

CATHOLIC PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS

Generations of Faith

February 13 and 16, 2011

SESSION FOCUS: This *Responding in Prayer* session focuses on treasured and traditional ways of Catholic prayer and devotion. The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of prayer, including Eucharistic adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, novenas, and prayers to patron saints. All of these prayer paths lead us to intimate communion with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and all call us to be Christ-like in the world. “In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to its faithful, according to its historic, social, and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography. The Magisterium [cf. DV 10] of the Church has the task of discerning the fidelity of these ways of praying to the tradition of apostolic faith; it is for pastors and catechists to explain their meaning, always in relation to Jesus Christ” (CCC, 2663).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Comprehend the Trinitarian nature of Catholic prayers and devotions.
- Value the importance and potential of Catholic prayers and devotions, both communal and individual.
- Practice Catholic devotions and prayers as part of the discipline of discipleship.

BACKGROUND READING:

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2558-2704*
- *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults: Prayer 461-95, 523-24*
- *Rediscovering Catholicism* by Matthew Kelly: Chapters 14, 15, 17 and 18

Christian Prayer [CCC 2558–2560]

2558 “Great is the mystery of the faith!” The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles’ Creed (*Part One*) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (*Part Two*), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (*Part Three*). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart;
it is a simple look turned toward heaven,
it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”
St. Therese of Lisieux

PRAYER AS GOD’S GIFT

2559 “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” (St. John Damascene) But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or “out of the depths” of a humble and contrite heart? (Psalm 130:1) He who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 18:9–14), humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that “we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8:26), are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. “Man is a beggar before God.” (St. Augustine)

2560 “If you knew the gift of God!” (John 4:10) The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. (St. Augustine)

WHAT ARE THE BASIC PRAYER FORMS? [CCC 2623-2649] (From *This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*)

The Catholic tradition has a rich variety of prayer. Prayers can be private. Or, prayers can be public like the liturgy. Prayers can use the words of others, like the traditional blessing before meals, or can be spontaneous words thanking God for his blessings. In addition, prayers can be vocal – said aloud – or silent, those whispered in the heart.

The Holy Spirit has instructed the church in various forms of prayer, inspiring different expressions through the ages. The basic types, also revealed in scripture, are as follows:

- **BLESSINGS AND ADORATION.** When we bless God we respond to God's gifts. We can bless God because God first blesses us. Adoration of God recognizes that God is the creator and we are the creatures. Adoration pays God homage as our sovereign Lord. Prayer of adoration is loving God for his own sake, simply because God is goodness itself and worthy of love.
- **PETITION.** Prayers of petition are prayers of supplication, prayers of asking. A prime prayer of petition is asking God for forgiveness. Prayer for forgiveness begins in humility and acknowledges God as a loving Abba who extends divine mercy to us through Jesus Christ.
- **INTERCESSION.** Intercessory prayers are petitions for others. When we pray for others, we imitate the Lord Jesus who prayed for everyone at the Last Supper (Jn 17) and who continues to intercede for us until the end of time. Following Jesus' example, we should pray in a special way for the needy and even our enemies.
- **THANKSGIVING.** We express gratitude to God for his many gifts: our beautiful world, our family and friends, our health and talents, the Lord Jesus and the gift of salvation he has won for us. A spirit of gratitude shows that we do not take anything for granted. God deserves our thanks; without our loving God, we would not even exist.
- **PRAISE.** Prayers of praise sing to and glorify God simply because God is God – gracious, loving, saving. When we praise God, the Holy Spirit joins our hearts and enables us to recognize our Lord and brother Jesus and to call God "Abba." True prayers of praise show no self-interest. They take joy in God alone: "Praise the Lord! Alleluia!"

Catholics recognize the uniqueness of the eucharist which exemplifies all forms of prayer. Through the eucharist, we bless, adore, and praise God. We thank the Lord for all the blessings we have. (Recall that *eucharist* means "thanksgiving.") We ask for forgiveness, the fulfillment of all our needs, and look to the needs of everyone – praying for and with them. And in holy communion, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord comes to us in a special way, uniting us to God and our Christian brothers and sisters.

Prayer Reflection

(From *This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* by Michael Pennock)

Think of your closest relationship. You know how vitally important this person is to you ~ and you to him or her. You cherish what the person says and who the person is. You like spending time together, laughing, talking, knowing each other more and more deeply. You give meaning to each other's lives.

Friends of the Lord Jesus cherish their friendship with him, too. They know that to deepen their friendship with him, they must make some time for him. Thus, prayer is vitally important in their lives. Prayer – like friendship – demands commitment and fidelity. It means that we take time out of our schedules to spend with the Lord. The question is: Do we want to grow in our relationship with the Lord?

Someone once said that if you are too busy for prayer, you are too busy. Are you too busy?

FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1. WHAT IS THE MOST MEANINGFUL WAY FOR YOU TO PRAY?**
 - 2. BASED ON YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF PRAYER, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO AN ADOLESCENT ON HOW AND WHY TO PRAY?**
 - 3. "PRAYER CAN CHANGE THE WORLD." DISCUSS.**
-

Further reading: Meditate on the death of Jesus by reading Luke 23. Put yourself in the scene beneath the cross and look at Jesus looking at you.

