

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Pray Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, August 4, 2018 8:15 AM Jer 26:11-16, 24; Mt 14:1-12 **St. John Vianney**, priest (In praying we are actually allowing ourselves to channel the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, into the world through our own being.)

Today we celebrate the memorial of **St. John Vianney**. St. John was a man of prayer. One of the qualities of prayer that he mentions is the loss of time, which I think is something good to focus on. **John said when he prays it's as if time stands still or as if he is not even aware of the passing of time.**

Now this is for a very good reason I believe, which you can also verify. **Our awareness is really timeless.** I have a 69-year-old body and I can tell that it is 69 years old. It's got arthritis. There are all kinds of things that don't quite work as well as they used to. My memory is not as good as it used to be. I can see that as well. But my awareness is exactly the way it was when I was four years old, because awareness is really timeless. **It is our participation actually in God, God's consciousness.** He gives that to us. St. Thomas says really **only God is; everything else only is in God by participating in God.** That's true for everything in creation. But we are special because we are made in the image and likeness of God and therefore besides being in God, sharing in God's being that way, **we also share in God's awareness.** That's his likeness. That's what God is ultimately; before he creates anything, God is nothing but pure awareness, and he gives that to us to share. And you could say **he looks through us** at the world, and he is looking through every creature like that that has any awareness.

So when we pray we are really letting that awareness be; we are letting it expand. He says that; John Vianney says that when we pray, the way he puts it I think is our souls expand. He is trying to talk about something that it's hard to talk about. But he has got a point that our awareness expands, perhaps it's not our soul, maybe that's what the Bible calls our spirit.

Nonetheless **there is an expansion, there is a growth, there is a widening, and there is a sense of joy and peace that accompanies this experience.**

Now this doesn't mean that if you pray, you will never have a bad day, but **prayer does alter your very being even in its physical form.** Not only that, but prayer really does alter life around you; therefore, **prayer really does change the world.** This is something John Vianney discovered. And he wanted to encourage everybody to pray more because in praying **we are actually allowing ourselves to channel the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, into the world through our own being,** through our bodies, through our brains, through our nervous systems, through our words, through our actions, through everything, including our thoughts. So on this memorial of John Vianney it would be good for us to reflect on this wonderful opportunity we often pass up, to take time to pray, not just say prayers, but pray.