

Prayer Prescription for Daily Life



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Prayer Prescription

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How to Pray

Praying with the Church

Deepening Your Prayer Life

Prayer is the Oxygen of the Soul

"Prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus." -- St. Therese of Lisieux

A Few Keys to Prayer:

Prayer is essential for living a holy life and for becoming a saint. Praying is not about a method - there are many fine ones - prayer is about showing up with the proper interior dispositions. Prayer is a work of grace - it is less about us and more about Him. The interior dispositions needed are faith and trust that God is present in this time of prayer. Even though it sounds crazy, begin prayer with a prayer: "Lord, I trust that you are present with me at this moment and that you look on me with passionate love."

Fidelity and perseverance: "Time spent faithfully every day in mental prayer that is poor, arid, distracted, and relatively short is worth more, and will be infinitely more fruitful for our progress, than long, ardent spells of mental prayer from time to time, when circumstances make it easy" (Jacques Philippe, Time for God). Setting aside a specific time of prayer each day and sticking to it will be the foundation that leads to a better quality of prayer. In the beginning, be faithful to the daily time of prayer and persevere during the difficult days.

Purity of intention: "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." The purity of intention desires to live more for God than for ourselves. It does not mean we are perfect yet, but that we have the desire to be so. Our intention should be to pray to please God - the gifts received during prayer are a bonus.

Prayer Prescription

The Point of Prayer:

We have our keys to prayer and a daily prayer regimen, now let's review the point of prayer. Prayer, which is communion with God, is that for which our heart longs. Those who pray are healthier and happier. The reality of God's love and our response (prayer) are undeniably beneficial to us spiritually, mentally, and even physically.

I propose in this booklet a way to let God change our lives. As a priest, I often hear the excuse that we are too busy to pray. I understand why this seems to be the case in our world. I believe, however, this is just the work of the kingdom of darkness. I have never been too busy to eat or sleep. Praying is much more important than either one of those activities. Praying is necessary for our soul. We are body and soul composites after all. We know we must feed the body, which will eventually pass away and be raised in the Resurrection of the Body at the end of time. Do we also then not realize we must feed our souls, which begin their eternal reward or punishment immediately after death?

Prayer is essential to developing our relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God will give us what we want the most, and if that is not Him, that is the definition of hell - eternal separation from God. Prayer not only helps us eternally but even temporally here on earth. Prayer is the key to avoiding temptations that lead to grave sin. Think about the serious sins you have fallen into in your life. How was your prayer life leading up to that fall? I bet it was wavering at best and closer to non-existent.

Prayer makes us a person of hope. In prayer, we recognize our complete dependence on God. This gives us hope. Prayer keeps us focused on heaven and hope is the virtue that gives us confidence that we will attain heaven based on the promises of our Beloved. Prayer helps us grow in trust in the goodness of God. We recognize that we are not promised heaven in this fallen world but in the one to come if we choose to live this pilgrimage well. Prayer helps us to live in peace of heart knowing that Our Father in heaven loves us and everything is in His control. All of the adversities that we may face, when accepted in trust and brought to prayer, will work for our good (cf. Romans 8:28).

I suggest not fitting prayer into your life but instead fitting your life into your prayer. How can we accomplish this you might ask? What follows is my prayer prescription (like a doctor of the soul) for developing a life of prayer. Not only does it help our life revolve around prayer it creates a routine of discipline.

Prayer Prescription

Mental Prayer/Christian Meditation:

I like to use the term mental prayer vs. meditation because meditation is so often associated with Eastern meditation or mindfulness, which has to do with the emptying of the mind. This is not Christian meditation nor should it be practiced by Christians. It is dangerous because it has to do with the emptying of the mind, which is neither safe nor helpful. Mental prayer or Christian meditation is about engaging our mind with the truth of the God who creates and loves us. The Catechism teaches us "The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history—the page on which the "today" of God is written" (CCC 2705). How to practice this will be found later in this booklet.

Ten Means Necessary to Grow in the Spiritual Life:

Have a Rule of Life: Fixed times for rising/praying/retiring

Mental Prayer: Conversing with God interiorly - 15 to 30 minutes per day

Spiritual Reading: essential for growing in prayer and faith

Daily Examen Prayer: reviewing the day with the help of the Holy Spirit. It helps us grow in gratitude

Attention to Daily Duties: stay focused on the duty of the moment

Penance & Mortification: three to four daily acts to keep the will under control. Penance for past sins. Mortification to keep will under control.

