



Prayer Time

A Collection of Catholic Prayers

BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH SERIES



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*The Knights of Columbus presents
The Building the Domestic Church Series*

Prayer Time

A Collection of Catholic Prayers

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A Companion for the Journey

by the Most Reverend William E. Lori, S.T.D.
Archbishop of Baltimore

As long as I can remember, my mother has closed each day by reciting prayers from a well-worn prayer book that was given her as a young woman. I doubt there is a single page in that volume she doesn't know by heart yet in her hands that it is more than a book. It is silent witness to years and years of daily prayer and an ever deepening friendship with God.

When I was growing up, prayer books like that fell out of fashion. It was said that we should not depend on prayers composed by others and still less should we recite rote prayers; rather, we should pray from the heart. Of course, we should pray from the heart. At the same time, we shouldn't be surprised that our hearts and minds, when at prayer, need the encouragement and guidance of holy men and women who have left behind prayers that beautifully express God's merciful love and foster our devotion. Besides, it is important that even in our purely private prayer, we use the vocabulary of faith and devotion common to Catholics through the ages and across the globe.

Happily prayer books like the present volume are returning to print. We are discovering how prayers drawn from the Scriptures, rooted in the Liturgy, and flowing from the hearts of the holy, the wise, and the learned help us in our journey toward God. How readily we can be renewed in the joy and hope our faith affords by prayerfully repeating Mary's Magnificat! How easily prayer from the heart can be launched by simple acts of faith, hope, and love! How our participation in the Mass is aided by prayers of preparation and thanksgiving for the gift and mystery of the Eucharist.

Prayer Time is a wonderful companion to members of the Knights of Columbus and their families. The Order constantly stresses the importance of sound family life and that requires families to pray together. How wonderful if Knights and their families throughout the world would spend time together each day offering prayers found in this wonderful volume. It goes without saying, that *Prayer Time* is a wonderful companion for anyone who truly wants to grow in holiness.

In introducing this book, it is my hope and prayer that many will adopt it as a companion for their spiritual journey; that this book will become a well-used and venerable resource for your daily prayer and a witness to your growth in friendship with the Lord. May God bless you and keep you in his love.



Fundamental Prayers

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

AN ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

AN ACT OF HOPE

O my God, relying on Thy infinite power, goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

AN ACT OF CHARITY

O my God, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

AN ACT OF PERFECT CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offended Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee. Amen.

MORNING OFFERING

O my God, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the intentions for which He pleads and offers Himself in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in thanksgiving for Thy favors, in reparation for my sins, and in humble supplication for my temporal and eternal welfare, for the wants of our holy Mother the Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the relief of the poor souls in purgatory. I wish to gain all the indulgences attached to the prayers I shall say and to the good works I shall perform this day. Amen.

PRAYER IN THE MORNING: THE BENEDICTUS

Blessed ✠ be the Lord, the God of Israel;
He has come to His people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of His servant David.

Through His holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember His holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship Him without fear,
holy and righteous in His sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;
for You will go before the Lord to prepare His way,

to give His people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:68-79)

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace, help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words, guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, and teach me to pray. Amen.

On Sundays and holy days pray the Te Deum on page 8.

PRAYER IN THE EVENING: THE MAGNIFICAT

My soul ✠ proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on His lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of His arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel
for He has remembered His promise of mercy,
the promise He made to our fathers,
to Abraham and His children for ever. (Luke 1:46-55)

O eternal God and Ruler of all creation, You have allowed me
to reach this hour. Forgive the sins I have committed this day
by word, deed or thought. Purify me, O Lord, from every spiritual
and physical stain. Grant that I may rise from this sleep to glorify
You by my deeds throughout my entire lifetime, and that I be
victorious over every spiritual and physical enemy. Deliver me,
O Lord, from all vain thoughts and from evil desires, for Yours is
the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen.

PRAYER AT NIGHT

O my God, I thank You for having preserved me today and for having given me so many blessings and graces. I renew my dedication to You and ask Your pardon for all my sins.

(make an examination of conscience quietly then pray The Canticle of Simeon which follows)

*Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake;
watch over us as we sleep,
that awake we may keep watch with Christ,
and asleep, rest in His peace (alleluia).*

Lord, now let Your servant go in peace;
according to Your word:
for my eyes have seen Your salvation
which You have prepared in the presence of all
peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to Your people Israel. (Luke 2:29–32)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

*Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake;
watch over us as we sleep,
that awake we may keep watch with Christ,
and asleep, rest in His peace (alleluia).*

TE DEUM

O God, we praise Thee: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. Everlasting Father, all the earth worships Thee.

