



# **PRAYER**

*in*

# **PRIMARY**

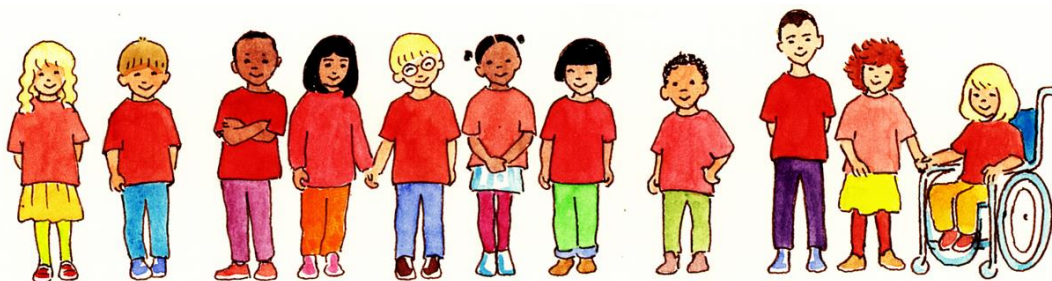


*and*

# **SECONDARY**

# **SCHOOLS**

*with*  
**Perspectives on prayer**  
*by*  
**Bishop Emeritus Thomas McMahon**





## Foreword

Catholic schools exist so that children and young people come to a personal knowledge and relationship with God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Part of Catholic education is to teach prayers and to teach how to pray. But how we teach prayer will depend on how we understand it ourselves.

The most basic feature about prayer is that it is an attempt to meet God who wants to meet us. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has 65 pages about prayer and begins with a description of prayer taken from St Thérèse of Lisieux;

***“For me prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look towards heaven; it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy.” (CCC 2558)***

It is therefore saying that any prayer needs to reflect on this statement – prayer is to cultivate our relationship with God.

Mgr George Stokes records: “ It is the Bishops’ Conference’s intention that each school day should incorporate a period of time for prayer: whole school; year group; classroom and form. Primary schools, RE departments and Chaplaincies in Secondary schools should develop pupils’ experience and understanding of the centrality of prayer in Catholic life. All comes from prayer and all is directed to prayer – our life in the presence of God”.

We are indebted to Bishop Thomas McMahon for all his teaching on prayer during his many school visits and presentations to teachers over the years. We are also extremely grateful to him for allowing us to incorporate some of his perspectives on prayer in this “Year of Faith” diocesan prayer guidelines to schools.

***“Prayer is the breath of the soul and of life”.***

*Benedict XVI, 25.04.2012*

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**“All who undertake to teach must be endowed with deep love, the greatest patience, and most of all, profound humility”** *St Joseph Calasanz*

# Pathways to Prayer

This talk will be divided into **four parts**:

1. **The importance of prayer**: if we don't give prayer priority, then it isn't going to happen;
2. **Different definitions of prayer**;
3. **The value of silence**, especially in the sort of world we are creating for ourselves today;
4. **Pathways to prayer** – different ways of praying. I'm going to follow the main parts, but there are many, many other paths to prayer as well.

## 1. The importance of prayer

Let's go back to those early disciples, how did they learn the importance of prayer? In one way only: through their proximity to Christ, being in His company; and so, they came near to Him so that they could then make Him near and real to others. And so their proximity to Christ, their coming near to Him and, in coming near to Him, it showed, and so they then made Him near and real to others.

**In Shakespeare's Henry V**, there is a lovely line:

The French herald suddenly comes in, makes a great entrance and the King says to him, 'What do I learn of thee?' And his reply, 'My Master's mind'.

What do we learn through prayer? – the Master's mind, through being close to Him.

**Monsignor Rod Strange** wrote one of the best books on priesthood. He has this lovely incident that he tells in the story in the middle of that book. He was on his way back to Rome and he arranged to meet a friend in London for lunch before getting his train going North. So they had lunch and this person then went with him to the railway station and, before he got on the train, he turned to his friend and said, 'I think I ought to apologise. I haven't been very good company today.' His friend said, 'That doesn't matter. What matters was that we wanted to meet'. Isn't that beautiful? It is the same with prayer. It doesn't matter how we feel, even when we feel terribly arid and full of thoughts and concerns for ourselves, what matters is to want to meet and to be there, to be with the Lord. That's what counts. Wanting to pray, the desire to pray is more important than feelings.

There's a kind of paradox, which is: the less we pray, the less we want to pray, and the harder it gets; the more we pray, the more we want to pray. Isn't that your experience? It's definitely mine.

The less we pray, the harder it gets but the less we pray, the less we want to pray. The more we pray, the more we want to pray.

And why prayer is so vitally important, it that it is through prayer, that we become **attuned** to the will of God; we grow to be on the same wave length.

**Rowan Williams** said, 'The less you pray, the worse it gets'.

And so prayer is necessary to inform our action. So that, what we do, flows from our time in prayer.

**St Francis de Sales**: 'I have so much to do today, that I must find two hours to pray'. The fuller one's life, the more important it is to find time for prayer.

Whenever I spoke to our clergy about the importance of prayer, I would say to them how easy it is for us, as priests, to develop a professional relationship with God as opposed to a personal relationship and then I would go on to say how easy it is for us, as priests, to be busy about the things of God, and not so busy about God himself. It is very true, isn't it?

So it is through prayer that we learn to live and move in the Spirit, and to get God's perspective on things.

**Julian of Norwich:** In her cell in Norwich, she had two windows: one window onto God, onto the Church; another window onto the street, onto the world where people came to consult her.

So, we ought to keep in mind the image of the two windows: the one onto God, prayer and the things of God and being nurtured on and by the things of God and then the other window onto the world, onto people, onto the street.

Then, it is very true that, if we don't have this hidden life with God, then it will be very difficult for our public life to bear fruit because it will be rather barren in some way. We always have before us the example of Jesus. He spent a night of prayer at the important moments of His life, such as before choosing the disciples, He spent time in prayer, to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

There is the lovely story that He told of Martha and Mary. It made a point, didn't it, very strongly.

And so, in this whole thought about the importance of prayer, it is too important a thing to leave to chance, meaning we ought to fix a set time and a set place where we go and we can give that time to prayer because we know what we are like, the days are short and there is always something to do, and it probably won't happen because it gets taken over by other things and interruptions and unexpected things that come our way.

So, my recommendation is to fix a time and a place when you know that, usually, you can be free and make that your time of prayer.

Even priests are encouraged to keep a space in the presbytery specifically for prayer because, even if the church is next door, it isn't always heated and may not be so inviting but, to go to a little oratory in the house that is more inviting and would encourage a time of prayer.

And so, it is too important to leave to chance.

**Bishop Butler** would speak about a 'rule of life', a pattern.

**Julian of Norwich:** 'Prayer makes the soul one with God'.

**St. Anselm:** From Him we come; In Him we are enfolded; and To Him we return.

We come to prayer, carrying both heartache and headache, in other words, all our worries and however we feel, bringing all the concerns that are on our heart, after a long day, when we are stressed and our bodies are tired, we carry our concerns on the heart, that is the time 'to lift up mind and heart'. We mustn't nurse the idea that we can only pray when we are not distracted. Our Lord knows all our concerns and we are only real when we bring them to Him. We pray what is inside us, but don't allow it to be too self-centred. What is happening to us and to our loved ones is important, of course, but go out to the wider world. These days, with instant news, we are very conscious of what is happening in our world.

**Distractions in prayer** – *Archbishop Ramsey*, when it was time for retirement, in an interview, the interviewer asked, 'and so, Archbishop, and how long did you pray this morning?' He said, 'well, I suppose for one minute, but it took me 29 minutes to get there.' Well, we all know the feeling. And that's why we must be generous in what we are aiming at because you only have to blink or have a distraction and that's ten minutes gone. Be generous in the time you allocate to prayer.

**Henri Nouwen** often speaks about falling asleep in his prayer.

**Teresa of Avila** used to get hold of that hourglass and shake it, hoping that the sand would go through more quickly; she couldn't believe that it was only that time, when she felt she had been there for a very long time.

**Mother Teresa of Calcutta**, in the revelations in her journals: the last 15 years of her life she knew no consolation in prayer whatsoever.

It is very true, I think, that God 'tries' those whom he loves.

**Teresa of Avila** who was visiting her nuns, as she got out of the coach or carriage, she fell right out into a puddle, and she was so angry, she said, 'Well, God, if that is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few of them!'

**Cardinal Hume**, a very prayerful person. He made no pretensions about the difficulties in prayer and he spoke about the prayer of Incompetence in his book 'Basil in Blunderland' but he says how the important thing is to carry on, to be there with the pain, and wanting to pray is a prayer in itself.

The Psalms are a great quarry when it comes to prayer because, however, you feel, then the psalmists have been there before you; psalms of repentance, rejoicing, petition, thanksgiving, psalms in sickness. – a tremendous quarry for prayer.

**Mother Teresa** – powerful witness when you think of the dryness she felt when praying. And this is what she said about prayer. She said, 'The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love; and the fruit of love is service'. One feeds the other.

**St John Paul II**, when he was in Taizé, France, said 'one stops at Taizé like one stops at a source or a spring'. Lovely description: nourishing our prayers through a source or a spring, and in time of sadness. Taizé chants are a great way of praying.

Prayer in the Christian life is absolutely inseparable because we are trying to align our will with God's will, rather than the other way round. So often we like to think that God's will aligns with our will but, no, we are trying to align our will with God's will, and that comes very much through prayer.

**George Herbert** said that 'prayer at the heart of pilgrimage'.

**Aaron, the High Priest**, when he used to pray, he put on a breastplate and on the breastplate were 12 jewels representing the 12 tribes of Israel so that, he went before God carrying the people on his heart.

**Cardinal Bernardin**, a very prayerful man, used to say to his priests 'pray while you are well because, if you wait until you are sick, you may not be able to do it'. And he found that because he died of cancer in the end and said this after he had got one of his bouts of cancer and thought that he would be able to devote more time to prayer in his illness, but no, he felt so dragged down by the illness that the being there was one thing but the ability to pray he found very, very difficult indeed.