Practice of the Presence of God: Remember that God is always present to us and uniting ourselves to Him throughout the day.

Fervent Communions: make fervent/devout Communions with a heart of gratitude

Frequent Confessions: Twice monthly with true repentance in the will for the sins and a firm purpose of amendment to change with grace.

Devotion to Our Lady: daily Rosary

Prayer Prescription

Daily Routine

Vocal Prayers: (Pray Daily in the morning)

(V)erse. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

(R)esponse. Who made heaven and earth.

Prayers to be said every day:

Pray the Angelus morning (6 am), noon, and night (6 pm).

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to your 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.

Prayer Prescription

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be. St. Michael Prayer. Guardian Angel Prayer. (see Appendix I for these prayers)

Morning Offering:

O Jesus, Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with all the Masses said throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our associates, for those who will die this day, for the holy souls in purgatory, and in particular, for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.

Litany of the Most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us.

Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, save us.

Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, save us.

Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, save us.

Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, save us.

Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, save us.

Prayer Prescription

Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, save us.

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, save us.

Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, save us.

Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness, save us.

Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, save us.

Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, save us.

Blood of Christ, victor over demons, save us.

Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs, save us.

Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors, save us.

Blood of Christ, bringing forth Virgins, save us.

Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, save us.

Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, save us.

Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, save us.

Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent, save us.

Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, save us. Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, save us.

Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, save us.

Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, save us.

Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor, save us.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.

Prayer Prescription

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

V. Thou hast redeemed us with Thy Blood, O Lord.

R. And made of us a kingdom for our God.

Let us pray.

Almighty, and everlasting God, Who hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son to be the Redeemer of the world, and hast been pleased to be reconciled unto us by His Blood, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate with solemn worship the price of our salvation, that the power thereof may here on earth keep us from all things hurtful, and the fruit of the same may gladden us for ever hereafter in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

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 with this confidence, I fly to 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.

Mental Prayer: (First two weeks 10 min/day, Second two weeks 20/day, and after a month 30 min/day which is the goal)

“Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *lectio divina* or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him (CCC 2708).” I would like to prescribe for you the ancient practice of the Church that was at the heart of the practice of countless Saints throughout the history of the Church, *Lectio Divina*. There are five simple steps (a straightforward way to do this is by signing up for carpeverbum.org):

Prayer Prescription

Pregame: Ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart and mind with His Presence and grace. Ex. "Holy Spirit, I know you are present to me in this moment, please help me to be more aware of your presence. Draw me into your presence."

1. Lectio / Read: "What does the biblical text say in itself?"

Find a Gospel passage that you want to pray with. The easiest way to do this is to pray with the Gospel of the day, usccb.org/bible/readings. You can also spend a few of the days each week praying through the Sunday readings, especially the Gospel.

2. Meditatio / Meditate: "What does this biblical text say to me in the context of the faith?"

We must let ourselves be moved or challenged by the "living and active" Word of God (Heb 4:12). God will move our hearts and inform our intellects through this pondering. A more profound prayer will lead us to an encounter with God as He speaks to us where we are and draws us closer to Himself.

3. Oratio / Prayer: "What do I want to say to the Lord in my response to His Word?" Have a conversation.

St. Augustine says: "Your prayer is the word you speak to God. When you read the Bible, God speaks to you; when you pray, you speak to God." Now speak to God what has arisen in your heart. What are the fears or doubts that appeared? What are the insights and joys that arose? What was challenging for you about the text?

4. Contemplatio / Contemplate: "What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?" In this conversation what is the Lord speaking to you in the silence of your heart?

St. Francis of Assisi was inspired to begin his mendicant lifestyle, and eventually the Franciscan Order, after hearing a homily on Matthew 10:7-19. Likewise, St. Augustine recounted the radical conversion he underwent after reading Romans 13:13-14, while St. Anthony was converted after reading Matthew 19:21. When we encounter the Lord, He never leaves us unchanged. He calls us to live out a more profound faith, hope, and charity in our lives.

5. Actio / Act: "Living out the Lectio Divina."

Prayer Prescription

We do well also to remember that the process of lectio divina is not concluded until it arrives at action (actio), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity. Once we have encountered God in prayer and recognize His specific call for us, it is a matter of doing it.

Postgame: Reviewing our prayer time will help growth in prayer. It can be done briefly as the prayer is concluding or after the prayer. It helps deepen our awareness of the gift of prayer.

Questions that may assist: As I prayed with Scripture, what was I thinking? What drew my attention, what struck me? What was I feeling as I prayed? What stirred in my heart? Did I feel joy? Did I experience peace? Was I anxious? Did I struggle in any way?