All the Angels, the heavens and all angelic powers, all the Cherubim and Seraphim, continuously cry to Thee: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.

The glorious choir of the Apostles, the wonderful company of Prophets, the white-robed army of Martyrs, praise Thee.

The Holy Church throughout the world acknowledges Thee: The Father of infinite Majesty; Thy adorable, true and only Son; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

O Christ, Thou art the King of glory! Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou took it upon Thyself to deliver man, Thou didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.

Having overcome the sting of death, Thou opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou will come to be our Judge.

We, therefore, beg Thee to help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood. Let them be numbered with Thy Saints in everlasting glory.

THE DIVINE PRAISES

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His holy name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be His most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His most precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS

We give Thee thanks, almighty God, for all Thy gifts, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.





Devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary

THE ANGELUS

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. (Hail Mary)

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to Thy word. (Hail Mary)

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us. (Hail Mary)

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

REGINA COELI

Throughout the Easter Season – from Easter to Trinity Sunday – the Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven) is prayed.

Queen of Heaven; rejoice, alleluia:
For He Whom Thou didst to merit to bear, alleluia,

Has risen as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, Who through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, deigned to gladden the world: grant, we beseech Thee, that through the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may receive the joys of eternal life.

Through the Same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SALVE REGINA (HAIL, HOLY QUEEN)

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To Thee do we cry poor banished children of Eve. To Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, O most gracious advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

THE MAGNIFICAT

My soul ✠ proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of His arm,
He has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel
for He has remembered His promise of mercy,
the promise He made to our fathers,
to Abraham and His children for ever. (Luke 1:46-55)

THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

MOTHER OF MERCY

O Mary, Mother of Mercy, watch over all people, that the Cross of Christ may not be emptied of its power, that man may not stray from the path of the good or become blind to sin, but may put his hope ever more fully in God who is “rich in mercy.” May he carry out the good works prepared by God beforehand and so live completely “for the praise of His glory.” Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

God of power and mercy, You blessed the Americas at Tepeyac with the presence of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. May her prayers help all men and women to accept each other as brothers and sisters. Through Your justice present in our hearts, may Your peace reign in the world. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

COME, LADY, UPON THE HEIGHTS

COME, Lady upon the heights;
Mary, visit us,
you who already brought such joy
to the house of your kinswoman.

COME, Help of the World
remove the stains of sin
and, in visiting your people,
take away the threat of punishment.

COME, Star and Light of the Sea,
pour forth a ray of peace;
set straight what is crooked,
give innocence of life.

COME visit us, we pray you,
strengthen our vigor
with the energy of a holy impulse,
lest our soul waver.

COME, Royal Scepter,
bring back the wave of those in error
to the unity of the faith
by which the citizens of heaven were saved.

COME, that together with you
we may ceaselessly praise the Son,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit;
may they give us their help. Amen.

Hymn at Matins for the Blessed Virgin Mary (13th century)

THE HOLY ROSARY

Introductory Prayers:

1. The Apostles' Creed
2. Our Father
3. Three Hail Marys, followed by a Glory be

Rosary Proper:

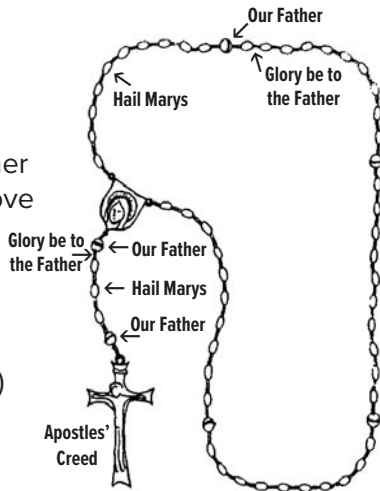
4. Recall the First Mystery, followed by Our Father
5. Ten Hail Marys
6. Glory be, followed by Second Mystery and Our Father
7. Ten Hail Marys (repeat as above until five Mysteries are said)

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES (Monday and Saturday)

- The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)
- The Visitation (Luke 1:39-56)
- The Nativity (Luke 2:1-21)
- The Presentation (Luke 2:22-38)
- The Finding in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES (Thursday)

- The Baptism of the Lord (Matthew 3:13-17)
- The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- The Preaching of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15)
- The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13)
- The Institution of the Holy Eucharist (Matthew 26:17-29)



THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES (Tuesday and Friday)

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-56)

The Scourging at the Pillar (Matthew 27:24-26)

The Crowning with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)

The Carrying of the Cross (Matthew 27:32-34)

The Crucifixion (Matthew 27:35-56)

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES (Wednesday and Sunday)

