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May 31, 2018 To my Dear Brothers who are in Prison, I know the conditions during the summer are excessively hot. I used to preach in the gym in the Middleton unit during the summers in Abilene. After the service I got to walk out and ride home in my air conditioner car with my wife. I would always think of you guys and how by the grace of God I was so blessed to come visit you. So as I turn 72 years old and write to you, I wanted to give you the best gift of love that I could think of. It is called contemplative prayer and if you learn and use it, you will find a great peace in your heart and feel a closeness to Jesus you never have had before. It is the foundation to becoming and remaining a Christian.

Prayer is one thing you can do in prison, and learn to do better than any of us out here, because I promise you that Jesus hears your prayers, and like little children, he loves you and wants to be close to you. "Let the little children come to me." We on the outside are like the Israelites who turned their backs on God in order to satisfy our desires for things and the world. But you are in Prison to find God and He is there right next to you waiting for you to invite Him into not only your heart but your life in jail. So for this hot summer let me get you started on a Master's degree in Prayer. I will begin with a great Catholic teacher, her name was Teresa of Avila, she was a poor nun in Spain who suffered much early in her life and through her suffering she became close to Jesus and mastered CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER. First a brief history on prayer. From the time of Abraham people have been talking to God, and in the case of the early Jewish fathers God spoke back to them like two people having a conversation. Read the story of Sodom; (Gen 18,) where Abraham is chageling God about if there are 10 good men, will you destroy the city. It was like us haggling over purchasing a pair of boots in Mexico. After the time of Jesus we were all and I mean All Christians taught the Lord's prayer. The early apostles taught us the Apostles Creed. We Catholics say a lot of Rosaries, and for good reason. The rosary started as the Jesus prayer. "The *Jesus Prayer* is a short, simple *prayer* that can put you in the right frame of mind to get closer to God. ... Lord *Jesus* Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. ... the *Jesus Prayer* can be traced back to the Church from the 4th Century. In 431 people began saying a Marian Prayer that evolved into the Hail Mary. (no it is not a football pass play). In the 1400s mysteries were added to Meditate on and in 1571 when during the battle of Lepanto (of the coast of Portugal) nations were praying the rosary and the battle was won. The rosary is a basic Catholic prayer. But it is a warm up prayer to start you into meditation. And it is hard to meditate if you are talking. So begin prayer by meditating. To meditate is to focus your thought on an item, for Christians a religious item. Like "Jesus dying on the cross". You could and you should meditate all the time it leads you deeper into prayer. Example: Focus on a happier time in your life it will make you feel good and bring you close to your love ones. You can do the same thing with God; focus on the arrest, the beating and the execution of our Lord and Savior. (an innocent man and our God). But now I want to introduce you to prayer beyond Meditation, it is called Contemplation. Back to our little Saint Teresa, She describes Contemplative Prayer this way. "Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us." This prayer is exquisitely useless, fixed only on the Lord, wanting nothing, seeking nothing, demanding nothing. It is the prayer of the loving gaze, it is sheer attentiveness to the other—like two lovers utterly content to be present to each other without words. It is deep calling to a deep place where language is superfluous. This prayer moves us away from the energetic expression of what is disturbing us to a deep silence within; I see it in terms of breathing out, emptying ourselves of all our concerns, while we breathe in only the breath of God. It is totally calming; it is being in the presence of the eternal attentive lover". So brothers start with common verbal prayers, like the Hail Mary or Our Father, or Glory Be (say for 10 minutes), then begin to meditate on Jesus, then just sit down on a bed or bench and imagine Jesus is sitting next to you, because I promise He is if you invite Him there. Then drift off in a trance or daze, like you did with a boring teacher in school. In this daydream the Son Of God will love you and put wonderful thoughts in your heart and peace in your soul. Any bad thoughts comes from the Evil one and let me warn you he will not like you to do this because it fills your soul with Christ and the devil will try to distract you. Please try to pray with me every evening at 7pm, and I will pray for you. I am sorry but the program has run out of money, so I will no longer be sending money orders to you while you are in prison. I will help you when you get out with Walmart card. And Letters WILL continue. Love michael