**Archbishop Warlock**, he died of cancer and had the same experience. He felt rather guilty about the whole thing and so, pray whilst we can and give this priority, finding time and making it something possible. Don't

make it something that is too big because it will just collapse. So, the great, great importance of prayer so that we actually do give it time and a place in our lives.

## 2. Different definitions of prayer

Never forget that prayer is a relationship with a person, just like Jesus' prayer was always with the Father.

Is the person real or notional? Is Jesus real or notional? If Jesus is real in your life, then it will be easier to have this personal relationship and prayer would be very much easier.

So, our Faith is centred around a person, not doctrines. Our faith is centred round the person, Jesus, very much Christocentric.

**My personal favourite definition of prayer.** I can only think it comes from the Cloud of Unknowing: 'Making ourselves present to the presence of God'. Why do I like it? Because you can be anywhere, at any time, and just for that instant you think of God, making Him present and making ourselves present to the presence of God, just for a second opening yourself up to the presence of God, the awareness of God, the being with God, the being with the Father. That's lovely? Because you can do it just like that, for a moment or for half an hour or for longer.

So making ourselves present to the presence of God.

**Mother Teresa's** definition of prayer; 'to think of God with love'. She said that she chose that because it enlarges the heart, filling yourself with God's love.

**A priest**, when giving a retreat to priests, once said, 'prayer is rather like sitting in the sun'. He said that, if you sit in the sun, you can't help but be changed by it. You may not know but you are being changed and other people know, they see it, can see it, reflected. When you sit in the sun, how pleasant it is to feel the light and the warmth of the sun. Therefore, sitting in front of the Lord, feeling something is there, so it is rather a nice definition of prayer.

I am sure that many of us here would say this: there are days when we feel our prayer is not rewarding but I am sure that many of us would also say that after years of trying to pray, our values are different; our choices are different; our priorities are different; our attitudes are different.

After a long period of trying to pray, we are gradually changed, and I think it is by God's grace, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but it is not an instant and there are days when it is jolly hard work but through the being there, then over that long period of time our values are different, our choices are different, our priorities are different and our attitudes are different.

**Plato:** 'a person comes to resemble that which they continually contemplate'.

This reminds me of *Abraham Lincoln's* famous line: 'after the age of 40, we are all responsible for our own faces; our faces betray the influences under which we live'. So we recognise a happy face, a sad face, a dissipated face, a cruel face.

**Cardinal Hume** described prayer as: 'His thirst meeting our thirst; His silence meeting our silence; His love meeting our love. No need for thoughts, and words get in the way'.

When I try to pray and I find suddenly that my prayer is getting too discursive, too full of words, my mind goes back to the end of what Cardinal Hume said, 'no need for thoughts, and words get in the way'.



**Archbishop Ramsey** (for priests): ‘God, myself and the people – being with Him for them and with them for Him’.

**Rowan Williams** said of prayer: it is rather like ‘putting down an anchor’.

The reason I think many people find prayer difficult is not only the silence but so much of our life is posturing, putting on a good face, a brave face, that in prayer and before God and alone there is no posturing and we tend to fill our lives with busyness so that we don’t have to face ourselves too much, but in prayer, before God and alone, then we have to face God and ourselves, and there is no posturing so that is why sometimes it is quite difficult because then we are unshielded and unprotected. So the aid of all prayer is to draw us into deeper intimacy with the Lord.

### 3. The value of silence

**Thomas Merton**, the trappist (about silence). He met a monk, newly-professed, and he asked him what he had learned in his first year in the monastery. To his surprise, he replied ‘I have learned how to close doors quietly’. Merton went on to reflect that a man who opens and closes doors quietly is on his way to mastering the art of caring, loving, of humility and kindness; he will feel kinship with what is around him, rather than seeking to dominate it. So there is rather a lot behind it, isn’t there - a great deal of sensitivity around the people, and respect.

**St Francis** demonstrated with his life that to be a saint, it is necessary to be human; and to be human, it is necessary to be sensitive and gentle.

Noise is one of the many menaces of modern life.

**In The Screwtape Letters, C S Lewis** said, ‘all this noise and busyness will no doubt please the devil who boasted in The Screwtape Letters that he would ‘make the whole universe a noise, in the end’. Well, he’s well on the way to it.

Noise defends us from the qualms and despairing thoughts within. People are frightened of silence because, in silence, we have to confront ourselves and that isn’t always easy or attractive. Silence can bring to the surface all kinds of uncomfortable thoughts that we would rather not face. Yet silence is essential because those thoughts do have to be worked through and then the silence can reach to stillness, stillness of the mind’s racing and the heart’s restlessness.

**St John of the Cross**: ‘Silence is the way that God speaks to us.

**Eckhart**, mediaeval mystic: ‘There is nothing in the whole of creation that so resembles God as stillness’.

**Mother Teresa** was asked what she said when she prayed. She replied, ‘I don’t say anything; I just listen’. ‘Oh, so, what does God say?’ ‘God doesn’t say anything; he just listens.’ You could say that demonstrates **Nouwen’s** words: ‘heart speaks to heart’,

And isn’t it true that, where there is the greatest friendship, sometimes it is just in absolute being together in total silence where words are not necessary. And so we learn the wisdom of the *Psalmist* ‘Be still and know that I am God’.



## 4. Pathways to Prayer

I am going to explore kinds of prayer and ways of praying. There are many other ways of praying.

Basically, there are four kinds of prayer, and three ways of praying:

1. **Praise:** the highest form of prayer because there is no self-interest in that, just praising God for being God. That's what we are called to do in prayer.
2. **Thanksgiving:** to be thankful for his manifold gifts  
Eckhart, at the end of his life, he said, I only have one prayer: 'Thank you, Lord' - it is enough.
3. **Repentance:** we are very aware of how far we fall short of the Gospel ideas; we are conscious of our sinfulness, so coming before God, conscious of our sins, and asking His forgiveness.
4. **Petition:** intercession, for ourselves, for others and for the world. We don't need too much encouragement with this.

### Three ways of praying:

1. With the **voice** - vocal prayer - saying prayers
2. Of the **mind** - meditation - meditative prayer
3. Of the **heart** - contemplation - contemplative prayer

Whilst I have said that there are many more types of prayer and you must choose what is good for you, it is good to keep in mind to have a progression, not to get stuck, as it were, at just vocal prayers, saying prayers, but to occasionally to move to the prayer of the mind and to contemplation.

The Psalms are a complete quarry of prayer. There are 150 Psalms, covering every mood.

*Abbot John Chapman [1865-1933]* of Downside: 'Pray in the way you can; don't try and pray in a way you can't.'

It doesn't sound as if *Abbot Chapman* found it very easy to pray. In the Living Spirit section of his book, he wrote, 'Prayer in the sense of union with God is the most crucifying thing there is. One must do it for God's sake but one will not get any satisfaction out of it, in the sense of feeling 'I am good at prayer', 'I have an infallible method'. That would be disastrous, since what we want to learn is precisely our own weakness, powerlessness, unworthiness. Nor ought one to expect a 'sense of the supernatural' ... And one should wish for no prayer, except precisely the prayer that God gives us - probably very distracted and unsatisfactory in every way! On the other hand, the only way to pray is to pray; and the way to pray well is to pray much. If one has no time for this, then one must at least pray regularly. But the less one prays, the worse it goes. And if circumstances do not permit even regularity, then one must put up with the fact that, when one does try to pray, one can't pray - and our prayer will probably consist of telling this to God ... The rule is simply: pray as you can, and do not try to pray in the way that you can't'.

It is clear that he did not find prayer very easy.

When it comes to prayer, take into consideration the mood that you are in; be guided by your mood. If you are distressed about something, if you are down about something, don't try and pretend that you aren't. Be real. God knows us better than we know ourselves. And, if you want to complain to God, then complain. So, take into account how you feel and what is on your mind at that particular moment in time. So, that's the first thing. Secondly, be sensitive to the season of the Church that we are in. Use your mood and the season as the background to your prayer.

## **The four kinds of prayer:**

- Praise:** The highest form of prayer: *St Augustine* on psalms: 'the praise of God should be the object of our meditation in this life because in the life to come, it will be the object of our rejoicing'. Take the mantra:  
***Come let us praise the Lord, for He is our God.***
- Thanks:** Eckhart: my only prayer is: 'Thank you' – it is enough. Thank God for all the blessings we have received.  
***Come, let us give thanks to the Lord; give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His love has no end.***
- Repentance:** there are 7 psalms of repentance; we think of the Pharisees and the Republicans, falling short of Gospel ideals.  
***Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.***  
***Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.***  
There is the Jesus Prayer: ***Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.***
- Intercession:** we have many examples in the Bible. We think of when Moses pleaded for his people as they fell to worshipping the golden calf. Moses intercedes and pleads for his people that God should turn from his fierce wrath, and God relents. Exodus 33:1-20.  
Sodom and Gomorrah where Moses bargains with the Lord: if I can find just 20 just people.....and then gets it down to ten.  
We can see how God responds to our prayers of intercession.

## **Three ways of praying:**

- Vocal :** of lips: Set prayers, your favourite prayers formal prayers; Morning Office; Evening Prayer; Office of Reading;  
Excellent but don't stop there because it can become too discursive, filling our time with words and perhaps they don't allow God to say very much to us because we are too busy 'saying' prayers.
- Meditation** of the mind: Take a scene or parable from the Gospel and place ourselves in that story, in that picture and meditate on it and to reflect. That can really be a starting point for our prayer, so just quietly reflecting on that, without too many words. The mind is seeking understanding and insight. The mind is active but the lips are quiet.
- Contemplative prayer**  
Prayer of the heart: which is the old meditation, and beyond prayerful reflection but it exercises the imagination and will. The lips and mind come to rest, but the heart and will reach out to God's presence.  
Simply looking at the Lord, in stillness and in wordless prayer.  
And to get you going, take a mantra phrase and repeat until it takes you into a stillness. Example:  
***Come, let us give thanks to the Lord; give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His love has no end.***  
if you are feeling in that mood of thanksgiving.  
or  
***Come let us praise the Lord, for He is our God.***  
if you want to praise Him.  
***Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.***  
or  
***Lord, hear my prayer***

or

***I believe, help my unbelief.***

if it is a difficult time.

or

***Lord Jesus, share your Spirit with us.***

or

***Lord, give us your grace [your favour, your love, your light]***

Having a mantra phrase, stills the mind and then, eventually, you let go of the mantra just to be there in stillness and quiet, in the presence of the Lord. And then the awful distractions may come back, you can just gently and slowly say your mantra phrase again until it brings you back to the stillness and quiet.