The Resurrection (John 20:1-29)

The Ascension (Luke 24:36-53)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-47)

The Assumption (Song of Solomon 2:10-11,14)

The Coronation (Revelation 12:1-6)

After the Rosary:

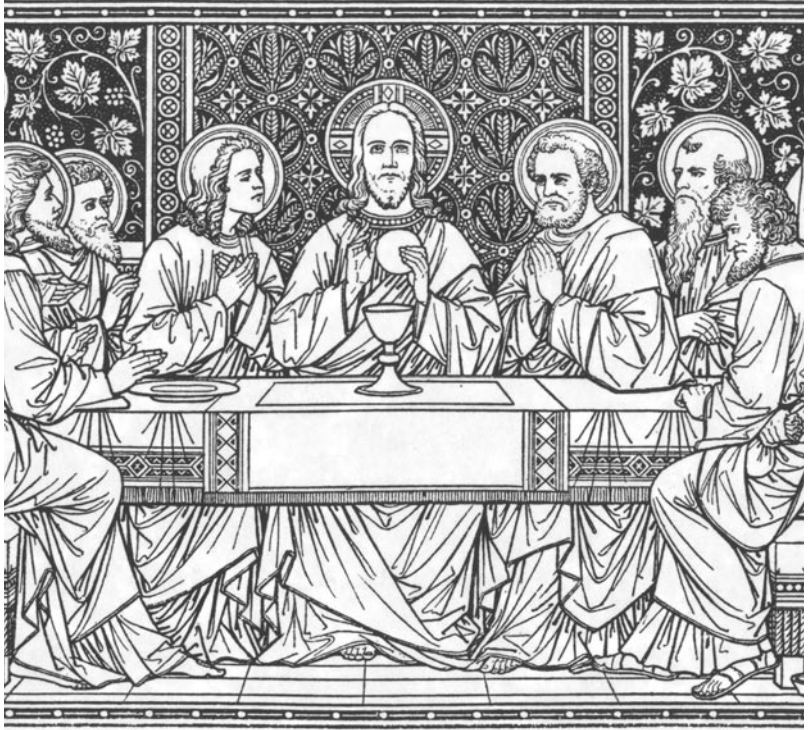
8. Salve Regina (page 12)

V. Queen of the most holy Rosary, pray for us.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, whose only-begotten Son by His life, death and resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life: grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating on these mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.





Communion Prayers

O SACRED BANQUET

O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

V. Thou didst give them bread from heaven.

R. Containing in itself all sweetness.

Let us pray:

O God, Who under a wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion; grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever feel within ourselves the fruit of Thy redemption. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER BEFORE THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Almighty and eternal God, behold, I approach the sacrament of Thine only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. I approach as one who is sick to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of eternal brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.

Therefore I beseech Thee, of Thine infinite goodness, to heal my sickness, to wash away my filth, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, and to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords with such reverence and humility, with such contrition and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention, as may conduce to the salvation of my soul. Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may receive not only the sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, but also the fruit and virtue of this sacrament.

O most indulgent God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thine only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took of the Virgin Mary, that I may be found worthy to be incorporated with His mystical body and numbered among His members. O most loving Father, grant that I may one day contemplate forever, face to face, Thy beloved Son, Whom now on my pilgrimage I am about to receive under the sacramental veils; Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end. Amen.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

PRAYER AFTER THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

I give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God, who hast vouchsafed, not for any merit of mine, but solely out of the condescension of Thy mercy, to satisfy me a sinner, Thine unworthy servant, with the precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray that this holy Communion be not to me a condemnation unto punishment, but a saving plea unto forgiveness. May it be unto me the armour of faith and the shield of good will. May it be the emptying out of my vices, the extinction of all concupiscence and lust, the increase of charity and patience, of humility and obedience, and of all virtues; a strong defense against the snares of all enemies, visible and invisible; the perfect quieting of all my evil impulses, both fleshly and ghostly; a firm cleaving unto Thee, the one true God; and a pledge of a blessed destiny.

And I beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bring me, a sinner, to the ineffable banquet, where Thou, with Thy Son and the Holy Ghost, art to Thy saints true light, fullness of content, eternal joy, gladness without alloy and perfect happiness. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

SOUL OF CHRIST (ANIMA CHRISTI)

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within Thy wounds, hide me.

Let me not be separated from Thee.

Defend me from the malignant enemy.

At the hour of my death, call me:

And bid me come to Thee.

That with Thy saints I may praise Thee forever and ever.

Amen.

