

Praying Digitally

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Smartphones have forever changed the way we live, and more than 90% of people in North America are now carrying around what are essentially ultra-compact, Internet-connected computers. It's also impacting the way we pray, with hundreds of Christian prayer apps available. ([Here are a few specific to our Catholic faith.](#)) But should we pray digitally?

There is [more research coming out each month](#) about the impact of screen time on our brains, specifically on our memories. We now know that most people skim materials presented digitally and retain less information from them when compared to the printed page. So what's the effect on prayer?

The truth is that it's different for each person. There may be digital natives in your parish who are so comfortable praying the Liturgy of the Hours on their mobile devices that it's not an issue for them. But there may be other people who, though they appreciate the convenience of having the entire Bible on their phone, actually have a difficult time achieving a deep level of prayer because of the digital medium.

So what's a parish staffer to do to answer the question, "Should we pray digitally?" Perhaps the best thing is to simply let your parishioners know about the pros and cons of praying with an app. It is convenient, and for busy people on the go, that might be the deciding factor. For others, having a nice prayer book may be the answer. Rest assured that more parishioners will be coming to you for guidance on this, so be ready with a few articles and some well-chosen words!