Another version of Mental Prayer:

Preparation: place oneself in the presence of Christ.

Selection of material: read or study a spiritual book, reflect on a scene in the life of Christ or a Saint, or ponder the Crucifix or some devout picture of Christ.

Consideration: reflect upon the material. Ask oneself the questions: who, what, why, for what reason

Conversation (core of the meditation): converse with Our Lord about the material. Employ the affections of love, adoration, thanksgiving, sorrow, petition.

Conclusion: Gratitude to Christ for the gifts received. Examination of faults during meditation, and resolution of further effort in succeeding meditations.

Daily Examen: (Pray Daily over the previous 24 hour period, takes 5 - 10 minutes)

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

Prayer Prescription

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Where did you experience a call to conversion, a gift of grace, or God's peaceful presence?

3. Pay attention to the movements of your heart. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movement of our heart. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make a note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your life? Are you concerned about a friend? Maybe you should reach out to him in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a shining moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether petition, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

End with an Our Father.

Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer. It begins with the Apostles' Creed, which summarizes the great mysteries of the Catholic faith. The Our Father, which introduces each mystery, is from the Gospels. The first part of the Hail Mary is the angel's words announcing Christ's birth and Elizabeth's greeting to Mary. St. Pius V officially added the second part of the Hail Mary. The Mysteries of the Rosary center on the events of Christ's life. There are four sets of Mysteries: Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and—added by Saint John Paul II in 2002—the Luminous.

Prayer Prescription

The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. The Rosary can be said privately or with a group.

The Five Joyful Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Mondays, Saturdays, and, during the season of Advent, on Sundays:

The Annunciation

The Visitation

The Nativity

The Presentation in the Temple

The Finding in the Temple

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Tuesdays, Fridays, and, during the season of Lent, on Sundays:

The Agony in the Garden

The Scourging at the Pillar

The Crowning with Thorns

The Carrying of the Cross

The Crucifixion and Death

The Five Glorious Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and, outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on Sundays:

The Resurrection

The Ascension

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Prayer Prescription

The Assumption

The Coronation of Mary

The Five Luminous Mysteries are traditionally prayed on Thursdays:

The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan

The Wedding Feast at Cana

Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

The Transfiguration

The Institution of the Eucharist

1. Make the Sign of the Cross.
2. Holding the Crucifix, say the Apostles' Creed.
3. On the first bead, say an Our Father.
4. Say one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads.
5. Say the Glory Be
6. For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery (perhaps followed by a brief reading from Scripture) then say the Our Father.

While fingering each of the ten beads of the decade, next say ten Hail Marys while meditating on the Mystery. Then say a Glory Be.

(After finishing each decade, some say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: *O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy.*)

After saying the five decades, say the Hail, Holy Queen, followed by this dialogue and prayer:

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

Prayer Prescription

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 while meditating on these mysteries
of 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.

End with a Sign of the Cross.

Appendix I: Prayers

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,

Prayer Prescription

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.

Glory Be:

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.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

Prayer Prescription

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus,

I believe that You

are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment

receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Prayer before/after Meals:

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

After: We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, Almighty God, who live and reign
world without end. Amen. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of
God, rest in peace. Amen.

Prayer Prescription

Spontaneous Prayers:

Jesus, I Trust in You.

Jesus, You know all things, I entrust all of my worries to You.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you.

I invoke the protection of the Blood of the Lamb.

Lord, I give you this temptation for the conversion of sinners or for the poor souls in purgatory.

Lord, perfect love casts out all fear. Take my fears and replace them with your love.

Lord, I Trust in Your Providential care.

"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief"

Lord, I place myself in your Sacred Heart to be purified, protected, and transformed.

Blessed Virgin Mary draw me to the love of your Son.

Prayer of Protection:

Lord, almighty, merciful and omnipotent God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit drive out from me all influence of evil spirits.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ,

I plead you to break any chain that the devil

has on me.

Pour upon me the most precious blood of your Son.

May his immaculate and redeeming blood break all bonds of my body or mind.

Prayer Prescription

I ask you this through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Archangel Saint Michael, intercede and come
to my help.

In the name of Jesus, I command all demons
that could have any influence over me
to leave me forever.

By his scourging, his crown of thorns, his cross,
by his blood and resurrection,

I command all evil spirits to leave me.

By the true God, by the Holy God,
by God who can do all,
in the name of Jesus, my Savior and Lord, leave me.

Amen.