



# Prayer

As Catholics, we believe that personal prayer is not complete unless our prayers are joined with the community of faith who is the living Body of Christ. The Sunday liturgy is the greatest form of prayer because together we receive the gift of the Holy Eucharist — the real presence of the Risen Christ. Attending weekly (or daily) Mass is an essential part of a healthy prayer life. Throughout the season of Lent, we are called to deepen our prayer life. For some, this means beginning a habit of daily prayer, setting aside time each day to share our hopes, joys, fears and frustrations with God. Praying first thing in the morning, while the house is still quiet, or praying while on your commute to work are simple ways to integrate prayer into everyday life. Praying the Rosary, visiting the Blessed Sacrament or attending a Retreat may bring you to new places in your relationship with God. Prayer is an essential part of every Christian's life.

Here are four great reasons why you might choose to pray:

1. You want to tell God how much you love Him and why.
2. You need to say “I’m sorry” for specific actions, attitudes, inaction.
3. You want to thank God.
4. You want to bring a concern about your life or someone in your life to God and invite him to guide you or to help them.

## SETTING THE FOUNDATIONS: (Adapted from: Fr. Mike Schmitz)

**When.** Decide when you are going to pray. Have a set time. But make it a time which is appropriate for prayer. And make it what you build your day around.

**Where.** Pick a place where you will be comfortable and attentive. And it should be accessible to you.

**What or How.** Choose one thing to do during prayer and stick with it for several weeks. After your time is up, decide if you should continue or try something different.

**Why.** Prayer doesn't just give us answers. The point of prayer is also to listen and to build a relationship with God.

## PRAYER IDEAS FOR LENT:

- Set aside time each day to read a Gospel story during Lent.
- Pray the Night Prayer from the ‘Liturgy of the Hours’. Knowing you are uniting in prayer with the whole Church throughout the world is a peaceful way to end the day.
- Start a Prayer Journal. Lent is a time to explore new ways of deepening our prayer lives.
- Make ‘gratitude’ an integral part of your prayer. When we specifically notice things to be grateful for, we become aware of and acknowledge God’s constant presence in our lives.
- Pray the Rosary. Lent is the perfect time to reflect on the mysteries of Christ’s life.
- Learn a New Form of Prayer. It is good to keep your prayer life fresh by trying a new type of prayer: *Lectio Divina*, Eucharistic Adoration, Contemplation. There are also times when traditional prayer brings comfort and inspiration.
- Attend a Weekday Mass.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Experience and celebrate the gift of God’s grace in the gift of forgiveness.
- Contemplate the Stations of the Cross. Accompany Jesus on his journey to Calvary, focusing on how he suffered for love of us and his interactions with those he met on the way and how he transformed their lives through love.

## PEOPLE WHO NEED PRAYERS:

Directing our attention on those who need prayers during Lent is a fruitful way of focusing our prayers of intercession, petition and thanksgiving.

- Pray for our Holy Father. One person who often requests our prayers is our Holy Father, Pope Francis. His very first Instagram post was simply captioned “Pray for me”.
- Pray for someone who has hurt you. This is especially powerful if you are still harbouring some resentment. Pray from your heart.
- Pray for a Forgiving Heart. Sometimes when we have been hurt by another person, we can know in our head that we have to forgive, but our heart still aches. In this case, we need to pray for ourselves.
- Pray at bedtime for those sleeping on the street. Pray for those who are homeless in every city who sleep in the elements. Pray for those who will not sleep tonight.
- Pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life. Pray those who are being called to the priesthood will hear and answer that call.
- Pray for parents, those living and those resting in the sleep of peace. Pray for first time parents and those trying to be parents.
- Pray for world leaders: for peace, economic stability.
- Pray for teachers: those who impart wisdom to children, prepare them to face the world and all its challenges.
- Pray for the elderly, especially those who live alone with no family to support or care for them.
- Pray for those persecuted because they profess their faith in Jesus Christ. Our solidarity with them in prayer offers hope and encouragement.
- Pray for those who dedicate their lives to caring for the sick: doctors, nurses, care staff.
- Pray for those who are sick: for healing, wholeness, strength, courage.
- Pray for someone who is lonely, anxious, depressed.
- Pray for a couple expecting a new born baby. Celebrate in their joy! Offer prayers of thanksgiving.

