

# Basic Forms of Prayer

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2644 – 2649

The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.

- Because God blesses the human heart it can in return bless him who is the source of every **blessing**.
- Forgiveness, the quest for the Kingdom and every true need are objects of the prayer of **petition**.
- Prayer of **intercession** consists in asking on behalf of another. It knows no boundaries and extends to one's enemies.
- Every joy and suffering, every event and need can become the matter for **thanksgiving** which, sharing in that of Christ, should fill one's whole life: "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thes 5:18).
- Prayer of **praise** is entirely disinterested and rises to God, lauds him, and gives him glory for his own sake, quite beyond what he has done, but simply because *He is*.

# Expressions of Prayer

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The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist and the feasts of the liturgical year.

The Christian tradition comprises three major expressions of the life of prayer: vocal prayer, meditation and contemplative prayer. They have in common the recollection of the heart.

- **Vocal prayer**, founded on the union of body and soul in human nature, associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart, following Christ's example of praying to his Father and teaching the Our Father to his disciples.
- **Meditation** is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion and desire. Its goal is to make our own in faith the subject considered, by confronting it with the reality of our own life.
- **Contemplative prayer** is the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love. It achieves real union with the prayer of Christ to the extent that it makes us share in his mystery.

## The Psalms

The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. They present two inseparable qualities: the personal, and the communal. They extend to all dimensions of history, recalling God's promises already fulfilled and looking for the coming of the Messiah. [Catechism 2596-2597]

# Common Prayers

## Sign of the Cross

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

## Our Father

Our Father in heaven, holy is 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 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.

## 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 the place of the dead; on the third day he rose 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.

# Prayers to Our Lady

## Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women and blessed 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.

## The Rosary

*The fundamental prayers listed above are also part of the Catholic rosary, a devotion dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God. (CCC 971) The rosary consists of twenty decades. Each decade focuses upon a particular mystery in the life of Christ and his Blessed Mother. It is customary to say five decades at a time, consisting of 1 Our Father, 10 Hail Marys and a Glory Be, while meditating upon one set of mysteries.*

### Joyful Mysteries

1. *The Angel Gabriel appears to Mary.*
2. *Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth.*
3. *Jesus is born.*
4. *Jesus is brought to the Temple.*
5. *Young Jesus teaches in the Temple.*

### Sorrowful Mysteries

1. *Jesus prays in the garden.*
2. *Jesus is beaten (scourged).*
3. *Jesus is crowned with thorns.*
4. *Jesus carries the cross.*
5. *Jesus is crucified.*

### Glorious Mysteries

1. *Jesus rises from the dead.*
2. *Jesus rises (ascends) into heaven.*
3. *The apostles receive the Holy Spirit.*
4. *Mary is taken up (assumed) into heaven.*
5. *Mary is crowned queen of heaven.*

## Mysteries of Light

1. *Jesus is baptised.*
2. *Jesus works his first miracle (Wedding at Cana).*
3. *Jesus preaches (Sermon on the Mount).*
4. *Jesus is transfigured (his glory is seen).*
5. *Jesus institutes the Eucharist.*

## Hail Holy Queen (Salve Regina)

Hail, Holy Queen,

Mother of mercy, our light, our sweetness, and our hope.

To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

To you do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious advocate,  
your eyes of mercy towards us and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

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

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

## Memorare (Remember Mary)

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, we turn to you, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother.

To you do we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, do not despise our petitions, but hear and answer us.

Amen.

## The Angelus

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

*Hail Mary...*

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to your word.

*Hail Mary ...*

And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us. *Hail Mary ...*

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 ask you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts; that, we to whom the incarnation of Christ, your 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 Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven)

*Said in place of the Angelus during Eastertide.*

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

For He whom you did 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. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we ask you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Benedictus

*From the Gospel of Luke 1: 68 - 79*

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel! \*  
He has visited his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up for us a mighty saviour \*  
in the house of David his servant,  
as he promised by the lips of holy ones,\*  
those who were his prophets from of old.

A saviour who would free us from our foes,\*  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
So his love for our forebears would be fulfilled \*  
and his holy covenant remembered.

He swore to Abraham our father to grant us,\*  
that free from fear and saved from the hands of  
our foes, We might serve him in holiness and  
justice \*  
all the days of our life in his presence.