***Julian of Norwich:*** ‘When we die and go to heaven, our prayers will be waiting for us as part of our delight’.  
‘All believing prayer is precious’.  
‘Prayer makes the soul one with God’.

21<sup>st</sup> May 2016



**“Education is something from the heart, and God alone is its master; we cannot succeed in anything unless God gives us the key to these [children’s] hearts”. St John Bosco**

## *What is Prayer?*

- St Therese of Lisieux:** "For me **prayer** is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."
- St Teresa of Avila:** "Prayer is a close sharing between friends."
- St Teresa of Avila:** "In **prayer**, we listen, we speak, we gaze.
- St Theophane the Recluse:** "Prayer is the spiritual barometer which allows us to know ourselves."
- St John Chrysostom:** "Prayer is  
A *port* in a storm  
The *anchor* of the shipwrecked  
A *stick* for the staggering  
A *treasure* for the poor  
Our *refuge* in evil  
The *mother* of philosophy  
The *light* of the soul  
*Water* protecting the Church  
As *indispensable* for *monks* as water for fish."
- Bishop Thomas' favourite definition of prayer is:**  
"making ourselves present to the presence of God."
- Cardinal Basil Hume:** "The task of handing on the faith to future generations is both the privilege and responsibility of the local Church. Its primary purpose is to bring young people to a personal relationship with

Jesus Christ."

**St John Vianney:** "When we **pray** we should open our hearts to God, like a fish that sees a wave coming."

**Fr C. O'Donnell:** "All **prayer** - liturgical, personal, or vocal - reaches out to God."

**Prayer** defined by children:

- Talking to God / Jesus.
- Thinking about God.
- When you sit still and do not talk.
- Prayer is when you talk to God in your heart and he shows you how to pray.



## Categories of Prayer

- Praise
- Thanksgiving
- Repentance
- Intercession



- *Prayer in Early Years is essentially about saying to God*
- *I love You*
- *Thank You*
- *I am sorry*
- *Please*

# Traditional Prayer

## KEY STAGE ONE



### 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. Amen.

### MORNING PRAYERS

1. Good morning dear Jesus, this day is for you, I ask you to bless all I say think and do.

2. Father in heaven, you love me.

You're with me night and day.

I want to love you always in all I do and say.

I'll try to please you, Father.

Bless me through the day. Amen.



### NIGHT PRAYER

God our Father, I come to say

thank you for your love today.

Thank you for my family,

and all the friends you give to me.

Guard me in the dark of night,

and in the morning send your light. 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.



## **GRACE BEFORE MEALS**

Bless us, O God, as we sit together. Bless the food we eat today. Bless the hands that made the food. Bless us, O God. Amen.

## **GRACE AFTER MEALS**

Thank you, God, for the food we have eaten.

Thank you, God, for all our friends.

Thank you, God, for everything.

Thank you, God. Amen.

## **ACT OF SORROW (1)**

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace I will try not to sin again.

## **ACT OF SORROW (2)**

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and for not loving you. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen.

## **GLORY BE TO THE FATHER**

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 your Guardian Angel**

O Angel of God,  
my guardian dear,  
to whom God's love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side,  
to light, to guard, to rule and guide.

**The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always.**

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2668)*



## KEY STAGE TWO

### All prayers cited in Key Stage 1 and:

#### HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Hail, Holy Queen, mother of mercy;  
Hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope!  
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve;  
To you 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 to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
O Clement, O Loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.  
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

#### THE 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 with this confidence, I fly to you, my Mother  
O Virgin of Virgins,  
Before you I stand  
Sinful and sorrowful.  
O mother of the word incarnate,  
Do not reject my petitions,  
But graciously hear and answer my prayer. Amen

#### THE MAGNIFICAT

My soul glorifies the Lord,  
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.  
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;  
Henceforth all ages will call me blessed.



The Almighty works marvels for me.  
Holy his name!  
His mercy is from age to age,  
On those who fear him.

He puts 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.



## The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord, have mercy.  
*Lord, have mercy.*  
Christ, have mercy.  
*Christ, have mercy.*  
Lord, 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.*

Holy Mary, *pray for us*  
Holy Mother of God,  
Holy Virgin of Virgins,  
Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine grace,  
Mother of the Church,  
Mother most pure,  
Mother most chaste,  
Mother inviolate,  
Mother undefiled,  
Mother most amiable,  
Mother most admirable,  
Mother of good counsel,  
Mother of our Creator,  
Mother of our Saviour,  
Virgin most prudent,  
Virgin most venerable,  
Virgin most renowned,  
Virgin most powerful,  
Virgin most merciful,  
Virgin most faithful,  
Mirror of Justice, *pray for us.*  
Seat of Wisdom,  
Cause of our joy,  
Spiritual vessel,  
Vessel of honour,  
Singular vessel of devotion,  
Mystical Rose,  
Tower of David,

Tower of Ivory,  
House of Gold,  
Ark of the Covenant,  
Gate of Heaven,  
Morning Star, *pray for us*  
Health of the sick,  
Refuge of sinners,  
Comforter of the afflicted,  
Help of Christians,  
Queen of Angels,  
Queen of Patriarchs,  
Queen of Prophets,  
Queen of Apostles,  
Queen of Martyrs,  
Queen of Confessors,  
Queen of Virgins,  
Queen of All Saints,  
Queen conceived without  
original sin,  
Queen assumed into  
Heaven,  
Queen of the most holy  
Rosary,  
Queen of the Family,  
Queen of Peace.

Lamb of God, who takes  
away the sins of the world,  
*Spare us of Lord.*  
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. Pray for us, O holy Mother  
of God,  
*R. That we may be made  
worthy of the promises of  
Christ.*

### LET US PRAY

Grant we beseech Thee, O Lord,  
that we Your servants may  
rejoice in continual health of  
mind and body and that through  
the glorious intercession of the  
Blessed Mary ever Virgin, she  
may free us from our sorrows in  
this life and obtain for us eternal  
happiness in the next, through  
Christ our Lord Amen.

## **Regina Caeli** [said between Easter & Pentecost]

Queen of Heaven rejoice, Alleluia!

The Son whom it was your privilege to bear... Alleluia!

Has risen as he said. Alleluia!

Pray for us to God. Alleluia!

Rejoice and be glad O Virgin Mary. Alleluia!

For the Lord is truly risen. Alleluia!

Let us pray

O God you were pleased to give joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant, we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mother that we may attain to the joys of eternal life, through Christ Our Lord. Amen



### **Twelfth Century Antiphon**

The **Regina Coeli** comes from an unknown author of the twelfth century and celebrates the joy of the Easter season. From the sixteenth or following century we find it in the evening offices of the Church's *Liturgy of the Hours* and in place of the *Angelus* during Paschal time. It is a simple prayer of remarkable theological density.

It addresses Mary: "Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia." The title "queen" is very ancient. It can be said to have a biblical basis. If the apostles, and indeed all the true followers of Jesus, are to sit on thrones (see Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 3:20-21), surely Mary, who perfectly fulfils all the demands of her Son's teaching, must also surely reign.

**The antiphon unites the Incarnation and the Paschal event: "For he whom you merited to bear, alleluia. Has risen as he said, alleluia." It is the fullness of joy announced by Gabriel at the Annunciation. It continues with a plea for Mary's intercession, "Pray for us to God, alleluia." It then enters into her paschal joy. Instead of letting the feast of the resurrection happen and pass is by, we are to follow Mary in constantly pondering: "Be glad and rejoice, O Virgin Mary, alleluia. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia." there is a modern hymn which says, "We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song."**

The prayer which follows is modelled the liturgy which remembers Mary, but then prays to the Father: "O God who gave joy to your family through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; grant we ask you that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

In this prayer we are again concerned with the greatest and ultimate issue of our Christian lives, salvation, which means sharing the joy of the resurrection of Jesus. This prayer to the Father is made through the one mediator, "through the same Christ our Lord" (see *Timothy* 2:4-5), but it is also "through his Mother, the Virgin Mary," that is a subordinate mediation that involves her intercession.

**It is in prayer that we can most easily experience the truths of the faith about Mary; in the *Regina Coeli* we can find an invitation to, and a model for, Paschal joy.**

*C. O'Donnell, O.Carm.*

## The Angelus

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.**

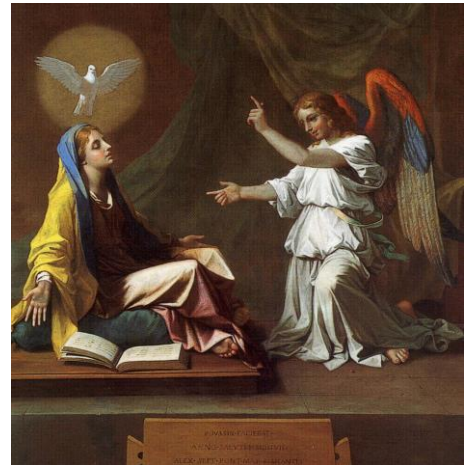
**Hail Mary...**

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 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 the same Christ our Lord. AMEN.



