Prayer and technology

Here’s some eye-opening numbers: 8,ooo text messages; 275 minutes of call time; 24 hours of face time – that is how much time my daughter spent electronically communicating with friends and family last month. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, research shows that young teens report spending an average of 1 hour and 35 minutes a day sending or receiving texts. I am not surprised, nor disheartened. Methods of communication have changed over the years and, when monitored and kept in balance to the rest of life’s activities, communicating with people is not a bad thing. After all, these are the most important relationships in my child’s life.

I asked my daughter why it was so important to have so many different ways to communicate with her friends. Why not just use the phone like I did? The roll of her eyes made it clear that I was so “yesterday.” “Texts are quick and people usually respond fast,” she said. “And I like seeing friends face-to-face on my computer. My friends are important to me, and I like to keep in touch.”

Prayer Is Communication

Prayer – communication with God – is our way as believers to keep in touch with God. And, if we allow it, God will actually communicate back. There are many different ways to pray; they can be old and ancient, or new and spontaneous. They can be filled with music or silent. Prayer can be active, such as a nature walk or a dance, and prayer can be sedentary, as in meditation or guided imagery. All of these are different forms of communication that help develop our relationship with God.

Modern Prayer, Ancient Message

This Lenten season, try out some different forms of prayer as a family. Start a family conversation by asking, “How much time do you spend with your best friend?” Then have each

family member, adults included, talk about the question. Follow that up by asking, “How much time do you spend with God?” I have to admit, when I ask these questions of myself, I see an imbalance. Talk as a family about how to make room in your lives to talk with God.

Kids might enjoy praying to God in their own cultural way. Try having them text or email God every day. They obviously don’t have to send it (I haven’t found an email address for God yet), but the act of writing down (or typing in this case) a prayerful thought is prayer. Sending the text prayer to themselves means they will pray it twice! If using email, save the prayers as drafts during Lent. When the Triduum begins, read through the saved emails and be reminded of the time spent with God. You may even want to try this for yourself. Notice what happens as you intentionally spend time with God. After all, this is the most important relationship in all of our lives.