As for you little child,\*  
you shall be called a prophet of God, the Most  
High,  
You shall go ahead of the Lord \*  
to prepare his ways before him,

To make known to his people their salvation \*  
through forgiveness of all their sins,  
the loving kindness of the heart of our God \*  
who visits us like the dawn from on high.

He will give light to those in darkness, †  
those who dwell in the shadow of death,\*  
and guide us into the way of peace.

Give praise to the Father almighty, \*  
and to his son Jesus Christ the Lord,  
to the Spirit who dwells in our hearts, \*  
both now and forever, Amen.

# The Magnificat

*From the Gospel of Luke 1: 46 - 56*

My soul glorifies the Lord,\*  
my spirit exults in God my saviour.

He looks on his servant in her lowliness,\*  
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty God has works marvels for me.\*  
Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,\*  
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength \*  
and scatters the proud hearted.  
He casts the mighty from their thrones \*  
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,\*  
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,\*  
remembering his mercy,  
the mercy promised to our Fathers,\*  
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

Praise the father, the Son and holy Spirit,  
both now and forever, Amen.

## Come Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,  
and enkindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created  
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful  
by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift  
of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise  
and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ  
our Lord. Amen.

# Praying with the Saints

*We sometimes look for special prayers in our encounter  
with God. This extract is taken from the Hymn of St Patrick,  
patron saint of Ireland. It brings us to an awareness that  
Jesus Christ, our God, is truly with us.*

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.  
I bind unto myself today  
the strong name of the Trinity.

*We are invited to participate in the Divine life of the Trinity  
- what an amazing thought! Certainly, this should give us  
much fuel for our prayer.*

## Prayer for mission

*We sometimes look for other words and our Saints, many of  
whom were at the forefront of mission activity, offer us a  
treasure-trove of prayers. Here is one written last century  
in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi:*

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.

*Where is God asking us to be instruments of peace?*

### **Prayer of desire**

O Lord, my God, who will seek you with simple and pure love, and not find that you are all one can desire, for you show yourself first and go out to meet those who seek you?

*St John of the Cross*

### **A prayer of surrender**

*St Ignatius was a man who reflected on what was at the heart of his life, encountered God, and then surrendered all:*

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.

*If we wish to surrender our life to God yet are afraid or do not know what God wishes to do with our life, let us take this to be our prayer too. Also share your desire with a friend, speak with a priest or another who has found their calling.*

### **Prayer for enlightenment**

Gracious God, Source of all life,  
by our baptism you call us by name  
and invite us to fullness of life in you.  
Bless each of us as we respond  
to your call to follow the Son.  
May we encourage and support one another  
in discerning and living out our Christian vocation.  
Help us to foster a culture of vocation  
in which your seed will bear much fruit.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

### **St Teresa's Bookmark**

Let nothing trouble you,  
let nothing frighten you.  
All things are passing; God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things.  
The one who possesses God lacks nothing:  
God alone suffices.

## **Other prayers**

### **Celtic Prayer,**

*from the Carmina Gadelica (19th century)*

God to enfold me,  
God to surround me,  
God in my speaking,  
God in my thinking.  
God in my sleeping,  
God in my waking,  
God in my watching,  
God in my hoping.  
God in my life,  
God in my lips,  
God in my soul,  
God in my heart.  
God in my sufficing,  
God in my slumber,  
God in my ever-living soul,  
God in my eternity.

### **Grant them rest**

Lord, welcome into your calm  
and peaceful kingdom  
those who have departed out of this present life  
to be with you.

Grant them rest and a place with the spirits of the  
just; and give them the life that knows no age,  
the reward that passes not away,  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

*St Ignatius of Loiola (16th century)*

### **Luminous**

Holy Spirit, giving life to all life;  
moving all creatures; root of all things;  
washing them clean; wiping out their mistakes  
and healing their wounds.  
You are our true life - luminous, wonderful -  
awakening the heart from its ancient sleep.

*Hildegarde of Bingen (1098 - 1179)*

### **Traditional Jewish Prayer**

The heavens declare your glory,  
The arch of the sky displays your handiwork.  
In your love you have given us the power to  
behold the beauty of your world, robed in all its  
splendour.  
The sun and the stars, the valleys and the hills,  
the rivers and the lakes all disclose your presence.  
The roaring breakers of the sea tell of your  
awesome might. The beasts of the field and the  
birds of the air speak of your wondrous will. In  
your goodness you have made us able to hear the  
music of the world. The voices of loved ones  
reveal to us that you are in our midst. A divine  
voice sings through all creation. Amen.