The custom of saying the 'Hail Mary' three times when the bell rang in the evening goes back to the thirteenth century, and there are bells of that period inscribed with the angelic salutation. The prayer was formerly the postcommunion for Masses of Our Lady in Advent and is now the opening prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The prayer, formulated in honour of the Incarnation, commemorates the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that Jesus was to be born of her. The prayer is recited three times a day at approximately 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. when the Angelus bell is rung. Where its practice exists the ringing of the bells commonly follows a certain pattern: there are three strokes at each invocation, each followed by a pause, and then nine strokes in succession during the recitation of the final prayer. The Angelus is replaced by the Marian antiphon *Regina Coeli* at Eastertime.

# MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

[May and October are months of The Rosary]

## Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Our Lord
4. The Presentation
5. The Finding of the child Jesus in the Temple



## The Mysteries of Light

1. The Baptism in the Jordan
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the call to conversion
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

## Sorrowful Mysteries

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion

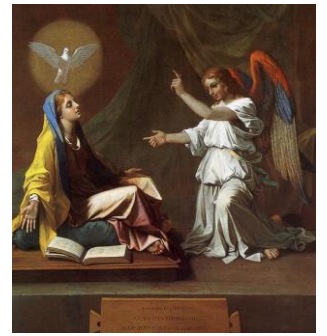
## The Glorious Mysteries

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Coming of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption of Our Lady
5. The Crowning of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven.



# Rosary Prayer

[incorporating all Mysteries]

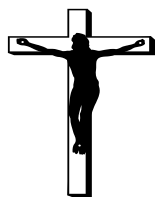


O Mary teach us to accept God's will, in the spirit of the **Annunciation**. Visit us in our need as you **visited Elizabeth**. Bring us forth in grace as you **brought forth Jesus in the flesh**. **Present us in the temple** of the Father and help us **find Jesus** in the midst of us.

We thank you, that by **Baptism**, we are sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. We rejoice to be invited to the **Wedding Feast** of the Lamb. May we **proclaim the Kingdom of God** in our lives. May we reflect something of the **transfigured glory of Jesus**, your Son and be nourished by his **body and blood in the Blessed Eucharist**.



Obtain for us O Blessed Mother, the courage to be one with **Jesus in his agony**, and to say: "*Father, your will be done.*" Grant that through **his wounds** we may be healed. Teach us the meekness of **our King crowned with thorns**. Help us **carry our cross** and know "*the fellowship of his sufferings on Calvary.*"



May we know too, the "**power of his resurrection**," and **ascend** to that home prepared for us. Pray for us, dear Mother, that we may share in the **out-pouring of the Holy Spirit**, and after this our exile, rejoice in the glory of your **assumption** and **coronation** in heaven. *Gabriel Harty, OP*

## Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Birth of Our Lord, The Presentation, The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

## The Mysteries of Light

The Baptism in the Jordan, The Wedding at Cana, The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the call to conversion, The Transfiguration, The Institution of the Eucharist.

## Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden, The Scourging at the Pillar, The Crowning of Thorns, The Carrying of the Cross, The Crucifixion.

## The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection, The Ascension, The Coming of the Holy Spirit, The Assumption of Our Lady, The Crowning of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven.



Monday	Joyful
Tuesday	Sorrowful
Wednesday	Glorious
Thursday	Mysteries of Light
Friday	Sorrowful
Saturday	Joyful
Sunday	Glorious

**“I invite people to pray the Rosary individually, in the family and in the community, placing themselves in the school of Mary who leads us to Christ, the living centre of our faith”. *Benedict XVI***

### Act of Faith

O my God, I believe in you  
 And in all that your Holy Church teaches.  
 Because you have said it and your word is true.  
 You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.  
 You are my Lord and my God.  
 Lord, I believe, increase my faith.

### Act of Hope

O my God, I put my hope in you  
 Because I am sure of your promises.  
 Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day  
 As we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

### Act of Charity

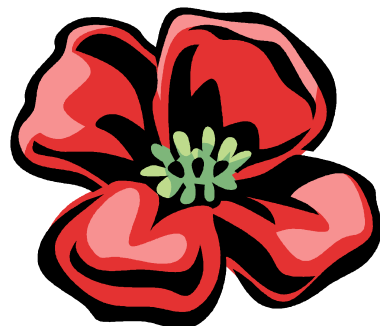
O my God, I love you with all my heart,  
 With all my soul, and with all my strength.  
 Lord, increase our love.  
 Help us to love one another.





**NOVEMBER, traditionally, is the month for remembering the dead  
FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace. Amen



**For the Dead Psalm 129**

Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord, Lord hear my voice!  
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.  
If you O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere You.  
My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.  
Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.  
Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption; Israel indeed He will  
redeem from all its iniquity.

**Let us pray:**

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of your servants  
departed, the remission of all their sins that through our loving supplication they may obtain  
the pardon which they have always desired: through Christ our Lord . Amen

**Act of Remembrance**

They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

**Prayer of Bl. John Henry Newman**

May God support us all day long, 'til the shades lengthen, and the evening comes and the busy world  
is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in his mercy may he give us a safe  
lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last!

**"Let us be like the swan. When it is dying it gathers all its inner forces and sings with  
more harmony than ever before in its life. That is how the saints die. It is the purest  
act of their life, the one most burning with love, the most perfect."** *St Madeleine Sophie Barat*

## CONFITEOR

I confess to Almighty God,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,  
through my fault, through my fault, through my most  
grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-Virgin,  
all the angels and saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.



## Act of Sorrow

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

## Stational Prayer

I love you Jesus my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always then do with me what you will.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus carries his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets his mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.



## **SERENITY PRAYER**

God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.

## **Divine Mercy -Three o'clock Prayer**

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls  
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable divine mercy,  
envelop the whole world and empty yourself out upon us.

O blood and water which gusted forth from the heart of Jesus, as a fount of mercy for us,  
I trust in you.

## **Divine Mercy Prayer - three o'clock [prayed every day in Trinity High School]**

It is now the hour of Christ's death. Let us pause and reflect.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

For the sake of his sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.

We ask this through Christ O Lord. Amen

**"It is not sufficient to forgive others: we must forgive them with humility and compassion. If we forgive them without humility, our forgiveness is a mockery: it presupposes that we are better than they."**

*Thomas Merton, weekly reflection April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012*

# A Way of the Cross with Children

## ✝ First Station

### *Jesus Is Condemned To Death*

Pontius Pilate told Jesus he was going to be crucified even though he was innocent. Jesus didn't say anything.



### ***Pause***

Sometimes we are accused of things we didn't do.

How do we feel on such occasions?

How did Jesus feel?

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Second Station**

### ***Jesus Takes up His Cross***

The soldiers gave Jesus a heavy wooden Cross to carry through the streets.



### ***Pause***

Sometimes we may have big worries or problems and people may say that we have a cross to carry.

Can we think of someone who has a cross to carry at this time and ask Jesus to help them.

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world

## **✚ Third Station**

### ***Jesus Falls The First Time***

Jesus walked along the streets with his Cross, many people gathered to look at him. The Cross was very heavy and he fell for the **first** time.

#### ***Pause***



Imagine we are in the crowd and see Jesus fall.  
What thought comes to mind?

#### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Fourth Station**

### ***Jesus Meets His Mother***

Jesus' mother was there, too. She came out of the crowd and went up to him.



### ***Pause***

How did Mary feel seeing her Son suffer like this?

In the quiet of our hearts ask Mary to walk with us and all people.

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



## **✚ Fifth Station**

### ***Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross***

The soldiers could see that Jesus was getting tired. They asked a man named Simon to help Jesus carry the Cross.



### ***Pause***

If you were in the crowd maybe, you would have been asked to help...

What would you have done?

How can we help others today?

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Sixth Station**

### ***Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus***

A good woman named Veronica came up to Jesus and wiped his face. A picture of his face remained on the cloth.

#### ***Pause***

How can we be courageous in showing  
concern for others?

Can we reach out in love  
to others today?



#### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Seventh Station**

### ***Jesus Falls The Second Time***

Now Jesus was very tired, and he fell a **second** time.



### ***Pause***

Think of how exhausted Jesus felt.

What would have made this moment more bearable?

Can I make someone's burden lighter in some way?

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Eighth Station**

### ***Jesus Meets Some Women***

Some women were standing along the street. They were friends of Jesus and loved him very much.



### ***Pause***

How does it feel to watch, someone we love suffer?

Think of someone we love who is hurting at this time and speak to Jesus about them.

### **Prayer**

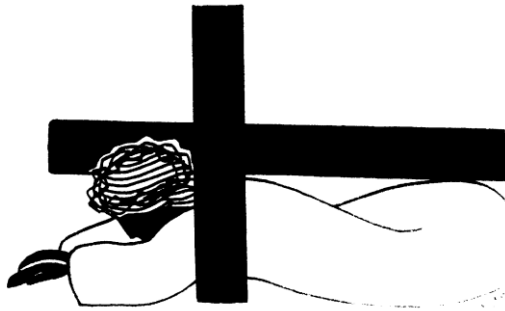
**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Ninth Station**

### ***Jesus Falls A third Time***

Jesus could hardly walk any further and fell a **third** time.



### ***Pause***

We can imagine that Jesus felt unable to carry on any more.

Think of a time when you felt that way.

Did you ask Jesus for help?

### **Prayer**

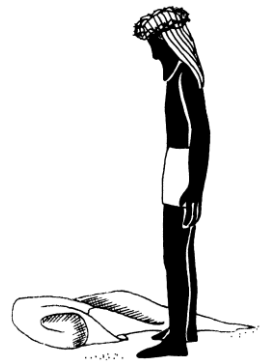
**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Tenth Station**

### ***Jesus Is Stripped Of His Clothes***

The soldiers stripped Jesus of his outer robe.



#### ***Pause***

What an unkind way to treat the King of Heaven and Earth.

Ask Jesus to strip us of any unkindness we carry in our hearts.

#### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Eleventh Station**

### ***Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross***

The soldiers nailed Jesus to the wooden Cross.

From the Cross of Suffering, Jesus prayed to His Father:

***“Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.”***



### ***Pause***

Is there someone we need to forgive?

Can we say in the quiet of our hearts: Jesus, I forgive .....