PRAYER BEFORE THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

My Lord Jesus Christ, who for the love You bear us, remain night and day in this Sacrament, full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling and welcoming all who come to visit You: I believe that You are present in the Sacrament of the Altar. I adore You from the abyss of my nothingness and I thank You for all the graces You have given me until now, and in particular, for having given me Yourself in this Sacrament, for having given me Your Most Holy Mother Mary as my advocate, and for having called me to visit You in this church.

I now salute Your most loving Heart, and this for three ends: first, in thanksgiving for this great gift; second, to make amends to You for all the outrages which You receive in this Sacrament from all Your enemies; third, I intend by this visit to adore You

in all the places on earth in which You are present in this Sacrament and in which You are the least revered and the most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love You so with my whole heart. I grieve for having until now so many times offended Your infinite goodness. I propose by Your grace never more to offend You for the time to come; and now, miserable and unworthy though I am, I consecrate myself to You without reserve. I give You and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From now on, use me and all that I have as You wish. All I ask of You and desire is Your holy love, final perseverance and the perfect accomplishment of Your will.

I recommend to You the souls in purgatory, but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to You all poor sinners.

And finally, my dear Savior, I unite all my affections with the affections of Your most loving Heart, and I offer them with You to Your Eternal Father and beg him for Your sake and for love of You, graciously to accept and grant them. Amen.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori



le igitur. El poder



Favorite Prayers

PRAYER BEFORE THE CRUCIFIX

Behold, O good and sweetest Jesus, I cast myself upon my knees in Thy sight, and with the most fervent desire of my soul I pray and beseech Thee to impress upon my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, true repentance for my sins and a most firm purpose of amendment: Whilst with deep affection and grief of soul I consider within myself and mentally contemplate Thy five most precious Wounds, having before my eyes that which David, the prophet, long ago spoke in Thy own person concerning Thee, my Jesus, They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful,

R. And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.

V. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray: O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

My God, my Savior, I adore Thy Sacred Heart,
for that heart is the seat and source
of all Thy tender human affections for us sinners.
It is the instrument and organ of Thy love.
It did beat for us. It yearned over us.
It ached for us, and for our salvation.
It was on fire through zeal, that the glory
of God might be manifested in and by us.

It is the channel through which has come to us
all Thy overflowing human affection,
all Thy Divine Charity towards us.
All Thy incomprehensible compassion for us,
as God and Man, as our Creator and our Redeemer and Judge,
has come to us, and comes, in one inseparably mingled stream,
through that Sacred Heart.
O most Sacred symbol and Sacrament of Love,
divine and human, in its fullness,
Thou didst save me by Thy divine strength,
and Thy human affection, and then at length by that
wonder-working blood, wherewith Thou didst overflow.

O most Sacred, most loving Heart of Jesus,
Thou art concealed in the Holy Eucharist,
and Thou beat for us still.
Now as then Thou save,
Desiderio desideravi—"With desire I have desired."
I worship Thee then with all my best love and awe,
with my fervent affection, with my most subdued,
most resolved will.

O my God, when Thou dost condescend to suffer me to receive Thee, to eat and drink Thee, and Thou for a while take up Thy abode within me, O make my heart beat with Thy Heart. Purify it of all that is earthly, all that is proud and sensual, all that is hard and cruel, of all perversity, of all disorder, of all deadness.

So fill it with Thee, that neither the events of the day nor the circumstances of the time may have power to ruffle it, but that in Thy love and Thy fear it may have peace. Amen.

Blessed John Henry Newman

CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

Opening prayers

1. Using a normal rosary, make the Sign of the Cross on the first large bead.
2. On the first small bead, recite the Our Father.
3. On the second small bead recite the Hail Mary.
4. On the third small bead, recite the Apostles' Creed.

For Each Decade

5. On the large beads, recite:

Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

6. On the ten small beads, recite:

For the sake of Your sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Concluding Prayer

7. After five decades, recite three times:

*Holy God,
Holy Mighty One,
Holy Immortal One,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.*

PRAYER FOR GROWING

With each new day that dawns I am growing up, O Lord. It's not too soon to start thinking of what I want to be. It's very hard, I think, to make the right decision but I pray that You will help and guide me. Show me what to do. Let me share, someday, my talents where they're needed. And when You show me, give me courage to be generous enough to do what You want.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O Father, inspire among Christians many holy vocations to the priesthood that keep alive the faith and preserve the grateful memory of your son Jesus through preaching his Word and administering the Sacraments with which you ceaselessly renew your faithful.

Call forth ministers of your mercy who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, may spread the joy of your forgiveness.

O Father, make the Church welcome joyously the many inspirations of the Spirit of your Son and, docile to His teachings, nurture vocations to the priestly ministry and to the consecrated life.

