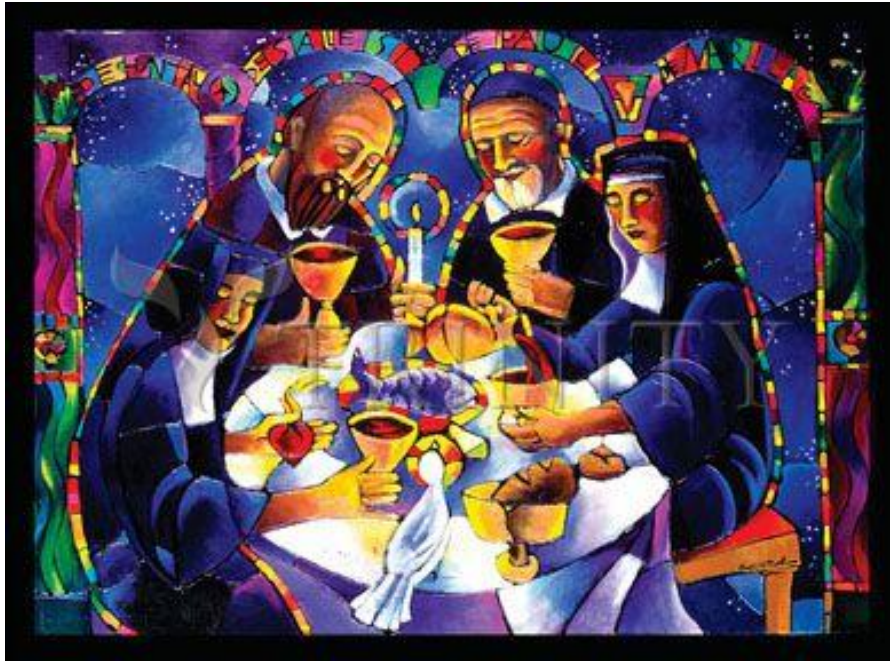


WAYS TO PRAY



COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Among Holy Persons

INNER CIRCLE OF LIGHT

“Never refuse the counsel of holy people, even if you are learned; for this, too, is one of the fruits of knowledge.”

[St. Ephrem the Syrian - AD 306-373]





WHAT IS THE INNER CIRCLE OF LIGHT?

St. Ephrem the Syrian (AD 306-373) said, *“Never refuse the counsel of holy people, even if you are learned; for this, too, is one of the fruits of knowledge.”* (Hypothesis XVIII, The Evergetinos Vol. II of the First Book)

Greek philosopher and mathematician, Pythagoras said, *“Friends are as companions on a journey, who ought to aid each other to persevere in the road to a happier life.”*

Saints and giants of faith are enlightened Spiritual Beings who lived on Earth, faced the same challenges we face today and reunited with God. Today they serve as the Teachers of mankind from the Realms of Spirit. They guide, protect, inspire and heal mankind. They are Teachers in the truest sense of the word. They can help us grow in any area of our lives and achieve the real purpose of life: to become One with God. They seek to bring light into the hearts and minds of people so that they may move ever onward in their development.

Many Saints or giants of faith have chosen to stay connected with souls on earth to guide them on the path of soul development and self-transcendence. They are the true teachers of mankind, directing the spiritual evolution of all those who desire to reunite with God. Their purpose is to provide us with guidance, and processes that allow us to open up to our true self.

In my spiritual journey, there are several companions upon whom I regularly call upon to aid me as I travel the path Jesus has set me on. They are saints or other giants of faith who guide, inspire and encourage me. Just as God communicates with me, in different ways (but often through Scripture), so too I have found that several of my journey companions communicate with me frequently through their writings or in other ways.

Author Napoleon Hill developed the concept of Mastermind Groups, which he described as: *“The coordination of knowledge and effort of two or more people, who work toward a definite purpose, in the spirit of harmony.”* He continues... *“No two minds ever come together without thereby creating a third, invisible intangible force, which may be likened to a third mind [the master mind].”*

Throughout my working life I used and participated in Mastermind Groups, in the areas of sales, marketing, promotions, leadership, training and management and particularly in the fields of insurance, TV and Radio.

It is only in looking back across the years that I have come to realise just how valuable, beneficial and awesome these alliances were in the development and growth of my career and of the organisations with which I was involved. It is also only in retrospect that I now realise and am amazed that Mastermind Groups are a vital part across all areas of my life, including the spiritual. Amongst the most prominent of my faith Mastermind Groups are the Spiritual Companion Peer Group, the Parish Retreat Planning Group and the Theology Study Group.

Inspired by promptings from the Holy Spirit, in the form of signs that just kept popping up, so much so that I could no longer ignore them, I formed the **Inner Circle of Light**, a roundtable Mastermind Group that consists of the saints and other giants of the faith that are my companions on the journey. I sought to seek counsel from a Council of Saints in one gathering!



THE PROCESS

Through prayer and discernment I was led to an issue or area of my life where I need improvement. For the first meeting with the **Inner Circle of Light**, the issue I took to the table was temptation.

The Companions I invited to my Roundtable were Sts. Paul, Augustine, Ignatius, Patrick and the author CS Lewis. The Holy Spirit brought others to the table - Sts. John Bosco, Philip Neri, Frances De Sales and John Chrysostom, with additional advice from St Thomas Aquinas and St Teresa.

I allocated a timeframe of 90 minutes for the “meeting.” In a search engine on my laptop I typed “*What do the Saints and giants of faith have to say about temptation?*” There were about 597,000 results!

I went with the flow, and after working through the first five or six hits, I had responses from the majority of my companions. I narrowed the search by asking what specific companions had to say, e.g. “*What did St Paul say ...? What did St Augustine say ...? What did CS Lewis say ...?*” etc.

Then, using copy, cut and paste, I compiled the responses that were meaningful to me, responses that my companions were communicating directly to me. The Holy Spirit was very much at work during this process. During the final 30 minutes I prepared the “Minutes” of the meeting, which were printed for me to take to my early morning Quiet Time the next day, for prayer, reflection and discussion with God. These “Minutes” totalled 5 pages.

This was a dynamic, exciting, enlightening prayer experience for me. I was amazed at how the roundtable **Inner Circle of Light** was so very real to me - my companions **were** “speaking” directly to me, guiding me, offering suggestions and solutions. After the meeting I developed three Action Items for follow up during the next week.

The counsel of holy people, of friends who are as companions on the journey, has given me new insight on the path I walk - which I do not walk alone. I have Jesus as Companion and Guide and I walk with a group of joyful, exuberant friends.