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

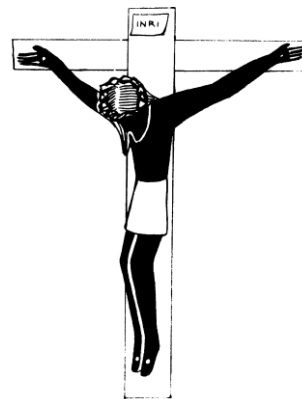


## **✚ Twelfth Station**

### ***Jesus Dies On The Cross***

Jesus died after three hours on the Cross.

This was a very sad day which we call Good Friday.



### ***Pause***

Why is Good Friday a good day for us?

Lord, you died on the Cross for love of me.

What selfishness can I let go of for love of you?

### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Thirteenth Station**

### ***Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross***

The Body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross. Mary, his mother, held him in her caring arms.



#### ***Pause***

Think of how painful this moment was for Mary.

Mary must have recalled holding him in her arms as a baby.

We think of all mothers who have lost their children and ask Jesus to comfort them.

#### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Fourteenth Station**

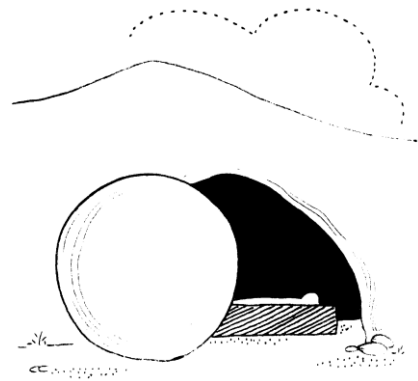
### ***Jesus Is Buried***

The Body of Jesus was washed and carefully wrapped in a clean sheet. Then he was buried.

A large stone blocked the entrance to his tomb and a soldier was told to stand guard.

### ***Pause***

What happens now?



### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

## **✚ Fifteenth Station**

### ***Jesus Is Raised From The Dead***

Life and death are the two most important events for everybody. Jesus, who died on the Cross for us, rose up again **alive** on Easter Day

#### ***Pause***

We think about and give thanks for this central mystery of our Christian Faith, **that Jesus rose from the dead and lives among us through his Holy Spirit.**



#### **Prayer**

**Teacher:** We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

**All:** Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



*(Source unknown)*

**May the Risen Lord bless us.**

**May he fill us with the wonder of his loving presence.**

**May we help to bring love, joy, and peace to others. Amen.**

**Stations of the Cross for KS2/Secondary [taken from Lord Alton's writings]  
available in Powerpoint from BRES**

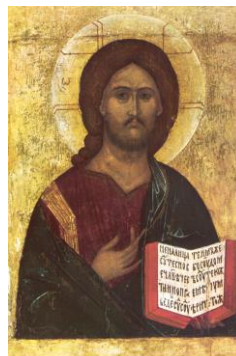
## Some Traditional aspirations

- Sacred Heart of Jesus I place all my trust in you. (**Month of June**)
- Lord I believe help my unbelief. (**Gospel Prayer**)
- Eternal rest grant to them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen. ..(**November**)
- Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.
- **Advent:** Come Lord Jesus, Come and save us
- **Lent:** Lord have mercy on us
- **Easter:** My Lord and my God
- **Pentecost:** Come Holy Spirit or Holy Spirit of God, guide and enlighten me.

## Who do you say I am?

### Who is God for you? Some images of God.

Good Shepherd	Giver of all gifts	Father of mercies
Light of the World	God of surprises	Source of all being
God of Compassion	God of Love	Creator God
Ruler of nations	Merciful Saviour	
Prince of peace	Son of God	
Rising Star	God of wonders	
Breath of Life	Spirit of Love	



## **Key Stage 3**

### **“Going deeper”**

#### **All cited in previous Key Stages:**

##### **Morning Offering**

Eternal Father, I offer you everything I do this day – my thoughts, works, joys and sufferings. Grant that, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and united to Jesus in the Eucharist, my life this day may be of service to you and to others. And with Mary and the whole Church I pray especially for the Pope’s missionary intention this month.... Amen.

##### **Our Father**

Praying the ‘Our Father’

We come into a relationship with God. We need him, we long for him – OUR FATHER

We give God our thanks and praise – HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

We seek God’s will – YOUR KINGDOM COME- YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

We bring God our needs – GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

We express our need of forgiveness and desire to be forgiving – FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES....

We ask for strength and protection – LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

##### **THE APOSTLE’S 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 hell;  
on the third day he rose again 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 before/ during tests/examinations**

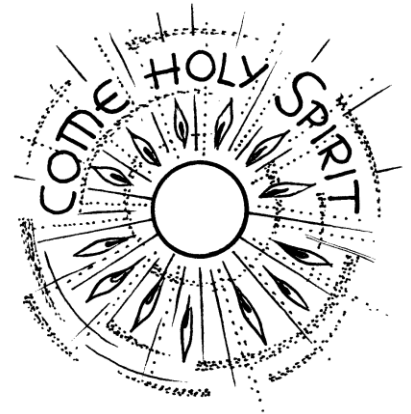
Direct, we beseech you O Lord, all our actions and carry them on by your gracious assistance  
that every prayer and work of ours may begin always from you and by you be happily ended.

## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
And kindle 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.

### Let us pray:

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



## A LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Your Spirit, Lord is kindness

**Response:** *Come to us Spirit of the Lord.*

Your Spirit, Lord is gentleness. **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is patience. **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is love. **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is forgiveness. **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is peace **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is thanksgiving **R.**

Your Spirit, Lord is wisdom. **R.**

Glory be to the Father...

## Prayer before a Test

*My God, enable me to trust in the good outcome  
of the test I am about to take;*

*help me to contribute my own share  
of optimism and confidence.*

*With your grace, my God,*

*I hope to crown my efforts with success.*

*Keep far from me at this moment*

*any presumption that it all depends  
exclusively on me.*

*You are next to me, my God,*

*the necessary and welcome presence  
in all the moments of my life.*

*I will take this test, my God,*

*because it is important  
for my personal development.  
My God, be the source of my inspiration  
in my doubts and uncertainties,  
supporting me with your blessing.*

Amen. <http://www.ithaca.edu/sacl/catholic/prayers/test/>

## **An exam Prayer**

Lord, thank you that you are with me now. Your love surpasses all fear. I give you the anxiety that I feel. I surrender all my worries to you. Clear my mind, calm my heart, still my spirit, relax my being that I may always glorify you in everything I write, speak and do.

[http://www.lords-prayer-words.com/prayers\\_before/prayer\\_before\\_exam.html](http://www.lords-prayer-words.com/prayers_before/prayer_before_exam.html)

## **PRAYER FOR EXAMINATIONS**

O God, help me at my examinations to remember the things which I have learned and studied. Help me to remember well, and to think clearly. Help me not to be so nervous and excited that I will not do myself justice, and keep me calm and clear-headed. Help me to try my hardest and to do my best. This I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen. [www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)

## **PRAYER FOR SELF-ACCEPTANCE**

Dear Lord, you have given us all talents and skills to use as best we can. But the sad thing is that we are dissatisfied with them. We want to be more successful, more wealthy, more popular than we are. We bemoan the fact that we are not as clever or as good-looking as other people, and we over-look the good points about ourselves. Help us Lord, to make the best use of the talents we have and help us to stop envying other people and be satisfied with ourselves as we are. Amen. [www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)

## **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS** (*Prayer of Blessed Pope John XXIII*)

O Jesus, send labourers into your fields, which are awaiting holy apostles, saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated brothers and sisters. Enkindle in the hearts of men and women the spark of a vocation. Grant that Christian families may desire to give your Church helpers in the work of tomorrow. Amen. – [www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)

## **A STUDENT'S PRAYER**

O God, it is good to be alive and here – though it's hard to wait to do all the things I want to do. You have made the world so rich, so great, so crammed full of possibilities. You have made it so beautiful. I thank you for all who have given me this chance to learn, and to get ready for life – [www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)



## **PRAYER TO BE LIKE THE HOLY FAMILY**

God, Our Father, in the Holy Family of Nazareth you have given us the true model of a Christian home. Grant that by following Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their love for each other and in the example of their family life we may have peace and happiness in our home and come to your home of peace and joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. – [www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)

## **Intercession of Saints**

Saints are friends and companions that accompany us. They are models for our lives described by the German theologian, Hans Urs Von Baltasar, as 'living commentaries on the Gospel'. If children are keen on animals they may be drawn to Francis of Assisi. St Therese of Lisieux shows how the Gospel can be lived in a bourgeois middle class home and in an austere Carmelite Convent.

The Saints are our guides, intercessors and friends and it is good to have a relationship with them.

### **Prayer of St Teresa of Avila**

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;

No hands but yours;

No feet but yours:

Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world.

Yours are the feet through which he is to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all people now.

### **St Patrick's Breastplate**

Christ be with me,

Christ be beside me,

Christ be before me,

Christ be behind me,

Christ be at my right hand,

Christ be at my left hand.

Christ be with me everywhere I go.

Christ be my friend, for ever end ever. Amen.



### **Prayer of St Francis of Assisi.**

Make me and instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;  
 Where there is despair, hope;  
 Where there is doubt, faith;  
 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.



### **Simplified Prayer of St Francis**

Lord make me a messenger of your love.  
 Where people hate, help me bring love.  
 Where people are sad, help me bring joy.  
 Where people are hurt, let me bring comfort.  
 Where people are lonely, help me bring friendship.  
 Help me to be the kind of neighbour who helps everyone -  
 Even those who don't help me. Amen.



### **St Jude**

Most holy apostle, St Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor who delivered your beloved Master into the hands of His enemies has caused you to be forgotten by many, but the Church honours and invokes you universally as the patron of hopeless cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for me, I am so helpless and alone. Make use I implore you, of that particular privilege given to you, to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of. Come to my assistance in this great need that I may receive the consolation and help of heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (*here make your request*) and that I may praise God with you and all elect forever, I promise, O blessed St Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favour, to always honour you as my special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to you. Amen.