Support the bishops, priests and deacons, the consecrated persons and all the baptized in Christ, so that they may faithfully fulfill their mission at the service of the Gospel.

We ask for this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Queen of the Apostles, pray for us!

Pope Benedict XVI

PRAYER TO KNOW ONE'S VOCATION

Lord, let me know clearly the work which You are calling me to do in life. And grant me every grace I need to answer Your call with courage and love and lasting dedication to Your will. Amen.

PIOUS INVOCATIONS

We adore You, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee.

My Jesus, mercy!

Jesus, I trust in You.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner.

Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give You my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I breathe out my soul with You in peace.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross is a school of faith, the faith which by its very nature “works through love” (Galatians 5:6).

Let us pray.

Brief pause in silence.

Jesus, innocent victim of sin,
receive us as companions on Your Paschal path,
which from death leads to life,
and teach us to live the time that we spend on earth
rooted in faith in You,
who have loved us and given Yourself up for us.
You are the Christ, the one Lord,
who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

The verse is said after each station is announced:

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus takes up His cross
3. Jesus falls for the first time
4. Jesus meets His Mother
5. Jesus is helped by Simon the Cyrene to carry His cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls for the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls for the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Let us pray.

Brief pause in silence.

Jesus, Lord rich in mercy,
You were made man so as to become our brother,
and by Your death conquer death.
You descended into Hades so as to free mankind,
to make us live again with You,
we are risen and called to sit with You in the heavenly places.
Good Shepherd who leads us to restful waters,
take us in Your hand when we cross the valley of darkness,
so that we may stay with You and contemplate for ever
Your glory. Amen.

*The Way of the Cross at the Roman Coliseum with
Pope John Paul II, presiding on Good Friday, 2004.*



Prayers for Special Intentions

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Heavenly Father, look upon our community of faith which is the Church of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to witness to His love by loving all our fellow creatures without exception. Under the leadership of the Holy Father and the Bishops keep us faithful to Christ's mission of calling all men and women to Your service so that there may be "one fold and one shepherd." We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE POPE

Heavenly Father, be pleased to bless and protect our Holy Father, Pope N., whom You have chosen as the successor of Saint Peter to be chief minister of unity and charity in the Church. Keep him safe in holiness of life and in wise fulfillment of his awesome responsibilities. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE BISHOP

Heavenly Father, in these trying times when the spirit of the age threatens Christian values, give our bishop N. holiness of life and wisdom to direct and guide our (arch)diocesan family of N. so that we may grow in Your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Heavenly Father, bless and protect priests and fill them with the joy and courage of their vocation as personal ministers of Christ in preaching Your word, forming communities in Your name and nourishing us with the Sacraments. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR DEACONS AND OTHER MINISTERS

Heavenly Father, since the time of the Apostles You have inspired the Church to commission certain members to assist in a special way in the pastoral mission of Christ. Bless the deacons and all other ministers that they may be humble and faith-inspired in their service. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR RELIGIOUS PRIESTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Heavenly Father, in Your wisdom You have called certain women and men to a life of special consecration so that in prayerful observance of a lifestyle of poverty, chaste celibacy and obedience, they might be witnesses to us that, as Saint Paul says, “our true citizenship is in heaven.” Give them, Lord, the grace of joy and perseverance in their holy vocation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE LAITY

Heavenly Father, You have called us all to holiness which means sharing in Your divine life. Fill us with a sense of our true dignity as those called to be Your daughters and sons in the world and Your ambassadors of justice, love and peace. Give us the desire to be worthy of this great calling and the courage to live up to it. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER IN TIME OF NEED

Heavenly Father, in my present need, help me to believe that You are aware of my anxiety and will do what is best for me. Give me the strength to trust You and put the present and future in Your hands. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FAMILY

Lord God, from You every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. Father, You are Love and Life. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman, and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of divine charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that Your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weakness and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family. Through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

Pope John Paul II

PRAYER FOR A DECEASED PERSON

God of the spirits and of all flesh,
who have trampled death and annihilated the devil
and given life to Your world, may You Yourself,
O Lord, grant to the soul of Your deceased servant N.
rest in a place of light, a verdant place, a place of freshness,
from where suffering, pain and cries are far removed.

Do You, O good and compassionate God
forgive every fault committed by Your servant in word, work or
thought because there is no man who lives and does not sin.

You alone are without sin and Your justice is justice
throughout the ages and Your word is truth.

Since You, O Christ our God, are the resurrection,
the life and the repose of N., Your servant,
we give You glory together with Your un-begotten Father
and Your most holy, good and life-creating Spirit,
now and always and forever and ever.

