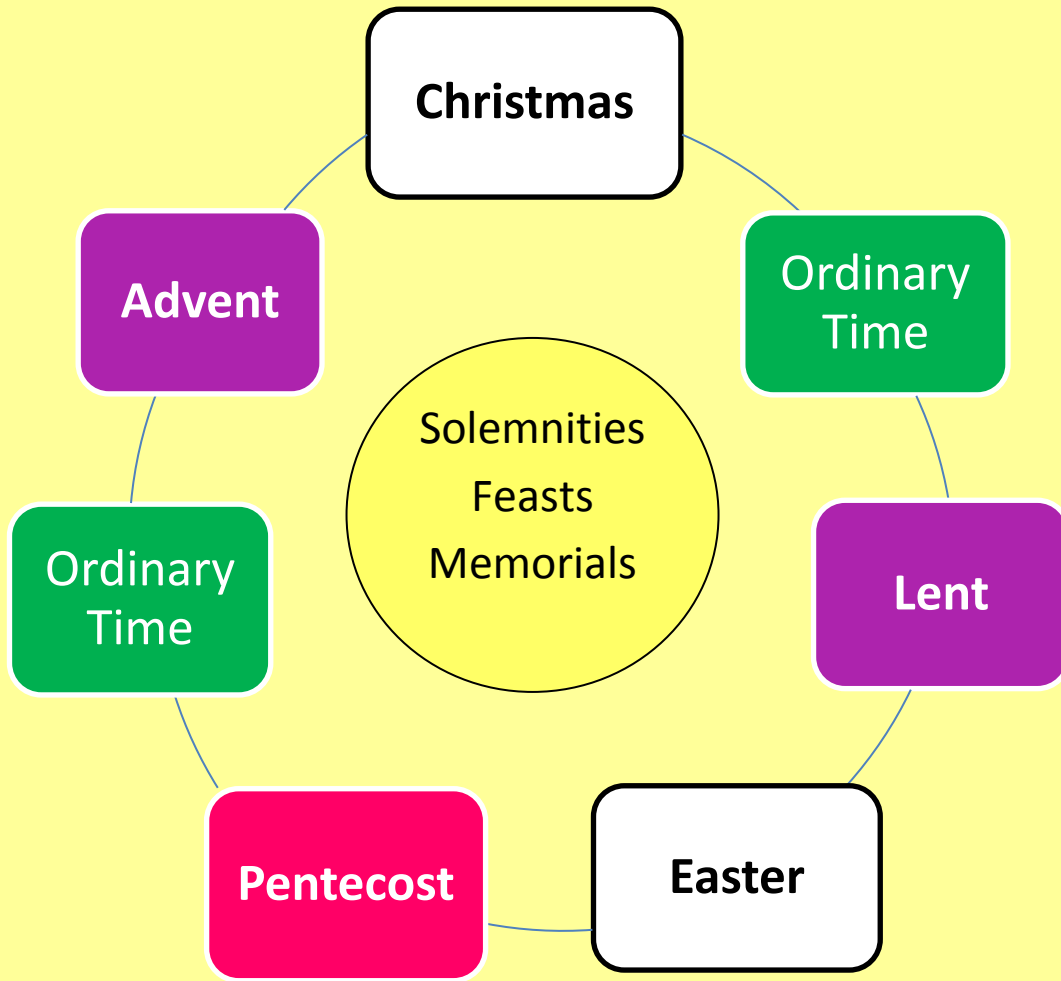
The Sacrament, being
reconciled with God
A service, being reconciled
with God and one another

Christian Funeral

Which of the above liturgical experiences have you had?

THE CYCLE of PRAYER

This annual cycle the Church celebrates the mysteries of Christ and honours the Blessed Virgin Mary and remembers the martyrs and saints.



THE PSALMS

The Psalter is the book in which the Word of God becomes our prayer.

The Psalms, with their concrete and varied language, teach us to fix our hope on God. There is a psalm for every human emotion and situation that people find themselves in.

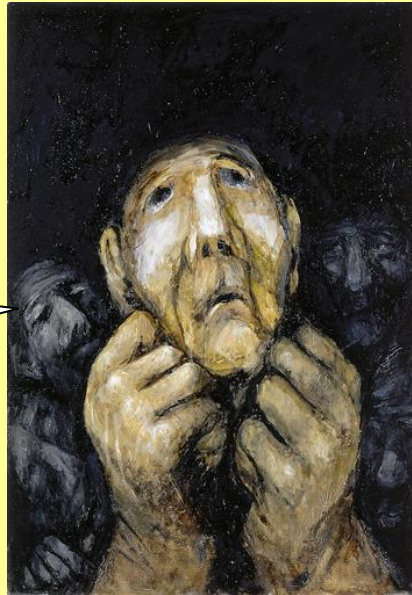
Give thanks to the Lord for
He is good for His
faithfulness endures
for ever.
Psalms 136

Lord you examine me and
you know me
You know when I sit you
know, when I rise.