### **St Peregrine [Patron of the sick]**

O great St Peregrine, you who have been called "The Mighty", "The Wonder-Worker" because of the numerous miracles which you have obtained from God for those who have had recourse to you, you who for so many years bore in your own flesh this cancerous disease that destroys the very fibre of our being, and who had recourse to the source of all grace when the power of man could do no more; you who were favoured with the vision of Jesus coming down from His Cross to heal your affliction, ask of God and Our Lady, the cure of these sick persons who we entrust to you. *(pause here and silently recall the names of the sick persons for whom you are praying)*

Aided in this way by your powerful intercession, we shall sing to God, now and for all eternity, a song of gratitude for His great goodness and mercy. Amen

### **St Joseph** [month of March] (supplied by St Joseph's Primary School, Canvey Island)

St Joseph, chosen by God to be the husband of Mary, the protector of the Holy Family, the guardian of the Church, protect all families in their work and recreation, and guard us on our journey through life. Amen.

### **St Thomas More** (supplied from St Thomas More Secondary School, Westcliff on Sea)

O Lord, give us a mind that is humble, quiet, peaceable, patient and charitable, and a taste of your Holy spirit in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. O Lord, give us a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity, a love of you. Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation and all dullness in prayer. Give us fervour and delight in thinking of you, your grace, and your tender compassion toward us. Give us, good Lord, the grace to work for the things we pray for. Amen

### **St Thomas Aquinas**

Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. Amen

## Bl. John Henry Newman

Lord support us all day long, 'til the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy may he give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.

## St Ignatius of Loyola

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will. Amen.

## St Richard of Chichester

Most Merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly day by day. Amen.

## St Antony of Padua (for lost items)

St. Anthony, perfect imitator of Jesus, who received from God the special power of restoring lost things, grant that I may find (*name the lost item*) which has been lost.

At least restore to me peace and tranquillity of mind, the loss of which has afflicted me even more than my material loss. To this favour, I ask another of you: that I may always remain in possession of the true good that is God. Let me rather lose all things than lose God, my supreme good. Let me never suffer the loss of my greatest treasure, eternal life with God. Amen

## St Angela Merici [prayed at Brentwood Ursuline High School]

Gracious God, let us remain in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will. Let us be bound to one another by the bond of love, respecting each other, caring for each other and bearing with each other in Jesus Christ. For if we try to be like this, without doubt, you Lord, will be in our midst. Amen.

**"The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God"** Bl. Julian of Norwich

# MEDITATION



**Christian Meditation is part of the ancient but on-going contemplative prayer.**

When we are talking about teaching children as young as 6-7 to meditate we are teaching them how to seek God and open themselves to his love and his plans.

Meditation is to help me to meet the living God hence it has many forms. It needs some preparation some stilling, quietening so that I am aware of myself and aware of God. This is prayer. Therefore relaxing, breathing, exercising, lying on the floor can indeed be a preparation for prayer if it calms me, draws me together, the image of somebody praying and trying to meditate is a crab with its claws down into its body, or octopus with legs curled up. It is for this stillness, this greater calm that I can look at God and find a bridge – the bridge can be a scene in Gospel a phrase in Scripture or something that allows me to look into God.

It is then that I can begin to think about God and me or to think about me and God and as I begin to think about God and me and me and God I am already in the process of meditation.

## How do we meditate?

We need to experience meditation to start to understand it. The recommended time for children is one minute per year of chronological age.

- If you find it comfortable remove your shoes. (This grounds you)
- Take a comfortable, upright seating position. Place your hands on your lap. Silently repeat a single word/mantra e.g. *“Jesus I love you”*. or *“Do not be afraid”*.
- ‘Maranatha’ is an Aramaic word from the language Jesus spoke. It means ‘Come Lord’. Maranatha can be found in the Bible – it concludes 1 Corinthians and ends the Book of Revelation.
- Close your eyes. Sit relaxed but alert.
- Find your inner room, your heart, and let God be with you. Silently say your mantra.
- Listen to the mantra as you say it, gently and continuously. If distractions come, gently return to your mantra.

Year Group Mantra		Recommended time for Meditation
Reception	Jesus I love you	2 minutes
Year 1	“	3 minutes
Year 2	“	4 minutes
Year 3	“	5 minutes

Year 4	“	6 minutes
Year 5	“	7 minutes
Year 6	“	10 minutes

**The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always.**

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2668)*

### **Some Scriptural Mantras**

Ps. 46:10	“Be still and know that I am God”
Luke 5:27	“Follow me”
Luke 4:41	“You are the Son of God”
Luke 4:25	“Listen to me”
Matt 28:9	“Peace be with you”
Matt 28:10	“Do not be afraid”
Matt 11:29	“I am gentle and humble in spirit”
Matt 11:28	“Come to me”
Matt 10:12	“Peace be with you”
Matt 9:9	“Follow me”
Matt 8:25	“Save us, Lord”
Matt 6:9	“May your name be holy”
Matt 6:31	“Do not worry”
Matt 7:	“Do not judge”
Matt 5:	“Love your enemies”
Jn.14:6	“I am the way the truth and the life”
Jn.13:34	“Love one another”
Jn. 10:11	“I am the good shepherd”
Jn.20:28	“My Lord and my God”

**“Jesus tells us to become simple, to become childlike. Meditation is the way of rediscovering our innate, childlike sense of wonder: Christian prayer is a state of innocence... The first thing you must learn when you set out on the pilgrimage of meditation is to listen to the message with the simplicity of a child.”**

*(John Main, The Way of Unknowing, p.38)*

**Key Resource: Teaching Children to Meditate, Kathy Day & Ernie Christie**

*“Interior silence, the inner stillness to which meditation leads, is where the spirit secretly anoints the soul and heals our deepest wounds” St John of the Cross*

## Prayer for Stillness

God of stillness and creative action, help us to find space for quietness today that we may live creatively, discover the inner meaning of silence, and learn the wisdom that heals the world. Send peace and joy to each quiet place, to all who are waiting and listening. May your still small voice be heard through Christ, in the love of the Spirit. Amen.

**“Prayer gives joy to the spirit,  
peace to the heart.  
I speak of prayer, not words.  
It is the longing for God,  
love too deep for words.”**

*St John Chrysostom*

# LECTIO DIVINA

“*Lectio Divina*” a Latin term meaning “divine reading” describes a way of praying Scripture. It was introduced in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century by a Carthusian monk called Guigo II (d.c.a. 1180) to help young people who joined the Order to pray with Scripture. It follows 4 stages or 4 stepping stones:

- First stage *Lectio* (reading)
- Second stage *Meditatio* (reflection)
- Third stage *Oratio* (response)
- Fourth stage *Contemplatio* (rest)

The following has been developed for individual group or class context:

## LECTIO DIVINA - “Divine Reading”



### 1. Reading

Read the text and ask, what is going on?

Details? Actions?

### 2. Reflection

What does it mean for us?

Read the text again. What phrase do you like in the text and why? What word attracts you? How does the text speak to you in the various places and situations you find yourself?

### 3. Response

Make some prayers.

Read the text again

We have heard God’s word and tries to see what it means. We can talk to Jesus about his message. It can be a prayer you know or one you make up.



## 4. Rest

Enjoy the text.

Read the text again.

Pause - a minute or two of silence with the text. Invite pupils to take away a few words from this time of reflection,

prayer or meditation as a message for today.

## A Concluding Prayer

**“There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel,  
by the encounter with Christ.”** *Benedict XVI*

**Key Resource:** With the Word of God: Lectio Divina a guide for school, home and parish.

**“If prayer and the Word of God do not nourish our spiritual life, we run the risk being suffocated by the many cares and concerns of daily existence.**

**Prayer makes us see reality with new eyes and helps us to find our way in the midst of adversity.”**

*Pope Benedict XVI (Papal Audience, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2012)*

# PRAYERS OF THE MASS

## The Order of Mass

### The Introductory Rites

*The Introductory Rites help the faithful come together as one, establish communion and prepare themselves to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.*

*All stand. The Priest approaches the altar with the ministers and venerates it while the Entrance Song is sung.*

Sign of the Cross

*All make the Sign of the Cross as the Priest says:*

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

**Amen.**

Greeting

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Or:**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Or:**

**The Lord be with you.**

**And with your spirit.**

Penitential Act

*The Priest invites the faithful to the Penitential Act.*

*Then one of the Penitential Acts follows:*

**I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,**

*and, striking their breast, they say:*

**through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

**Have mercy on us, O Lord.**

**For we have sinned against you.**

**Show us, O Lord, your mercy.**

**And grant us your salvation.**

**You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:**

**Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

**Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

**You came to call sinners:**

Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

**Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.**

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:

Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

**Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

*The absolution by the Priest follows:*

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

*The Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy) may follow.*

Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

**Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

**Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.**

Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

**Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

The Gloria

*When indicated this hymn is either sung or said:*

**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.**

The Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer all stand

*At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:*

**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.**

**Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil...and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles...Who live and reign for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

**The peace of the Lord be with you always.**

**And with your spirit.**

**Let us offer each other the sign of peace.**

*All offer one another the customary sign of peace.*

Breaking of the Bread

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins** of the world, have mercy on us. **Lamb of God, you take away the sins** of the world, have mercy on us. **Lamb of God, you take away the sins** of the world, grant us peace.

Invitation to Communion all kneel

*After his private prayers of preparation the Priest genuflects, takes the host and, holding it slightly raised above the paten or above the chalice says aloud:*

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion

*The communicants come forward in reverent procession, and make a preparatory act of reverence by bowing their head in honour of Christ's presence in the Sacrament.*

The Body (Blood) of Christ.

**Amen.**

*After the distribution of Communion, if appropriate, a sacred silence may be observed for a while, or a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung.*

Prayer after Communion all stand

**Let us pray.**

*All pray in silence. Then the Priest says the Prayer after Communion, at the end of which the people acclaim:*

**Amen.**

### **The Concluding Rites**

*The Concluding Rites send the people forth to put into effect in their lives what they have received.*

Blessing

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Dismissal

*Then the Deacon, or the Priest says:*

Go forth, the Mass is ended. Or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. Or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. Or:

Go in peace.

