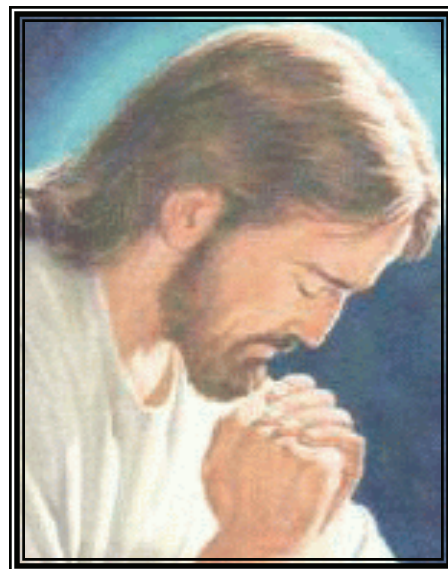


PRAYER 101

What is “prayer”?

This is some of what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about prayer:

- “Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him” (CCC 2560).
- “According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain” (CCC 2562).
- “In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit” (CCC 2565).



What if we... *GASP!* don't know how to pray??

No problem!

Jesus knew this would be an issue, so he showed us how:

*"This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one."
(Matthew 6:9-13).*

What does this mean for us today?

Everything!

First the Church tells us that “God thirsts that we may thirst for him.” This means that not only is prayer an encounter with God, but God wants us to encounter Him in prayer so badly that He thirsts for us to encounter Him in prayer! The God of the universe, who spoke into the darkness and created the light, has a desire, a thirst so deep that only you can quench by coming to Him in prayer. [Check out the beautiful language Holy Mother Church uses here!]

7 THINGS JESUS TELLS US TO PRAY FOR IN THE OUR FATHER:

1. That God's name would be held holy!

Seems simple enough, but here we're asking to participate in being children of God who hold up the holiness of His Name. That means in school, work, with friends. Everywhere and always.

2. That the Kingdom of God would come!

That God's Spirit would come and be upon us as we look forward with hope to Christ coming again.

3. That God's will be done on earth, just like it's done in heaven!

God wills that all of humanity would be brought into the newness of life and into relationship with Him. Sadly, this isn't always done, which we know just from reading the newspaper or watching the local news. As Christians, we seek be the instruments of God in the world. That means being the hands, feet, heart, and word of Christ in the world. We seek to be Christ and to show others what it means to be in loving relationship with Him.

4. That we would trust in God, our Father, to give us everything we need!

This requires trust on our part as his children. Despite whatever happens during our day: good, bad, and in-between, we're telling God that we trust Him AND asking Him for the grace to keep trusting, even when it's hard. Plus, we're trusting that God would give us exactly what we need even if it's not what we want. God knows the difference, and He'll give us today, exactly what we need to grow more in love with Him and spread His love and will in the world.

5. That God would forgive us with the same measure that we forgive others!

Whoa! This is a hard one... we're telling God that if we hold a grudge and choose not to forgive our little brother or older sister, a parent, a friend, etc. that He can choose not to forgive us too! The good news is that God loves us infinitely, and chooses to forgive us out of His mercy. But that doesn't mean we're off the hook! We ask God for the grace to forgive others with a generous heart, just as He forgives us.

6. That God would help us to always choose Him over temptation!

No matter what looks good to us in this life, God knows what's best for us. We need Him to give us the grace to not only ignore the temptations before us, but to also run into the safety of His arms every time. Holiness isn't the absence of sin, it's the presence of grace. It's not about what we don't do, it's about choosing to love and serve. It involves the things we will do out of love for Him.

7. That God would free us from all the evils in our heart and all the things we have brought into our relationship with God!

We don't always do what we know we should, and so here we ask Him to take away those things that keep us from knowing and loving Him more deeply.

HOW AM I GOING TO REMEMBER ALL THAT?!

That seems so hard! I'm going to be praying for HOURS!

First thing: Don't worry!! Prayer is just about communicating with God! All He wants is for you to talk to Him! That sounds awkward, I know, but let's break it down. When you're sitting in prayer, not sure of what to say, think

****ACTS:****

- **A – Adoration:** Tell Him that you love Him! This is what Praise & Worship falls under. We praise, adore, and love God not merely because of what He does for us, but just because He's God and He's amazing! Doesn't it just make your day whenever your friends or family members tell you they love you? Of course it does! We love to be loved! Well, God is the same way He **LOVES** being told that you love Him! And the best part is... it never gets old!
- **C – Confession:** So, you did something... well, a *few* things... okay a LOT of things today that you weren't proud of, and you know you could have done better. Tell God about those things, and know that He not only wants to hear about them, but He longs to forgive you for those things you did wrong. If they're serious sins, make sure to head to confession like we covered last time! If you're not sure, it's always better to be safe than, well, *still* sorry... head to the confessional and hop in line!
- **T – Thanksgiving:** No matter what happened during our day, we should thank God that He has not only given us those things to experience, but that He has given us the breath of life in the first place. Thank Him for the joys in your life, AND for the suffering He allows you to experience. It's through our suffering that we're united to Christ's death, and our joys that we're united to His resurrection!
- **S – Supplication:** We all know people who need prayer, so that's what this is! We pray for our friends, our family members, our Church, the world, and anybody/everybody! This is also where we pray for ourselves, where we get to ask God for things. And don't be afraid to ask! Remember: *"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened"* (Luke 11:9).

****TIPS****

~Start out small (holiness doesn't happen in a day!)

~Start with 5 minutes a day