Eternal rest grant unto N., O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him (her).
May he (she) rest in peace. Amen.

PRAYER IN SORROW

God of all consolation, in Your unending love and mercy for us,
You turn the darkness of death into the dawn of new life. Show
compassion to Your people in sorrow. Be our refuge and our
strength to lift us from the darkness of this grief to peace and joy
in Your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



LIBERA ME DOMINE

R 07



Prayers for the Intercession of the Angels and the Saints

PRAYER TO YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here, ever this day (night) be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY ANGELS

O leaders of the heavenly armies, although we are always unworthy, we beseech you that with your prayers you may encircle us with the protection of the wings of your angelic glory. Watch over us as we bow low and earnestly cry out to you: Deliver us from trouble, O princes of the heavenly armies.

PRAYER OF ST. FAUSTINA

Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me. *Jesus I trust in You!*

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. Thou has given me all that I am and all that I possess: I surrender it all to Thee that Thou may depose of it according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will have no more to desire.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O God, in Your wonderful providence You were pleased to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most holy Mother. Grant, we beg You, that we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom we venerate on earth as our protector. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. JUDE

Saint Jude, glorious Apostle, faithful servant and friend of Jesus: The name of the traitor has caused you to be forgotten by many, but the true Church invokes you universally as the Patron of thingsdespaired of. Pray for me, that finally I may receive the consolations and the succor of Heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (here make your request), and that I may bless God with the Elect throughout eternity. Amen.

Saint Jude, Apostle, martyr and relative of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Mary and of Joseph, intercede for us.

PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do Thou, O Prince of the heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen

PRAYER OF ST. PATRICK

I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold
And lead, His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need; the wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward; the word of God
to give me speech, His heav'nly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort me and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in the hearts of all who love me,
Christ in the mouth of friend and stranger,

I bind unto myself the Name, the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three,
of whom all nature hath creation; Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
praise to the Lord of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the Lord.
Amen.



Helps from the Catechism

THE TWO COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
(Matthew 22:34ff; CCC* 2051-2055)

THE GOLDEN RULE

Do to others as you would have them do to you.
(Matthew 7:12; CCC 1970, 2407)

TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the LORD, your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD Your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.

*CCC=Catechism of the Catholic Church

6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

(Exodus 20:2-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21; CCC 2056ff.)

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-23; CCC 1716-1729)

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To shelter the homeless.
5. To visit the sick.
6. To visit the imprisoned.
7. To bury the dead.

(CCC 2447)

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

1. To counsel the doubtful.
2. To instruct the ignorant.
3. To admonish the sinner.
4. To comfort the sorrowful.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive all injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

(CCC 2447)

THE THREE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Charity

(1 Corinthians 13:13; CCC 2086-2094)

THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

1. Prudence
2. Justice
3. Fortitude
4. Temperance

(CCC 1805-1809)

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Wisdom | 5. Knowledge |
| 2. Understanding | 6. Piety |
| 3. Counsel | 7. Fear of the Lord |
| 4. Fortitude | (Isaiah 11:1-3; CCC 1829-1832) |

THE TWELVE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Charity | 7. Generosity |
| 2. Joy | 8. Gentleness |
| 3. Peace | 9. Faithfulness |
| 4. Patience | 10. Modesty |
| 5. Kindness | 11. Self-control |
| 6. Goodness | 12. Chastity |
| | (Galatians 5:22-23; CCC 1829-1832) |

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. Pride | 5. Gluttony |
| 2. Greed | 6. Envy |
| 3. Lust | 7. Sloth |
| 4. Anger | (CCC 1866) |

THE FOUR LAST THINGS

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Death | 3. Hell |
| 2. Judgment | 4. Heaven |
| | (CCC 1020-1041) |

THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1. To keep holy the Lord's Day by attending Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and to rest from servile labor.
2. To confess your sins in the sacrament of Confession at least once a year during the Easter Season.
3. To receive holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.
4. To observe the days of fast and abstinence according to the norms of the Church.
5. To observe the marriage laws of the Church.
6. To contribute to the needs of the Church.

(CCC 2041-2043)

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE EUCHARISTIC FAST

1. Whoever is to receive the blessed Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from all food and drink, with the sole exception of water and medicine.
2. A priest who, on the same day, celebrates the blessed Eucharist twice or three times may consume something before the second or third celebration, even though there is not an hour's interval.
3. The elderly and those who are suffering from some illness, as well as those who care for them, may receive the blessed Eucharist even if they have consumed something.

Code of Canon Law, canon 919

FAST AND ABSTINENCE

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday Catholics are obliged to fast and abstain (see below the *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1250-1253). We are to turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel.

