

What is Prayer?



Prayer is a conversation with God. When we pray, we reach out to God with our needs, our struggles, our joy, and our gratitude. By raising your heart and mind to God in this conversation, you'll discover that he's already reaching back out for you with his love! Regular prayer is the best way to strengthen our relationship with God, and there are many different ways to express your prayer.

Why Do We Pray?

We pray to grow closer to God. We also pray to understand God's plan for our lives...and that will make you unbelievably happy! Prayer offers us the opportunity, strength, and grace to become the best-version-of-ourselves. When we pray, it becomes easier to recognize God's voice in our lives and collaborate with him to create Holy Moments.

What Are The Three Forms of Prayer?

The three forms of prayer are vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Whether you've heard these terms before or not, don't worry! They are really just three different ways we can pray—and they are available to everyone.

- **What is vocal prayer?**

Vocal prayer is the most common type of Catholic prayer. If you've ever said the following prayers, you've used vocal prayer: the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, grace before meals, the Rosary, novenas and litanies. Many vocal prayers are written and approved by the Church, like the prayers we

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say during the Mass. You might say vocal prayers out loud with a group, on your own, or you might just use the silent voice of our minds to say them in your head.

- **What is meditative prayer?**

Meditative prayer is when you speak to God from your heart. Meditating as a Christian is different from other forms of Eastern meditation. Instead of trying to empty your mind, Christian meditative prayer is when you focus your mind on God and the way he's moving in your life. If you want to try meditative prayer, you could choose to read the Bible and focus on what's happening in the Bible scene. You could sit in a quiet place and open up your heart to a conversation with God about your life. You could even try praying with practices like Lectio Divina which means divine reading— to help you enter into meditative prayer!

- **What is contemplative prayer?**

Contemplative prayer is when you rest completely in the presence of God, letting go of your imagination, thoughts, and emotions. Whether you've experienced this type of prayer before or not, here's the truth: you are capable of this sort of prayer— you don't have to be a nun or a monk to practice it! Enter deeply into the classroom of silence and open yourself completely to God. When you sit in solitude and rest in the presence of Jesus, it will bring you purpose, direction, and love of God like nothing else!

What are the six expressions of prayer?

The six expressions of prayer are blessing, adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. Translation: When you talk to God in prayer, there are six different reasons why you might go to him...and we call these different styles of talking to God the "expressions" of prayer.

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- **What is a Prayer of Blessing?**

A prayer of blessing is when you respond to God and the many gifts he's given you. Whether you're grateful to God for your life, your loved ones, the sunshine, or some other amazing blessing in your life, a prayer of blessing will help you see your life in a whole new light.

- **What is a Prayer of Adoration?**

A prayer of adoration is when you spend time with God simply because you love him. During adoration, you spend quality time with Jesus, just like you would with a friend. You can do many things during Adoration prayer, including talking to Jesus about your life, meditating on the Bible, or simply sitting in silence. Going to Eucharistic Adoration is one way you can try out this expression of prayer!

- **What is a Prayer of Petition?**

A prayer of petition is when you go to God, trusting that he will take care of your needs and wants. In the Bible, Jesus says, *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Matthew 7:7-8) Our requests might not be answered in the way or time we ask for, but Jesus promises that he always hears them, and that's why we go to him again and again with our needs!

- **What is a Prayer of Intercession?**

A prayer of intercession is when you pray for others. You can use intercessory prayers to pray for things like physical healing, emotional comfort, guidance, and protection, for starters. If you have an especially important intention, you can pray a novena for nine days. Praying for the needs of others is a powerful act of kindness and love.

- **What is a Prayer of Thanksgiving?**

A prayer of thanksgiving is when you thank God for his gifts in your life. To help you make a prayer of thanksgiving, you could make a list of ten things you're grateful for, and bring this list to God. You could also read different parts of the

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Bible like Psalm 34 or 111. This prayer isn't just for good times—it can also be incredibly powerful during difficult times in your life.

- **What is a Prayer of Praise?**

A prayer of praise is a joyful prayer to God, recognizing who he is. You might enter into this type of prayer on your own, with a group, or you could use the Book of Psalms or Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) to inspire you!

Why do Catholics use rote prayers?

Rote prayers are pre-written prayers (like the Hail Mary or Our Father) that are repeated in a consistent and structured manner. Catholics, like many other religious traditions, use rote prayers as a form of worship and spiritual practice! The word *catholic* means *universal*. Rote prayers provide a standardized form of prayer that is used by Catholics all over the world. This helps to create a sense of unity within the Church, as Catholics from different cultures and backgrounds can come together in common prayer using the same words. They are often deeply rooted in the history and traditions of our Church, passed down through generations, and are a way to connect with the faith of those who came before. Rote prayers can help Catholics feel a sense of continuity with their religious heritage. It's important to note that while rote prayers are a significant aspect of Catholic worship, they are not the only form of prayer practiced by Catholics. Rote prayers are just one of the many ways in which Catholics express their faith and connect with God.

The sign of the Cross

Catholics typically begin and end their prayers with the Sign of the Cross. To make the sign of the cross, you start by touching your forehead, then your chest, then left shoulder followed by right shoulder. At the same time you say, "*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*" This is a simple way to ask God for protection and blessings!

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The Our Father

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he taught them the Our Father. This prayer is also commonly known as The Lord's Prayer, and it's one of the most well-known and widely used prayers in the world!

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.

The Hail Mary

The Hail Mary prayer is a powerful intercessory prayer to Mary, the mother of Jesus. The majority of the Hail Mary is taken from the Gospel of Luke!

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.

The Glory Be

The Glory Be is a short prayer that helps you to pray to the entire trinity—the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit:

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.

The Apostle's Creed

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of the core Catholic doctrine - the Trinity, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the communion of saints. It is often prayed at the start of the rosary and sometimes during Mass.

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

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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.

The Act of Contrition

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 not sin again.

Amen

The Guardian Angel Prayer

The Guardian Angel Prayer is a way of asking for the guidance and protection of your guardian angel.

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

The Rosary

The Rosary is an ancient and powerful prayer that leads you through a meditation of different scenes of Jesus' life like his birth, Crucifixion, and his Resurrection. As you meditate on these scenes, you say other prayers including the Apostles creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Hail Holy Queen, and others. People usually use Rosary beads to help them keep track of the prayers. The beads make the Rosary a

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physical prayer as well as a spiritual prayer. The simple motion of moving your fingers from one bead to another creates a powerful rhythm. This physical motion and the rhythm it creates add to the soothing of your heart, mind, and soul that praying the Rosary produces.

Why do Catholics pray to the Saints?

Catholics do not *pray* to the saints the way we pray to God. It's better to think of it as praying *with* the saints. Saints are people like you and I who lived wonderful lives with God. We can go to them and ask them to pray intercessory prayers just as we can ask our parents, relatives, or best friends to pray for us or those that we love.