

## **8. Family Prayer: Making your home a holy place.**

The family is God's first school for all his faithful. It is in the family that we learn how to love God and love our neighbour. Although we do not sit and take notes in order to pass an exam, we are gaining knowledge all the time about God and his love for us as we encounter within our family a multitude of experiences. Our faith at all times informs us and guides our actions and keeps us loyal to Jesus. When we pray together as a family the whole of Heaven comes to our aid, and gives us strength for problems which come our way.

When you pray with your children and show them God's love, you are giving them a powerful means to live their own lives in peace and away from danger.

When Jesus showed St. Margaret Mary, His Sacred Heart and asked that the Image of the Sacred Heart be enthroned in the family home, He wished to be given permission by the parents in that family to care for the souls of mother, father, and children. He will love us from the place He calls home, the Human Family. He will, through our prayer life lead us safely home to His most Holy Family in Heaven.

Is your home a holy place? Is there an image of Jesus and Mary in your home? Have you a corner or place set aside as a place for prayer, where those in your family can pray alone or with the family? Put a statue or holy picture there. Statues of Our Lord and our Lady can be purchased at a Catholic store. Place prayers there, which can be said by anyone who kneels to pray. Ask yourself, "Where is God in my home?" He only requires a small area of your home in order to fill a huge area of your heart.

We give a whole room to television which more often than not leads to the corruption of the family by shows which are morally bankrupt. Take the time today to plan how you can make your home a holy and spiritually nourishing place.

Family prayers begin when we wake up in the morning. Each person should make the sign of the cross and silently say the Morning Offering as he or she begins the day.

Before we go to sleep at night we make the sign of the cross, thank God for our day, make an examination of our behaviour towards God and neighbour during the day, ask forgiveness for our offences and resolve to go to confession if serious sin has been committed. Choose your prayers from the Psalms, say the Rosary, and pray to your guardian Angel to keep you safe throughout the night.

### **The Sign of the Cross**

In Baptism we were signed with the sign of the cross of Christ. Each time we use it, we profess our faith in the saving action of his death and resurrection, and in the Trinity dwelling in our hearts.

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

### **The Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you,  
blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary,  
Mother of God,  
pray for us, sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **The Morning Offering:**

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day, for the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for all my sins and for the intentions of our Holy Father for this month. Amen.

### **Keeping the Family Holy.**

To keep our families holy we should develop within ourselves and the children knowledge of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Knowing and asking for these gifts is an important part of each person's development in their faith. The prayer to the Holy Spirit given here is the favourite prayer for any occasion you find yourself in need of immediate help. Students say this prayer before exams and to help them remain calm and clear-minded during stressful decision making times. Parents can say this prayer often because they will often need guidance in their decisions within the family or on the job!

### **The Holy Name of Jesus.**

In our Families let us make a special effort to keep God's name holy! The 2nd Commandment asks us to do just that, when it tells us to not use God's name wrongly. The name of Jesus is God's name. The three Wise Men knelt to pay him homage. Scripture tells us that at the Holy Name of Jesus every knee should bend. It is the practice in the faith to bow our heads at the name of Jesus. If you hear his name being used in any way that is not holy, quietly in your heart say the following prayer or one suitable for reparation for the person who spoke wrongly. If it is possible to correct the person speaking do so when there is calmness.  
" Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen."

### **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
And you shall renew the face of the earth.  
Let us pray.  
O God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by

the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Three Theological Virtues:** Faith, Hope, and Charity.

**The Four Cardinal Virtues:** Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

**The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:** Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Courage, Knowledge, Piety, the Fear of the Lord. (CCC 1266, 1303, 1785, 1830-1831, 2217.)

**The Fruits of the Holy Spirit:** Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, , Gentleness, Faith, Modesty, Self-control, Chastity. ( CCC 1832 )

**The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy:** To feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to the homeless, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned, to bury the dead.( CCC 2247 )

**The Seven Spiritual works of Mercy:** To Counsel the doubtful, to instruct the ignorant, to correct the sinner with love and without judgement, to comfort the afflicted, to forgive offences, to bear wrongs patiently, to pray for the living and the dead.

### **Promise of the Holy Spirit**

'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you.

I have told you this while I am still with you. The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

I am telling you the truth: it is better for you that I go away, because if I do not go, the Helper will not come to you. But if I do go away, then I will send him to you.

When the Spirit comes, who reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all the truth.' **(John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:7, 13.)**

### **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

Come down upon us, Spirit of God, spirit of wisdom and peace and joy; come as a great wind blowing; sweep our minds with a storm of light. Be in us as bright fire burning; forge our wills to shining swords in the flame. Purify our hearts in the crucible of the fire of love. Change our tepid nature into the warm humanity of Christ, as he changed water into wine. Be in us a stream of life, as wine in the living vine. (Caryll Houselander 1901-1954.)