To *fast* means eating one main meal and eating a smaller amount of food at other the times of the day. When fasting, snacking is not permitted. *Abstinence* means that no meat is eaten on those days for those between the ages of 14 and 60. As a way of keeping the memory of the death of the Lord on Good Friday alive in our spiritual life, Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence; the Church also teaches that all Fridays are days of penance, and abstinence is the preferred form of penance.

Meat is the flesh and organs of mammals and fowl.

The *Code of Canon Law* says the following on the observance of fast and abstinence:

Canon 1250 All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the entire Church.

Canon 1251 Abstinence from eating meat or another food according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year unless they are solemnities; abstinence and fast are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and on the Friday of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Canon 1252 All persons who have completed their fourteenth year are bound by the law of abstinence; all adults are bound by the law of fast up to the beginning of their sixtieth year. Nevertheless, pastors and parents are to see to it that minors who are not bound by the law of fast and abstinence are educated in an authentic sense of penance.

Canon 1253 It is for the conference of bishops to determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence and to substitute in whole or in part for fast and abstinence other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In addition to Sunday, the days to be observed as holy days of obligation in the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States of America, in conformity with canon 1246 of the *Code of Canon Law*, are as follows:

- January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God;
- Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter, the solemnity of the Ascension;
- August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
- November 1, the solemnity of All Saints;
- December 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception;
- December 25, the solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1, the solemnity of All Saints, falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated. In some dioceses the Solemnity of the Ascension is celebrated on the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION IN CANADA

In addition to Sunday, the days to be observed as holy days of obligation in the Latin Rite dioceses of Canada, in conformity with canon 1246 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, are as follows:

- January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God;
- December 25, the solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The bishops of Canada have transferred all other holy days to the nearest Sunday.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The sacrament of Reconciliation is a special encounter with Jesus Christ and it is a fruitful source of grace. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: “The sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true ‘spiritual resurrection,’ restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God” (1468). Indeed, the sacrament of Reconciliation is a time for love, mercy and healing. Regrettably, some see this sacrament of forgiveness and healing as a cause for anxiety and fear. Jesus intended it to be a time of compassion and mercy and every priest in confession is conscious of being a minister of understanding and forgiveness. When Jesus gave us this sacrament He knew well our human nature and knew the need we have — that is, to encounter — to hear the freeing words: “I absolve you of your sins. . . .” The Church recommends monthly confession as a spiritual discipline. At a minimum, Catholics must make a confession of sins when they are conscious of mortal sin before the reception of holy Communion. The precept of the Church says that Catholics ought to confess their sins in the sacrament of Confession at least once a year during the Easter Season.

There are many blessings in frequent confession (cf. CCC 1425-1498). Among such blessings are the following:

1. It restores divine life to those who have lost it through mortal sin.
2. It increases grace and one's capacity for grace and helps one to grow in Christian maturity.
3. It brings order and peace into one's life by causing one to pause at regular intervals and ask oneself the all important question: Where am I in my relationship with God?
4. It improves personal relations with others by making one aware of attitudes and actions that cause pain to others.
5. It motivates one to practice the basic Christian virtues: faith, hope, charity, humility, self denial, repentance, detachment from the pagan ways of modern life.

Making a good confession entails contrition (sincere sorrow for offending God), confession of sin (confronting our sinfulness in an honest manner) and satisfaction (making amends by following the priest's advice and doing the penance he imposes). A good confession requires preparation by prayer, examining the conscience and the making the resolve not to sin again.

At the sacrament

Bless me, ✠ Father, for I have sinned. It has been (estimate time since last confession) since my last confession.

Confess all your sins.

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Do the penance given by the priest.





Family Prayer Time

The thought behind Family Prayer Time is to provide a simple formula to be used by the family that would like to set aside a brief period once a month for praying together as a family. Families come in all ages, of course, and it will be for the parents to adapt the prayers and reflections to their own needs. As time goes on, the family may be inspired to write its own prayer service. That would be a welcome and wonderful development.

How is family prayer time to be arranged? There is no set rule. One method that has been helpful is to decide that on one day each month, after the evening meal, even before the dishes are washed, the family would gather to pray together. It is a little awkward at first, but once the custom is established, everyone's schedule is arranged so that all can be on hand. Needless to say, God's blessing will be on the effort.

These reflections concentrate on the place of Jesus in our lives and on the family virtues illumined by the example of the Holy Family: love, concern, forgiveness, outreach to others, and a sense of vocation, an awareness that each one is called by God to a special mission in life. Obviously, where very young children are present, be mindful of the language of the prayers, and the readings from sacred Scripture may be done from a children's version of the Bible.