SOME TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC 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
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.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and all members of the apostleship of prayer and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. 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.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, 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.

MEMORARE

**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 by this confidence,
I fly unto you,
O Virgin of virgins, my mother,
To you I come, before you I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.**

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

**Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, 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, O most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us,
and after this exile,
show 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.
Amen.**

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God, relying on your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

ACT OF LOVE

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O 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. Amen.

PRAYER TO OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts me here, ever this day (night) be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R: And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed,

Through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R: Amen.

THE DIVINE PRAISES (These praises are traditionally recited after the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.)

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his holy name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.

PRAYER FOR PEACE (attributed to 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;

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not seek so much 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.

FAMILY/GROUP PRAYER ACTIVITIES

- 1. CREATE “CATHOLIC PRAYER CARDS”** ~ Type traditional and nontraditional Catholic prayers on your computer. Cut them out and glue or tape them to 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 notecards. Use a binder ring to hold the prayer cards together. As you pray the prayers on the cards as a family or as a group, think about and discuss the following questions:
 - When do you (or did you) pray this prayer?
 - Why do you value this prayer?
 - How does this prayer help you to live out your life of faith?

- 2. DECORATION OF A HOME CROSS** ~ At the heart of Catholic prayer is the Trinity – God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Perhaps one of the greatest mysteries that Catholics ponder, the Trinity is included in all of the central prayers and Rites of Catholicism. A simply understanding of the Trinity is that God is revealed to us in three different Persons, thereby providing us with three ways to be in relationship with God. When we pray, sometimes we find ourselves in conversation with God the Father, sometimes we find ourselves in conversation with Jesus, and sometimes we seek the wisdom and energy of the Holy Spirit. We begin and end prayer in the name of all three. As a family or group, to remind yourselves of the Trinitarian nature of prayer, create a home cross using words and symbols to depict important elements of the Trinity.
 - On the top portion of the vertical beam of the cross, write the words or draw images that describe who God the Father is for you.
 - On the lower portion of the vertical beam of the cross, write words or draw images that describe Jesus for you.
 - On the horizontal beam of the cross, write words or draw images that describe how you see the Spirit of God and Jesus visible in the people and world around you.
 - Use this prayer when you are finished making your cross or whenever you use it in any way: “Lord, you are blessed and the source of every blessing. Be with us now and whenever we use this symbol of our faith. May we strive always to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.”

3. FAMILY/GROUP DISCUSSION OF HOW YOU EXPERIENCE

EUCHARIST ~ As a family/group of intimate friends plan a visit to the church and sit, stand or kneel before the tabernacle, or participate as a family/group at the next Eucharistic Adoration. This can also be done after attending mass. Whatever the occasion, when you leave the church, gather together at a restaurant or home and:

- a. Invite family/friends to reflect on their experience of Christ in the Eucharist/celebration of Mass and how they are nurtured and challenged through their participation in Eucharist.
- b. Invite family/friends to reflect on the many ways they see Jesus revealed in the world around them: people, places, events.
- c. Read Luke 9:10-17 aloud to your family/friends, then invite them to ponder that the passage says to them about Eucharist.
- d. Invite family/friends to present, aloud, their needs and the needs of others to Jesus.
- e. Invite the family/friends to close the group's prayer time by offering prayers of gratitude for the time they were blessed to spend in prayer with Jesus. Close by praying together a Glory to the Father.

4. EXPERIENCE LECTIO DIVINA AS A FAMILY/GROUP

- a. Begin by reading aloud a Scripture passage of your choosing. Take a few minutes of silence to pray with it and to ponder in silence what it might be saying to you.
- b. Read the same passage again, followed by a few minutes of silence, after which you speak aloud a word or two from the Scripture passage that is echoing in your heart, or one that stands out for you in some way.
- c. (Optional – using a bowl of water, touch the center of it to create some ripples.) Make the point that the sharing of the word can be compared to a stone being thrown into a pool of water – once a word is spoken, the group waits for the ripples to end before they “toss” in another word.
- d. Read the Scripture passage a final time, and briefly share with each other what challenge or insight the passage presents to you.
- e. Close by praying together the Glory to the Father.

MATTHEW KELLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(From Matthew's book *Rediscovering Catholicism*)

Matthew says, "...we've lost our sense of wonder. It is true for almost every area of our lives, but particularly when it comes to matters of faith and spirituality. We have lost the quintessential quality of childhood - wonder...If we do believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, then the power unleashed within us by the consumption of the Eucharist is unfathomable." (pg. 193) Questions: Do you experience the wonder? Do you sense the mystery and power of receiving and consuming your God in the Eucharist? Do you marvel at the fact?

