

PRAYER

A construction worker who visited St. Patrick's Cathedral every day on his lunch hour was asked by one of his fellow workers, "What do you do there?" He responded, "I say, Hello, Jesus, this is Jerry. Then I look at Him, and He looks at me."

God beholds you. He calls you by your name. He sees you and understands you as he made you. He knows what is in you, all your peculiar feelings and thoughts, your dispositions and likings, your strengths and your weaknesses. He views you in your day of rejoicing and in your day of sorrow. He sympathizes in your hopes and your temptations. He interests Himself in all your anxieties and remembrances, all the risings and fallings of your spirit. He encompasses you round and bears you in His arms. He notes your very countenance, whether smiling or in tears. He looks tenderly upon you. He hears your voice, the beating of your heart, and your very breathing. You do not love yourself better than He loves you.

John Henry Cardinal Newman

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and everyday. Either he will shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.

St. Francis de Sales

I cannot bring myself to hunt through books for beautiful prayers. There are so many of them that I get a headache. Besides, each prayer seems lovelier than the next. I cannot possibly say them all and do not know which to choose. I behave like a child who cannot read: I tell God very simply what I want and He always understands.

For me, prayer is an upward leap of the heart, an untroubled glance towards heaven, a cry of gratitude and love which I utter from the depths of sorrow as well as from the heights of joy...

When I feel so spiritually barren that I cannot summon up a single worthwhile thought, I say an Our Father or a Hail Mary. These two prayers fill me with rapture and feed and satisfy my soul.

St. Therese of Lisieux

Jesus said:

When you pray, there is no need to use many words. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your 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, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blest are you among women and blest is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

+++

Acts of Contrition — Listed below are 4 of the 11 options provided in the Rite for The Sacrament of Reconciliation. The 11th “Act of Contrition” provided in the Rite (the 4th one listed here) is a single, brief sentence. Persons receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation may use any one of the 11 “Acts of Contrition” provided in the official Rite, or they may use any other “Act of Contrition” they know, or they may use their own words: *(As the instruction for the Rite states above the 11 options: “The penitent expresses sorrow for sins in these or similar words:”)*

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Wash me from my guilt and cleanse me of my sin.
I acknowledge my offense; my sin is before me always.

Lord Jesus, you chose to be called the friend of sinners. By your saving death and resurrection free me from my sins. May your peace take root in my heart and bring forth a harvest of love, holiness, and truth.

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

+++

I should be distressed that I drop off to sleep during my prayers... But I don't feel at all distressed. I know that children are just as dear to their parents whether they are asleep or awake, and I know that doctors put their patients to sleep before they operate. I'd never before heard it said that one's faults did not distress God, and I was overwhelmed with joy when I did receive this assurance. It gave me patience to endure this life of exile. It was, too, the echo of my inmost thoughts. For a long time I had realized that Our Lord was more tender than a mother – and how well I know the depths of tenderness in more than one mother's heart! I know that a mother is always ready to forgive the misbehavior of her child.

St. Therese of Lisieux

Let me love you, my Lord and my God, and see myself as I really am – a pilgrim in this world, a Christian called to respect and love all whose lives I touch, those in authority over me or those under my authority, my friends and my enemies. Help me conquer anger with gentleness, greed by generosity, apathy by fervor. Help me to forget myself and reach out towards others.

Clement XI of Rome

Prayer for Serenity

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference ~ living one day at a time ~ accepting hardships as a pathway to peace ~ taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it ~ trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will, so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

The Heart of Christ

Lord, you invite all who are burdened to come to You.
Allow Your healing hand to heal me.
Touch my soul with Your compassion for others.
Touch my heart with Your courage and infinite love for all.
Touch my mind with Your wisdom, that my mouth may always proclaim your praise.
Teach me to reach out to You in my need, and help me to lead others to You by my example.
Most loving Heart of Jesus, bring me health in body and spirit that I may serve You with all my strength.
Touch gently this life which you have created, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your 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.

St. Francis Assisi

Family Prayer

God made us a family. We need one another ~ we love one another ~ we forgive one another ~ we work together ~ we play together ~ we worship together. Together we hear God's word ~ together we grow in Christ ~ together we love all people ~ together we serve our God ~ together we hope for Heaven.

These are our hopes and ideals. Helps us to attain them, O God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O tender Father, you gave me more, much more, than I ever thought to ask for. Thank you, and thank you again, O Father, for having granted my requests, and for having granted those things that I never realized I needed or sought.

St. Catherine of Siena

May Christ shield me today...

Christ with me, Christ in me. Christ before me, Christ behind me. Christ beneath me, Christ above me. Christ on my right, Christ on my left. Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand. Christ when I lie down. Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me. Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me. Christ in every eye that sees me. Christ in every ear that hears me.

St. Patrick of Ireland

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess you have given me. I surrender it all to you to be disposed of according to your will. Give me only your love and your grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more.

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Jesus Lord, I offer you this day because I believe in you, love you, hope all things in you, and thank you for your blessings. I am sorry for having offended you and forgive everyone who has offended me. Lord, look on me and leave me in peace and courage. Give me humble wisdom that I may serve others with you, and be pleasing to you always.

Be praised, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially brother sun, who brings day, and you give us light by him...

Be praised, my Lord, for sister moon and the stars in heaven, you have made them clear and precious and lovely.

Be praised, my Lord, for brother wind and for the air, cloudy and fair, and in the weather by which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for sister water, who is very useful and humble.