Psalms 139

Lord my God, I take refuge in you
save me from my pursuers and
rescue me.

Psalms 7



Trusting Sieger Koder

I waited, I waited for
the Lord then He
stooped to and heard
my cry.
Psalm 40

From the depths I cry to
you, Lord, Oh Lord hear
my cry.
Psalm 130

How blessed are all who fear
the Lord who walk in
His ways!
Psalm 128

My heart be at peace once
again for the Lord has treated
you generously.
He has rescued me from death
my eyes from tears and my
feet from stumbling.
Psalm 116

The Psalter's many forms of prayer take shape both in the liturgy of the Temple and the human heart.

You are invited to explore more of the psalms and their many facets.

RHYTHMS OF PRAYER

"We must remember God more often than we draw breath." St Gregory CCC 2697

The Tradition of the Church proposes certain rhythms of prayer intended to nourish continual prayer. Some are daily such as morning, evening and night prayers, grace before and after meals, the Liturgy of the Hours (seven stages). This celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours deepens the understanding of the liturgy and of the Bible especially the Psalms.

The Liturgy of the Hours – three major hours Morning Prayer (morning, evening and night),



What is your rhythm of prayer?

What would you feel drawn to develop?

THE SAINTS and PRAYER

For many of the rhythms we have the saints to thank for....

Communion of the Saints – previous witnesses

St Ignatius
Imaginative meditation and
the Spiritual Exercises

St Therese of Lisieux
Intercession

St Bernard of Clairvaux
Silence

St Benedict
Liturgy of the Hours
Lectio Divina

St Dominic
Rosary

St Therese of Avila
Contemplation
The Interior Castle

St John of the Cross
Contemplation
The Dark Night



Who has touched you today or from the past in your personal journey of faith?

How do you nurture your own personal prayer life?

MARY: THE MOTHER OF GOD, THE GREATEST WOMAN OF PRAYER

Mary gives God her absolute consent and in giving her consent, she becomes the first and most faithful of Jesus' disciples. (Mary and the Saints p. 5)

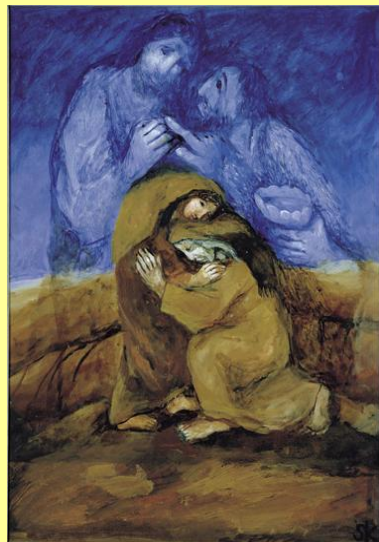
Mary in her FIAT and MAGNIFICAT expresses her generous offering of her whole being in faith.

FIAT



Annunciation Sr Mary Stephen

MAGNIFICAT



Magnificat Sieger Koder

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior.”



*Therese believed that Jesus
and the Father were listening
at the moment she was praying.
Everything she said mattered because
she was in a living relationship ...
prayers were spontaneous... She
would talk to God when she was
happy, sad, or sleepy.*



RESOURCES

Daily Examen ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen

Sacred Space sacredspace.ie

Living Space sacredspace.ie/livingspace

Pray as you go www.pray-as-you-go.org

Today's Good News www.goodnews.ie/index.shtml

Courses, retreats and access to spiritual directors: www.epiphanygroup.org.uk

Books

Paul Nicholson: *Growing Into Silence*

A Time of Prayer (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales) Catholic Truth Society www.cts-online.org.uk

Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying With Icons Henri J. M. Nouwen

Catechism of the Catholic Church www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm

Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life Christopher Jamison

Finding God in each moment Carol Ann Smith et al

How to Pray: A Practical Handbook John Pritchard

Mary and the Saints; companions on the journey James P Campbell (Pastoral Ministry Series)

Intimacy with God: An Introduction to Centering Prayer by Thomas Keating

Personal Prayer: Living in Love with God John Trenchard

Praying with Posture: Short Meditations for the Whole Body Gina Hall

Sadhana: A Way to God - Christian Exercises in Eastern Form Anthony DeMello Sr.

Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life Dennis Linn

The Art of Theological Reflection: Patricia O'Connell Killen

The Return of the Prodigal Son Henri Nouwen

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts Paul Turner, McCrimmons Publications

Posters, Cards and CD ROMs

Posters by Sieger Koder; Sr Mary Stevens; Turvey Abbey and more Pauline Books and Media pauline-uk.org

Chants for Prayer CD 4 CD set by Keith Duke, Geoffrey Nobes and Margaret Rizza www.kevinmayhew.com and pauline-uk.org