Matthew says, "St Jerome once wrote, 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.' The great tragedy in the modern environment is that people know more about their favorite music group or sports players than they do about Jesus Christ. Get to know Jesus. Read the Gospels. Never let a day pass without pondering a few of the precious words in those four books." (pgs. 210-211) Questions: Do you know Jesus? Do you read the Gospels every day? Once a week? Are you willing to choose a small section of the Gospel and read it slowly, and then re-read it and ponder its message? Are you willing to do it today...and again tomorrow?

Matthew says, "For a moment, just imagine if every Catholic in your parish read a good spiritual book for fifteen minutes a day. How would your parish change? If every Catholic spent fifteen minutes a day, every day, learning about his or her faith, how different would our Church be in a year? Five years? Ten years? (pgs. 248-249)

Matthew says, "Prayer doesn't change God; prayer changes us. We should approach prayer seeking to understand God more, rather than seeing prayer as an opportunity to give God his instructions for the day. We should approach prayer with the hope of growing in virtue. (p. 262) Question: How do you approach prayer?

EIGHT WAYS TO ADORE CHRIST

1. **PRAY THE PSALMS OR THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS** ~ Whether you are praising, giving thanks, asking for forgiveness or seeking an answer, you'll find an appropriate psalm. The ancient prayer of the Church called the Liturgy of the Hours is an excellent way to pray through the Book of Psalms throughout the year.
2. **RECITE THE "JESUS PRAYER"** ~ Say "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner" repeatedly as you quiet your heart and mind.
3. **MEDITATE USING SCRIPTURE** ~ Choose a passage from the Bible. Read the words and ask God to let the passage speak to you. Pay special attention to anything that strikes you and ask God what he wishes for you to draw from that passage.
4. **READ THE LIFE OF A SAINT AND PRAY WITH HIM OR HER** ~ Most holy men and women have had a great devotion to Our Lord in the Eucharist. Therese of Lisieux, Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Dorothy Day and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta are just a few.
5. **POUR OUT YOUR HEART TO CHRIST AND ADORE HIM** ~ Speak to Jesus and tell him all that comes to your mind. Listen for his response. Pray the prayer that St. Francis instructed his brothers to pray whenever they were before the Blessed Sacrament: "I adore you, O Christ, present here and in all the churches of the world, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world."
6. **ASK FOR FORGIVENESS AND INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS** ~ Think of those who have hurt you and request a blessing for them. Ask God to forgive you for all the times you have neglected or hurt someone else. Bring before the Blessed Sacrament all those who have asked you to pray for them.
7. **PRAY THE ROSARY** ~ Ask Mary to join you as you gaze on Christ in the Eucharist and as you pray the Rosary.
8. **SIT QUIETLY AND JUST "BE" IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD** ~ Think of a visit to the Blessed Sacrament as coming to see your best friend. Instead of talking to the Lord, try listening to what he wants to tell you.

~ Adapted from the OSV Pamphlet, "Eucharistic Adoration"

Pre-K ~ 6th GRADE LESSON SYNOPSIS

PRE-K AND K ~ The students reviewed prayer and the sign of the cross as well as the triple sign of the cross used during Mass at the Gospel. We talk to those we love. God loves us and we love Him, therefore, we talk to Him in prayer and listen to Him. One of our cherished Catholic devotions is the rosary. The students did an activity as the teacher taught them how to say the rosary. Each child received a rosary to take home. They also talked about some Catholic sacramentals: Holy Water, crosses, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, candles, ashes, etc.

GRADE 1: The First Graders also reviewed prayer. They discussed various types of prayer and when these prayers were used in their homes. They listened to the story, "The Day the Little Children Came." After hearing the story they did another type of prayer called reflection or meditation. They pretended they were sitting in Jesus' lap. What did you say to Jesus...what did Jesus say to you? They also learned that they could go into their very own heart space at any time and just be with Jesus. They too talked about various Catholic sacramentals.

GRADE 2: After a short review of prayer, the Second Graders learned about the "Our Father". The prayer that Jesus himself taught us. They discussed the meaning of each line of the prayer. They talked about times and places where they pray. They also learned various types of prayer that can deepen their friendship with God. They each wrote their own prayer of thanks. They too discussed various Catholic sacramentals.

GRADES 3 and 4: After listening to the story, "The Two Men in the Temple", they discussed what Jesus teaches us about prayer. They learned five types of prayer: Blessing and Adoration, Praise, Petition, Intercession and Thanksgiving. After listening to a quote from the psalms, the students were asked to identify what type of prayer the psalmist was using. They also wrote an appropriate prayer for various stories and discussed them with the group. They ended with a discussion about various Catholic sacramentals and devotions.

GRADES 5 and 6: Fifth and sixth graders began by discussing prayer and the fact that it is talking to and listening to God and that it can be private or public; spoken, sung, or silent; formal or spontaneous. They then read a story about King David, a bible figure who was considered to be a man of prayer and is also credited with writing some of the psalms we sing today in the Church's liturgy. They then learned that psalms are poems and hymns that were first used in the liturgy of the Israelites and that today the psalms are also prayed and sung in the public prayer of the Church. The students ended their session by reading psalms and then writing one of their own.