## NEW PLACES TO PRAY

- Garden. Consider praying the Psalms in it's nature setting:

Ps. 1 and a Tree	Ps. 62 and a Rock
Ps. 16 and a Path	Ps. 63 and a Cactus or Drought Tolerant Plant
Ps.19 and the Sky	Ps. 72 and a Grassy Area
Ps. 36 and a Fountain....Flowing Water	Ps. 92 and a Tree
Ps. 42 and a Waterfall, Ocean or Stream	Ps. 104 and the Birds
Ps. 46 and a Lake or Stream	

Consider reading, contemplating and praying biblical passages which reflect the majesty of God in creation:

Job 12:7-10

Gen. 1 and Gen. 2

Daniel. 3:57-88

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Colossians 1:16-17

### Jesus's parables on Nature:

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|------------------|--------------------------|
| Mark 4:3-9       | The sower and the seed   |
| John 12:24       | The grain of wheat       |
| Matthew 13:24-30 | The darnel and the wheat |
| Mark 4:30-32     | The mustard seed         |
| Luke 21:19-31    | The budding fig tree     |
| Luke 12:27f      | The flowers of the field |
| Mark 8:11-13     | The weather signs        |
| Matthew 6:26     | The birds of heaven      |

Contemplate St. Francis Prayer in the garden: ‘Make me a channel of your peace.’

Christ went to pray at the Garden of Gethsemenae. It is a prayer of total surrender to the Father’s will. So as a Lenten activity, contemplate the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemenae.

- Go for a quiet Walk. Consider a 30 min walk. Turn off the music and walk in silence. Let God speak to you. Alternatively, pray the Rosary as you walk or commute.
- Visit the Blessed Sacrament in a church or an oratory. Here before the Lord enter into His presence in prayers of adoration, intercession, petition, and thanksgiving.
- Pray while working. While most people do not enjoy cleaning, it is an act of love for the family. Offering it in prayer can turn it into a prayerful activity.
- Pilgrimage. During Lent, consider making a day’s pilgrimage to a recognised place of devotion. Prayer begins with the journey, is enriched by the experience and contemplation, and sustained by the strengthening of one’s faith. Walking in the footsteps of saints and pilgrims can inspire and encourage us in our faith.
- Embark on a climb or hike. Pray the Rosary. Read from scripture. The quiet solitude of a hike creates space for God to speak to you.

## Four Basic Forms of Prayer

Prayer of Blessing and Adoration (praising God)

Prayer of Petition (asking for what we need, including forgiveness)

Prayer of Intercession (asking for what others need)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (for what God has given and done)

### Prayer of Blessing and Adoration

In this prayer we express praise and honour to God. We praise God for giving us life, for the wonder and beauty of our world, and for all the many blessings we enjoy. We open ourselves up to praise God for all the wonders of creation.

### Prayer of Petition

This is probably the most familiar prayer form of prayer. We are often taught to ask God for the things we need, but asking and praying for them are not necessarily the same. When we pray our petitions, we are asking God, who loves us very much, for something that we believe is good—for ourselves or for others. By using this form of prayer we are mindful of the needs of others as well as of our own needs. We are aware that God wants us to bring our concerns and worries to prayer knowing that he will always hear and answer those prayers. God may answer our prayers in a different way and in a different timeframe than we are seeking but God will always give us what we need.

Prayers of petition serve to remind us that God expects us to care for one another and for all his creation. We can pray about the ordinary experiences of life—for people who are sick, for someone who needs a job, for help in our school work, for a safe trip. We pray for peace in our families and in our world. We can also express our sorrow and contrition to God in our prayer.

### Prayer of Intercession

This form of prayer is prayer on behalf of others. This form of prayer can be a source of blessing upon others, the Church, and our world. Because we know that Our Lady and the saints intercede for us before God, the Church encourages us to pray to them for their intercession. Such prayer can bring us great strength and courage and also great peace of mind and heart.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

This form of prayer helps us to be grateful for God's many blessings, spiritual and temporal, and helps us to recognize and appreciate all the good things God gives to us. Reserving some time to praise and thank God for his gifts—the gift of life; the gift of our families and friends; the gift of food, clothing, and shelter; and the numerous other gifts we often take for granted—helps us to form a true spirit of gratitude.

## What Will Happen When You Pray?

Here are six things to expect as you develop a conversation with God in prayer:

1. **You will recognize your dependence on God.** Every time you pray, you are saying, “In my own strength, I cannot do all that I want to do.” We recall St. Paul: “There is nothing I cannot do with the help of the One who gives me strength.” (Phil 4:23)
2. **You will appreciate the bonds of communion with others through prayer.** We don't simply bring our own needs before the Lord. We reach beyond ourselves in praying with and for others. Jesus said: “I am praying for them. I am praying not for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.” (Jn. 17:9)
3. **You will gain strength from outside of yourself.** Prayer is a way of inviting God to enter into your life's struggles. Prayer can be a source of strength, wisdom, joy and inner peace.
4. **You will surrender control.** In surrendering yourself to God in prayer, it allows you to admit to God that you need Him.
5. **You will communicate your real feelings.** You begin to openly and honestly communicate, listen, contemplate, and act.
6. **You will trust that God knows your every need and hears your every prayer.** St. Peter reminds us: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.” (1Pet. 3:21) Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mk. 11:24)

### Adapted from:

Cathedral of St. Thomas More, Arlington

[www.cru.org](http://www.cru.org)

[www.yourmodernfamily.com](http://www.yourmodernfamily.com)

[www.young-catholics.com/672/lent/](http://www.young-catholics.com/672/lent/)