Parent: Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All: Dear Jesus, we are here to spend a few minutes with You in prayer. We want to praise You, to pray for ourselves, our friends and neighbors, and for everyone in the world. We know that You came to call all of us to know, love and serve Your heavenly Father so that we would be a happy family and at peace.

Parent: Jesus, be close to us now as we pray to the Father in the words You taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Parent: Jesus, we want to pray to Your Mother too. We remember how the angel told her she was to be Your Mother. We remember how she went to Elizabeth who praised her for saying to God, "Be it done to me as You wish." That was saying a big "yes" to God. We want to ask Mary to pray for us because we know, Jesus, that if we are close to her, we will be close to You.

All: Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Parent: Jesus, as God, You were in existence before the world was made. Then You became man with Mary as Your mother so that You could tell the world how You and the Father and the Holy Spirit together love all of us and want to share Your holy life with us. All praise to this Most Holy Trinity.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Parent: (N.) will you read for us so that we will have something special to think about? (Here mother or father asks someone to read a Bible passage selected from the following: the Annunciation, Luke 1:26-38; the Visitation, Luke 1:39-80; Jesus' birth, Luke 2:1-20, 2:3; Jesus' baptism, Mark 1:1-11; the Wedding at Cana, John 2:1-11; the cure of leper, Mark 1:40-45; the feeding crowd, Matthew 15:32-38; the ten lepers, Luke 17:11-19; the laborers in vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16; the merciless servant, Matthew 18:21-35; the Pharisee and tax collector, Luke 18:9-14; the good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37; the Good Shepherd, John 10:1-21).

Parent: Let's talk a little bit about the gospel passage. Would you like to tell the story your own words? Who were the good people in the story? Were there any bad people in the story? Suppose you had been there; what would you have done? What does the story mean for your life?

(Here mother or dad gives each child a chance to answer. At the end, he or she can talk briefly about a lesson that can be learned from the scripture passage.)

Parent: I think now that we should pray for our family and for all families. We can begin by remembering the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Saint Joseph. They had their good times and parties and they had their hard times too, or when Jesus went to Jerusalem and got lost. But they were happy because they loved each other and were kind and helpful to each other. So let us pray that God will help us to be a kind and loving family with each one trying to obey God and to help one another.

(The following paragraphs may be added occasionally.)

Of course, the Holy Family had relatives and friends, and they cared about them too. We remember how Mary went to stay with Elizabeth when she was going to have a baby. And Saint Joseph was a carpenter and was always fixing things for the neighbors. And Jesus, besides being a young boy was also God, so He was always being good to others. Imagine living next to Jesus! Could He ever help you with your homework! So let us pray for our friends and relatives that God will bless them and keep them from harm.

When Jesus grew up and left home to go around preaching about God the Father and His love for us all, Jesus remembered how happy He had been with His family and tried to make everyone understand that we are really one big family, with God as our Father. He talked about being kind, about forgiving those who

hurt us, about saying bad things about other people, about taking care of the hungry and those who have no families of their own. Jesus also taught us to pray for everyone, even our enemies. So let us pray for everybody in the world and especially for those who have no one to care about them.

There were men and women who listened to Jesus and prayed with Him for those who were poor or sick or hungry or did not know that God the Father loved them. Jesus said to many of these men and women, "I am glad that you are praying with me. But I would like you to work with me too." So the Apostles and others went around preaching about God's love. Other men, and some women too, were busy helping the sick and feeding the hungry and teaching the children. As we grow up, Jesus says to us, "I am glad that you are praying for your family and for others. I would like you to work with me too." To some He says, "I want you to get married and teach your children to be good and loving. To some boys he says, "I would like you to be priests when you grow up." To others Jesus says, "I would like you to be religious brothers when you grow up." To some girls He says, "I would like you to be nuns when you grow up." And to still others, boys and girls, Jesus says, "I would like you to grow up to be single people working in the world and helping me to make others understand that God loves them." So let us pray that as we grow up, we will try to know what Jesus wants us to be, and that we will be ready to listen to Him.

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Dear Jesus, we pray with You to the Heavenly Father for all the men and women and children of the world, those who live with their families and those who do not. Make us kind and generous to one another and protect us with Your loving care.

Mary, our Mother, and good Saint Joseph, keep us close to Jesus so that we too will be a holy family.
Amen.

(making the Sign of the Cross)

Parent: Now let us close by asking God's blessing. May almighty God bless us, ✠ Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

“Faith seeks understanding”: it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith, and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens “the eyes of your hearts” to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation.

– Catechism of the Catholic Church, 158.

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Pope St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 5
Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our Time

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