**Thanks be to God.**

[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, I love and adore you,  
You're a special friend to me.  
Welcome, Lord Jesus, O welcome!  
Thank you for coming to me.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, O thank you  
For giving yourself to me.  
Make me strong to show your love  
Wherever I may be.



I'm ready now, Lord Jesus,  
To show how much I care.  
I'm ready now to give your love  
At home and everywhere.

Prayer of St Thomas: "My Lord and my God".

## Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

### THE DIVINE PRAISES

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.

# Morning Prayer [simplified for schools]

## Music

**Ant. O Lord, you are my rock**

### Psalm 121

If I look to the mountains,  
will they come to my aid?  
My help is the Lord,  
who made earth and the heavens.

May God, ever wakeful,  
keep you from stumbling;  
the guardian of Israel  
neither rests nor sleeps.

God shields you,  
a protector by your side.  
The sun shall not harm you by day  
nor the moon at night.

God shelters you from evil,  
securing your life.  
God watches over you near and far,  
now and always.

**Glory be ...**

**Ant. O Lord, you are my rock**



## **Scripture Reading** *Matt 16 13:16*

Jesus went to the territory near the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

"Some say John the Baptist," they answered. "Others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet."

"What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

## **Intercessions**

We turn to our heavenly Father and give thanks for the gift of this day as we pray.

We pray for our Church particularly Pope Francis

***R/. Jesus you are our teacher***

We pray for our Bishop, Alan

***R/. Jesus you are our teacher***

We pray for our school family

***R/. Jesus you are our teacher***

We pray for our family and friends

***R/. Jesus you are our teacher***

Pause [we pray for the special intentions we carry in our hearts today]

With Jesus our teacher we pray the prayer he taught us: **Our Father**

**Prayer**

God of wonder bless us this day and help us to open our eyes to your presence in the faces of all whom we meet in our school and in our family. Amen

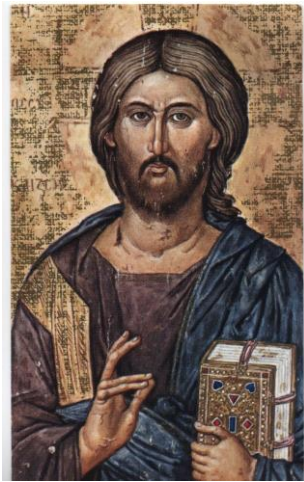
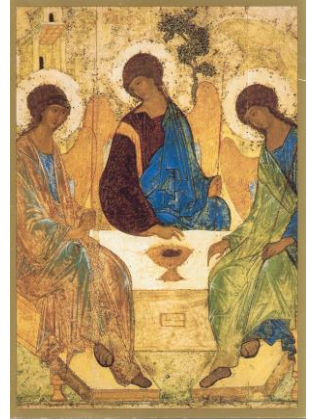
## **Blessing**

May Jesus our friend bless us. May his love surround us and may we take his message to all.

# Praying with ICONS

*“Give me an icon and a  
candle and I will teach  
children to be  
contemplative”*

*Cardinal Basil Hume*



Icons are windows  
on to eternity.

## *Before an Icon*

The unbeliever is challenged  
The intellectual is lost for words  
The theologian feels small  
The artist's heart is filled with joy  
The contemplative finds fresh inspiration  
Those who are distressed find peace  
Those who thought they were strong are disarmed  
The wounded find healing  
The fainthearted find confidence  
The thirsty are refreshed  
The poor listen and understand  
The child throws wide its arms, and smiles. *Anon*



# Praying with Icons

An icon is a "meeting place" between the holy person (depicted) and the person. When an iconographer creates an icon they are said to "write and icon", not paint it. This is because the creating of icons is a prayerful exercise in humility before God.

Icons are highly symbolic using shapes, colours and forms to symbolise different spiritual realities. Eyes tend to dominate iconic subjects. The best iconographers are not artists but saints.

Praying with icons is an ancient prayer practice that involves keeping our eyes wide open, allowing into our heart what the image visually communicates. We focus not on what is seen in the icon, but rather what is seen through it- the love of God. Icons lift up our minds from earthly things to heavenly. They are not simply art but a way into contemplative prayer and can be one way to allow God speak to us. They are a very real means of connecting us with God and his love.

Praying with icons is a form of prayer without words with a focus of being in God's presence, rather than, performing in God's presence. Icons are doorways into stillness, into closeness with God and have a way of teaching the heart spiritual truths that the mind cannot. We are naturally attracted to a person's eyes, so this helps focus our heart's connection with Christ or other holy person.

We need to take time to gaze at the icon and allow our sense of sight as well as the longings of our heart to interact with whatever the icon presents in a particular moment.

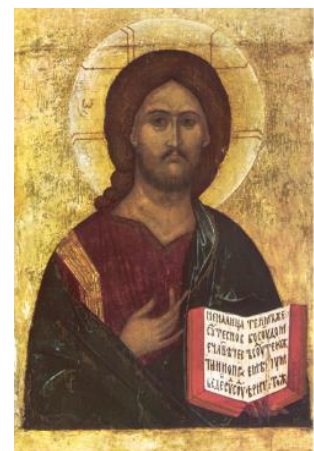
*Fr Simon Ckuj*

**1. Begin prayer** (you may light a candle near Icon as a flame is a metaphor for prayer inviting us into the presence of God).

**2. Look or gaze at the Icon with quiet attention**

**3. Speak to God in our own words**

**4. Listen- let God speak to us**



# ASSEMBLIES

## Practical guidance for assembly preparation

Assemblies require careful planning if they are to be meaningful events. We cannot, however, ensure that these occasions will be religious experiences, that is the work of the Holy Spirit, but we can create the conditions and bring children to the threshold of worship.

### TEN TIPS:

1. Favour a holistic approach (cross-curricular, and take account of the cultural richness of participants).
2. Decide on the appropriate strategies to present the assembly; prepare the venue creating a sense of occasion.
3. What will the focus be: artefact, candle, drape, poster, art display, symbol etc?
4. Maximise pupil involvement and ensure staff presence and participation.
5. Content should be Scripture based, to ensure good doctrine and sound teaching (use a translation appropriate for participants).
6. Include some intercessions that reflect current situations, the reality of pupils' lives. Such prayers can be educational in teaching us how to pray in a way that fosters extended love of neighbour.
7. Use various forms of prayer: formal, personal, reflective, liturgical.
8. Choose hymns that are God-centred and balance the participative and reflective.
9. Build into assembly a quiet moment/silence to allow God to speak, teach, draw and love us. It is a time as Cardinal Hume cites when two silences meet: the silence of God and the silence of the individual.
10. The assembly should last ten to twelve minutes.



# The Seasons of the Church's Year

The Church's liturgical year is divided up into times and seasons and each has a particular focus. These different times celebrate different aspects of the life of Christ and our salvation.

**The Season of Advent:** The Church's year begins during the month of November with the Season of Advent. This is a time of preparation for the celebration of the Lord's birth at Christmas. It covers the four Sundays before Christmas Day and all the weekdays between the first Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day, therefore it can vary in length from year to year. In the Church, the priest wears purple vestments which signify that we are preparing for a great event.

**The Christmas Season:** The First Mass of Christmas marks the end of Advent and beginning of the joyous Christmas Season when we celebrate the Mystery of the Incarnation, the moment when God took human flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. The first Sunday after Christmas Day is set aside for the celebration of the Holy Family. January 6 is the Solemnity of the Epiphany when our Saviour was made known to the world at the visit of the three wise men. The Sunday after the Epiphany celebrates the Baptism of the Lord and also marks the close of the Christmas Season. This time of particular celebration, therefore, goes into the month of January and can, again, vary in length. In the Church, the priest wears white vestments which signify rejoicing and resurrection.

**The Season of Lent:** The Season of Lent is one of intense preparation for the death and Resurrection of our Lord. It is a time of conversion from sin to the values of the Gospel. The season a period of forty days (not including Sundays) which begins with Ash Wednesday, so called because on this day ashes are blessed and distributed to the faithful. This custom goes back to Old Testament times when the people would lay aside their expensive garments and instead put on sackcloth and ashes to symbolise their atonement for sin or in times of great intercession before God. From Ash Wednesday, the Season of Lent covers the next six Sundays - the last being Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) which marks the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem - and the first three days of Holy Week. The season is forty days because Christ himself spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and praying, and the Jewish spent forty years

wandering in the desert when they fled from Egypt. The theme of this season is one of reconciliation with God, of turning away from sin and being faithful to the Gospel. The faithful are asked to do something in particular during this season to help make them more aware of the great gift that Christ gave us by dying for our sins. They may decide to give up something for Lent - some luxury they enjoy such as sweets, etc. - or they may decide to take up something such as visiting the Church every day or donating time or money to a charity, etc. Ash Wednesday is also a day of fast (eating less than usual to remind us of the poor and those who go without food) and abstinence (meat is not consumed on this day). In the Church, the priest wears purple vestments to signify repentance.

**The Easter Triduum:** This very short time begins immediately after Lent ends on the Wednesday of Holy Week. The first day is **Holy Thursday** which commemorates the Last Supper. This commemoration takes place in the evening so as to coincide as closely as possible with the time when Christ celebrated the Passover Feast with his disciples in the upper room. This is also the night when the Eucharist was Instituted by our Lord - during this Passover Feast he took bread and wine and gave it to his disciples as his body and blood with the instruction that we should do this again in his memory. After the Passover Feast, Christ went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and it was here that he was arrested. This is symbolised in the Church by the emptying of the tabernacles and stripping the altars bare, and they shall remain in this way until the Resurrection on Holy Saturday night. On Holy Thursday night the priest wears white vestments.

The second day is **Good Friday** and is a particularly sombre day and one of great meditation and prayer because it is the day on which Christ was crucified for us. The priest wears red vestments symbolising the blood that was shed for us. During the afternoon there is a celebration of the Lord's Passion which recounts his trial and death. During the service a cross is carried in procession and then venerated by the faithful as it symbolises our instrument of death and also the instrument of our salvation. The Eucharist is not celebrated today though Holy Communion is given to the faithful.