Be praised, my Lord, for brother fire.

Be praised, my Lord, for our mother earth.

St. Francis of Assisi

Prayer for Harmony

God the Father, source of everything divine, you are good, surpassing everything good, and just, surpassing everything just. In you is tranquility, as well as peace and harmony. Heal our divisions and restore us to the unity of love, which is reflective of your divine nature. Let the bond of love and the ties of divine affection make us one in the Spirit by your peace which renders everything peaceful. We ask this through the grace, mercy, and compassion of your only Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

St. Dionysius of Alexandria

Prayer for Vocations

Compassionate God, with great expectation we look to your Spirit to work in our world, empowering us to serve you as Jesus did.

May we listen for your word and respond generously to your call. Renew in us the grace of our baptism. Strengthen married couples, single men and women, deacons, priests, sisters, and brothers as they seek to serve you by sharing their love and compassion.

Grant wisdom to those who are discerning their own call. With gratitude may we all proclaim the Good News of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer for Life

Loving God, Creator of all, we recognize that life is a gift from you. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit and renew in us a deep respect for all persons: the family, children, the unborn, the sick, the disabled, the abused, the imprisoned, the aged, the dying, the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, the victims of war, and those who are oppressed in any way.

Bless all of us, and instill in us a deep love for your gift of life.

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may our words and actions foster reverence for all human life.

May we be true witnesses to the truth that all life is precious and has sublime dignity. Lead our nation and our world to this understanding so that we may be a people dedicated to the protection of all your sons and daughters.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, the Word who took on our human nature and lived among us. Amen.

Oh God, my God, be everything to me. Even when my heart condemns me, be greater than my sins. I am not holy or worthy of you. Make it so that I do not have to be. Show me, show the whole world, that you can carve something acceptable even from the most flawed stone.

John Carmody

Prayer for Health, Wisdom and a Sense of Humor

O Lord, give me a good digestion as well as something to digest.

Give me health of body as well as the sense to keep it healthy.

Give me a holy soul, O Lord, which keeps its eyes on beauty and purity, so that it will not be afraid on seeing sin.

Give me a soul that knows nothing of boredom, groans, and sighs.

Never let me be overly concerned for this inconstant thing that I call ME.

Lord, give me a sense of humor, so that I may take some happiness from this life, and share it with others.

St. Thomas More

O merciful God, fill our hearts, we pray, with the graces of your Holy Spirit: with love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. Teach us to love those who hate us; to pray for those who spitefully use us; that we may be the children of your love, our Father, who makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. In adversity grant us grace to be patient; in prosperity keep us humble; may we guard the door of our lips; may we lightly esteem the pleasures of this world, and thirst after heavenly things; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

St. Anselm

May I be no man's enemy, and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides. May I never quarrel with those nearest me: and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly. May I love, seek, and attain only that which is good. May I wish for all people's happiness and envy none. May I never rejoice in the ill-fortune of one who has wronged me. When I have done or said what is wrong, may I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always rebuke myself until I make amends. May I win no victory that harms either me or my opponent. May I reconcile friends who are angry with one another. May I never fail a friend who is in danger. When visiting those in grief may I be able by gentle and healing words to soften their pain. May I respect myself. May I always tame that which rages within me. May I accustom myself to be gentle, and never be angry with people because of circumstances. May I never discuss who is wicked and wicked things he has done, but know good people and follow in their footsteps.

Eusebius

“God, if this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder you have so few of them!”

St. Theresa of Avila — *when she was soaking wet and covered with mud after falling from her horse in a rainstorm and landing in a big puddle of mud.*

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do great things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for, yet everything I had hoped for;
almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am, among all people, most richly blessed.

It is a great grace of God to practice self-examination; but too much is as bad as too little. Believe me, by God's help, we shall advance more by contemplating God than by keeping our eyes fixed on ourselves.

St. Teresa of Avila

Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear, for He who created you has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as mother. Blessed be You, my God, for having created me.

St. Clare of Assisi, on her deathbed

At night, St. Ignatius of Loyola would go up on the roof of the house, with the sky there above him. He would sit there quietly, absolutely quietly. He would take his hat off and look up at the sky for a long time. Then he would fall on his knees, bowing profoundly to God.

O God, grant us a deeper sense of fellowship with all living creatures, our little brothers and sisters, to whom, in common with us, you have given this earth as home. We recall with regret that in the past we have acted high-handedly and cruelly in exercising our domain over them.

Thus, the voice of the earth, which should have risen to you in song, has turned into a groan of travail.

May we realize that all of these creatures also live for themselves and for you – not for us alone.

They too love the goodness of life as we do, and serve you better in their way than we do in ours.

St. Basil of Caesarea

Dear God,

So far today, I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or overindulgent.

But in a few minutes, God, it will be time to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help!

Thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen!

Not only is there no need of an intermediary through whom God would want you to speak with Him, but He finds His delight in having you approach Him personally and in all confidence.

Speak to Him often of your business, your plans, your troubles, your fears – of everything that concerns you.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Christians must have the courage to ask God for help and encouragement when their faith is troubled or shaken by uncertainty. It is often difficult to understand what God is teaching or asking of his children, but, people must find the courage to say, "I don't understand you, Lord. Listen to me. Help me understand." Christians have the right, so to speak, to ask Jesus for an explanation, and asking for further clarification is the true way to pray and speak with Jesus.

Pope Benedict XVI