

The Spiritual Life: The Path to Union with God – Father Browning

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). The perfection of the Christian life is union with God. In heaven, this perfection is the Beatific Vision. We should progress toward this perfection by living the spiritual life on earth.

My study of the spiritual life enflamed my heart with a desire for holiness - This course aims to introduce you to the "three stages of the spiritual life" and deep prayer as outlined by the saints and doctors of the interior life. Its goal is not merely knowledge of the spiritual life but also the inspiration to live it. What you learn in this class will be the practical means to respond to God's call for you to be holy.

The Second Vatican Council's document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states in paragraph eleven, "Fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect."

This course will cover:

- The goal of everything - deification
- The life of grace: sanctifying and actual grace
- The three stages of the spiritual life: purgative, illuminative, and unitive
- The levels of prayer as they correspond to the stages
- Seven Deadly Sins
- Theological and Moral Virtues
- The Dark Nights
- The Devil's common tactics against us
- along with practical applications for your life

Required Reading:

Ralph Martin, *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2006).

Dan Burke, *Into the Deep: Finding Peace Through Prayer* (North Palm Beach: Beacon Publishing, 2016).