The third day is **Holy Saturday** during which there are no celebrations of the Eucharist and Holy Communion is not given in Church. It is a day of reflection and

prayer. In the evening time and preferably closer to midnight, the Easter Vigil is celebrated.

This triumphant ceremony celebrates the fact that Christ has risen from the death and has destroyed the power of sin and death. The priest wears white or gold vestments to signify this. The ceremony begins with the lighting of the Easter Fire and the procession with candles carried by the faithful. The readings trace the history of the people of Israel from creation, through Exodus, and up to the time of Christ. As the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt with the Passover lamb, so we are freed from slavery to sin with the Paschal Lamb – Jesus Christ. During the celebration, the baptised renew their baptismal promises.

**The Easter Season:** The Easter Season commences with the celebration of the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night and continues until the Solemnity of Pentecost which is fifty days later. It is a time of particular joy and celebration in the Church and throughout the season the priest wears white vestments. On the Solemnity of Pentecost however, he wears red vestments which also signify the Holy Spirit, which was given to the disciples on that day.

**Ordinary Time:** The remaining thirty-four weeks of the year are called “Ordinary Time” and throughout this time the Church celebrates the life of Christ and the salvation he won for us. The season is not celebrated in the same way as the other seasons though that does not mean it is any less important than the other seasons. Ordinary time begins the day after the Baptism of the Lord and continues until Ash Wednesday. It then resumes the day after Pentecost and continues until the day before the First Sunday of Advent. The final Sunday of Ordinary time is of particular solemnity because it celebrates Jesus Christ as universal King.

Throughout the year there are also other celebrations which take place. These celebrate the lives of the saints which are set before the faithful as examples of Christian living. Some of the saints, such as the apostles, are celebrated throughout the Church, while others are only celebrated locally. There are also other solemnities of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin.

# WEBSITES

[www.hundredprayers.org.uk](http://www.hundredprayers.org.uk)

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

[www.carmelites.ie](http://www.carmelites.ie)

[www.mcrimmons.com](http://www.mcrimmons.com)

[www.stpaulsmedia.co.uk](http://www.stpaulsmedia.co.uk)

[www.loyolapress.co.uk](http://www.loyolapress.co.uk)

[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

[www.vatican.](http://www.vatican.)

[www.veritas.](http://www.veritas.)

[www.catholicfaith.org.uk](http://www.catholicfaith.org.uk)

[www.prayasyougo.org](http://www.prayasyougo.org)

[www.nottingham-diocesan-centre](http://www.nottingham-diocesan-centre)

(Angelus Project Primary & Secondary)

[www.prayingechday.org](http://www.prayingechday.org)

[www.assemblies.org.uk](http://www.assemblies.org.uk)

[www.barnabasinschools.org.](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.)

[www.cafod.org](http://www.cafod.org)

[www.childschapel.org](http://www.childschapel.org)

[www.catholicdoors.com](http://www.catholicdoors.com)

[www.drawingsofjesus.com](http://www.drawingsofjesus.com)

[www.4gatherings.com](http://www.4gatherings.com)

[www.comepraytherosary.org](http://www.comepraytherosary.org)

[www.ebible.com](http://www.ebible.com)

## **Resources :**

### **Assemblies**

Assemblies Vol. 1    Liturgical and School Occasions [McCrimmon 01702 218956]

Assemblies Vol. 2    Feasts of Mary and The Saints [McCrimmon 01702 218956]

St Paul: Teacher, Pupil, Lover [St Pauls 0207 828 5582 ]

### **Lectio Divina**

Lectio Divina: Home, School and Parish [McCrimmon 01702 218956]

### **Masses**

Masses with Young People    [McCrimmon 01702 218956]

### **Meditation**

Teaching Children to Meditate by E. Christie & C Day.

### **Icons**

Available from St Pauls [0207 828 5582]

# APPENDICES:

## 1. Educators' Prayer

Jesus, Teacher  
Who kindled the light of truth  
In the hearts of all  
You have chosen us for the mission  
Of teaching others  
Even as You taught,  
And have given to us,  
This community of educators,  
The ministry of celebrating life  
And of consecrating the earth,  
Give us new hearts:  
Open, understanding, committed  
To all that is true, good, lovable;  
Make us docile – to learn to serve  
Even from those we seek to serve.  
Infuse in us the spirit of collaboration  
To enable us graciously to give  
Even as we gratefully receive.  
Pour forth your spirit into this,  
Your community of educators,  
So that our zeal of our  
Personal commitment to you  
And to the ministry of teaching  
Be rekindled in our hearts.  
Praise and thanks to You, Lord Jesus, Master  
For calling us to be educators  
And for all others who teach - In Your Name. Amen.



## 2. A Teacher's Prayer

I want to *teach* my students more than lessons in a book,  
I want to *teach* them deeper things that people overlook.  
The value of a rose in bloom, its use and beauty too,  
A sense of curiosity to discover what is true,  
How to think and how to choose the right above the wrong,  
How to live and learn each day and grow up to be strong,  
To *teach* them always how to gain in wisdom and in grace,  
So they will someday make the world a brighter, better place.  
Lord, let me be a friend and guide to give these minds a start  
Upon their way down life's long road,  
Then I'll have done my part.

*Jill Wolf.*

## 3. Prayer for Artists

Bless the creators, O God of creation,  
who by their gifts make the world  
a more joyful and beautiful realm.  
Through their labours  
they teach us to see more clearly  
the truth around us.  
In their inspiration  
they call forth wonder and awe  
in our own living.  
In their hope and vision  
they remind us  
that life is holy.  
Bless all who create in your image,  
O God of creation.  
Pour your Spirit upon them  
that their hearts may sing  
and their works be fulfilling.  
Amen.



## 4. Prayer for the Year of Mercy



### Prayer of Pope Francis for the Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.  
Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;  
made Peter weep after his betrayal,  
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:  
"If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.  
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.

## 5. Staff Meeting Prayer

### BEFORE MEETING

We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

St Paul teaches that the Christian Community is made up of people with different gifts – as we give thanks for the individual gifts of all of us here we listen to St Paul: *1 Cor.12:20-22,25-27.*

*As it is, there are many parts but one body. So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” Nor can the head say to the feet “Well, I don’t need you!” On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker.*

*And so there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern to one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it.*

We invite the Holy Spirit to come upon our meeting as we say:

“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.”



## 6. AFTER MEETING

As we bring our meeting to a close we remember our frailty and the encouragement that St Paul gave to the Colossians – an ideal for our school.

*You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you.*

*And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.*

*(Col. 3:12-15)*

And so we sum up our deliberations and commit them to God as we say together.

Our Father...

## **7. Prayer before Governor/Interview Meetings**

We stand before you, *HOLY SPIRIT*  
conscious of our sinfulness,  
but aware that we gather in your name.

Come to us, remain with us,  
and enlighten our hearts.

Give us light and strength to know your will,  
to make it our own,  
and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by your wisdom,  
support us by your power, for you are God,  
sharing glory of Father and Son.

You desire justice for all:  
enable us to uphold the rights of others;  
do not allow us to be misled by ignorance  
or corrupted by fear or favour.

Unite us to yourself in the bond of love  
and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in your name  
may we temper justice with love,  
so that all our decisions may be pleasing to you,  
and earn the reward  
promised to good and faithful servants.

You live and reign with the Father and the Son,  
one God, forever and ever. Amen

*(Prayer used at Vat II)*

## 8. TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

### Why Pray?

We pray to **know** God – “The surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:8).

We pray that we may meet the Living God. We pray that we may know ourselves.

Through **prayer** children are enabled to come to know our Trinitarian God who is:

Our Father and Creator  
Our Saviour and Brother  
Our Friend and Guide.

We are children of the Father  
Brothers and Sisters of the Son  
Temples of the Holy Spirit.

At the **Heart** of prayer is **Relationship**. There is no true Christian prayer unless we are seeking the Christian God who is FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT.

To teach children how to pray is, Cardinal Hume reminded teachers, ‘**profoundly educational**’.

Prayer is not a discipline to be taught but rather a journey of accompanying children.

Children are natural and spontaneous pray-ers. They have an innate sense of awe and wonder and beauty. For them “the world is ablaze with the glory of God”.

### Language in Prayer

It is important to use language which relates to the child’s actual experience rather than a language which relates to formal religious experience.

Remember a call to pray must not be coded – e.g. Children join your hands for prayer.

This must not be a call to discipline and order.

### Prayer Focus

In classrooms it is expected that there is a **PRAYER FOCUS** with a suitable artefact, e.g.

Crucifix/Statue. This may change to reflect the Liturgical Year, or, the current Topic being taught.

**Simplicity** – Start with something that draws everyone together e.g. Greeting – Sign of the Cross – Hymn – Prayer.

**Atmosphere** – Create an atmosphere conducive to prayer – Focus – Music.

## Various Experiences

Include a variety of opportunities and approaches, and be alert to experiences of children.

### Pray With:

We pray **with** children and not **at** them.

Enabling children to pray demands wholehearted involvement with them not in teacher/pupil way but in a relationship of learning, and discovering together.

### Widen Our Gaze

Through prayer we look to the wider needs of those we love and the needs of our Church and our world. Our hearts are enlarged and we move from selfishness to selflessness.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when considering praying with children is to:

“Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is Holy ground

**‘Pray always – (1 Thess 5:17)**



## GOD AND PRAYER



A man who afterwards became a prominent Christian said that his idea of God was revolutionised when, as a little boy, he was taken to visit an old lady. The old lady pointed out to him a text on her wall – ‘Thou, God, seest me’ – and she said to him, ‘You watch those words. They do not mean God is always watching you to see what you are doing wrong, they mean he loves you so much that he cannot take his eyes off you’.

A very precious way to pray is just through silence. No thoughts or words, just wanting to be silent in the presence of God. Perhaps one of the high points in prayer is where two silences meet: God’s silence and our silence. No need for thoughts – and words get in the way.

*Cardinal Basil Hume*