### **Prayer for a Family**

O Dear Jesus, I humbly implore You to grant Your special graces to our family. May our home be a place of peace, purity, love, and faith. I ask You, dear Jesus, to protect all of us and bless the labour of our hands. Bless all in our family who are not at home as well as all those who are. We remember with love all our relatives and friends and place them in

your loving care. Take care, Dear Lord, of all those in our family who have died and thank you for your many blessings which we receive every day. Amen.

### **Family Prayers during Lent.**

During the season of Lent, we are asked to do a spiritual cleansing of ourselves. The Sacrament of Reconciliation renews our relationship with God whom we have offended by our sins. To prepare for this Sacrament, we need to consider the following:

1. Ask ourselves how we have offended God.
2. Ask ourselves how we have offended our neighbour, keeping in mind that our neighbour is any human being we come in contact with.
3. Be truly sorry for our sins.
4. Make up our minds not to sin again.
5. Tell our sins to the priest in confession.
6. Do the penance the priest gives and make right by way of restitution the wrongs we have done.

### **Prayer before Confession.**

My Lord and My God, I have sinned and I am guilty before You. Grant me the strength to say to the Priest, what I say to You in the secret of my heart.

### **Prayer after Confession.**

O My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His Name, my God, have mercy on me.

### **Prayers at the end of the day.**

Pray the Rosary together as a family. Let the children say a decade each. Even one decade together will bring blessings to your home!

### **Pray the Rosary Daily.**

As a general rule, the Joyful Mysteries are said on Monday and Saturday.

**First Joyful Mystery**----The Annunciation. For the love of humility. (Luke 1, 28)

**Second Joyful Mystery**----The Visitation. For charity towards my neighbour. (Luke 1, 41-42)

**Third Joyful Mystery**----The Birth of Jesus. For the spirit of poverty. (Luke 2, 7)

**Fourth Joyful Mystery**----The Presentation. For the virtue of obedience. (Luke 2, 22-23)

**Fifth Joyful Mystery**----Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple. For the virtue of piety (Luke 2, 46)

As a general rule the Sorrowful Mysteries are said on Tuesday and Friday.

**First Sorrowful Mystery**--The Agony in the Garden. For true contrition for sins.(Luke 22, 44-45).

**Second Sorrowful Mystery**--The Scourging at the Pillar. For the virtue of purity.(John

19, 1).

**Third Sorrowful Mystery**--Crowning with Thorns. For moral courage. (Matthew 27, 28-29).

**Fourth Sorrowful Mystery**--Carrying of the Cross. For the virtue of patience. (John 19, 17)

**Fifth Sorrowful Mystery**--The Crucifixion. For final perseverance. (Luke 23, 46)

As a general rule the Glorious Mysteries are said on Wednesday and Sunday.

**First Glorious Mystery**--The Resurrection. For the virtue of faith. (Mark 16, 6)

**Second Glorious Mystery**--The Ascension. For the virtue of hope. (Mark 16, 19)

**Third Glorious Mystery**--Descent of the Holy Spirit. For the virtue of love. (Acts 2, 4)

**Fourth Glorious Mystery**--The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Revelations 12, 1)

**Fifth Glorious Mystery**--The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Revelations 12, 1)

As a general rule the Luminous Mysteries are said on Thursday.

**First Luminous Mystery**--Baptism of Jesus. For submission to God's will. (Matthew 3, 16-17)

**Second Luminous Mystery**--Wedding Feast at Cana. For devotion to Mary. (John 2, 1-5)

**Third Luminous Mystery**--Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. For the grace of conversion. (Mark 1, 14-15)

**Fourth Luminous Mystery**--The Transfiguration. For reverence and love of God. (Matthew 17, 1-2)

**Fifth Luminous Mystery**--Institution of the Holy Eucharist. For thanksgiving to God. (Luke 22, 19-20)

### **Pray to your Guardian Angel**

God has given each one of us an Angel to guard us. Padre Pio and some other Saintly people have seen their Angels. Although we do not see our Guardian Angels we should remain aware of their role in our lives and that they pray before the throne of God for us. When you sleep at night your Angel prays for you, so be at peace when you say the following prayer.

**Dear Angel, God in His goodness sent you to guide, protect, and enlighten me, and bring me back to the truth when I go astray. Help me when I become disheartened, and instruct me when I make decisions. Help me to become a faithful follower of Jesus. Amen.**

At a time when the world was in great danger the Pope asked that the following prayer be said by the faithful after each Mass. At this time in our history when the family is under constant attack we should say this prayer often. Students at High School find that saying

this prayer helps them to deal with and not give in to pressures which are destructive.

**Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel.**

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and wiles of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl through the world, seeking the ruin of souls.

**To help us live in a truly Christian way we have the beautiful prayer of St. Francis to guide us:**

Lord make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**St. Thomas More** was put to death for refusing to sign a document which would allow Henry VIII to become the head of the English Catholic Church. Although Thomas was a father himself he would not deny his Catholic faith in order to save his own life. He went to his martyr's death with the same holy heart he always prayed for. Here is his prayer:

**Prayer for a Holy Heart. by St. Thomas More ( 1478-1535 )**

Lord, grant me a holy heart  
that sees always what is fine and pure  
and is not frightened at the sight of sin,  
but creates order wherever it goes.  
Grant me a heart that knows nothing of  
boredom, weeping and sighing.  
Let me not be too concerned with myself.  
Lord, give me a sense of humour  
and I will find happiness in life  
and goodness for others.

**When the Apostles asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he taught them this prayer:**

**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.

**A prayer for mums and dads.**

Father, you called us to begin this family together.  
Give us your love to keep it in safety.  
May our family always comfort those who live in it  
and welcome those who enter it.  
Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

**For Our Children.**

Lord, help our children to know the road you have chosen for them:  
May they give You glory and gain salvation.  
Sustain them with Your strength, and let them reach the higher goals.  
Enlighten us their parents,  
that we may help them to recognize their calling in life and respond to it generously.  
May we discern the working of your Holy Spirit within each one. Amen.

Love in the family flows out to others. We always feel as we go through life that we are on a journey. There are times that we feel that we are stuck and we do not know how to get ourselves unstuck without destroying everything around us. It is at these times that God is asking us to look after the special needs of others, to let our love which has nowhere to go, help those in need.

**Mother Teresa of Calcutta** can teach us about finding Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor. Here is one of her prayers:

**For Service to Others.**

Make us worthy, Lord,  
To serve our fellow human beings  
throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger.

Give them through our hands this day their daily bread,  
And by our understanding love, give peace and joy.

There is a mystery in service to others, in that we end up receiving more than we give.  
Good health in our families includes reaching out to others and an attitude by all in the family to serve and look after each other with good humour.

**Dear Father,**

**I remember before you all the people I love,  
and now in silence I say their names to you.**

**Bless them and care for them today.**

**I remember before you all those in need;**

**All the people who are sad and lonely and forgotten.**

**All those who are hungry and cold,**

**in pain of body and distress of mind.**

**Bless them all this day and give them their daily bread.**

**Let us never forget your words;**

**that whatever we do for those in need we do for you. Amen.**

### **Prayer for those who are sick and suffering.**

#### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.  
He guides me along the right path, he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff,  
with these you give me comfort.  
You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil, my cup is overflowing.  
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days  
of my life. In the Lord's own house  
shall I dwell for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Prayer of St. Pius X**

My hope is in Christ, who strengthens the weakest by His Divine help. I can do all in him who strengthens me. His Power is infinite, and if I lean on Him, it will be mine. His Wisdom is infinite, and if I look to Him for counsel, I shall not be deceived. His Goodness is infinite, and if my trust is stayed on Him, I shall not be abandoned.

### **Prayer in time of suffering.**

Behold me, my beloved Jesus, weighed down under the burden of my trials and sufferings, I cast myself at your feet, that you renew my strength and my courage, while I rest here in your presence. Permit me to lay down my cross in your most merciful heart,

for only your infinite goodness can sustain me; only your love can help me bear my cross, only your powerful hand can lighten its weight. O Divine King Jesus, whose heart is so compassionate to the afflicted, I wish to live in you; suffer and die in you. During my life, be my model and my support; at the hour of my death, be my hope and my refuge.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me. St. Joseph, pray for me. Amen.

**When anyone in your family is sick. say the Chaplet of Divine Mercy often!**

**Prayers for Advent**

Many of our beautiful practises come to us from the local customs of a group of people. The Advent Wreath originated in Eastern Europe among the Germanic people. Christianity kept their customs alive and adapted their beautiful ideas to celebrate Advent.

In prechristian times the people of Eastern Europe would collect evergreen branches and light fires to bring the hope for Spring into the dark and dreary months of winter. When these same people became Christian they saw that the Christ who is the light of the world had entered their lives bringing them to a new springtime of the Holy Spirit.

Today the Advent wreath is made up of a wreath of evergreen branches encircling four candles.

The Advent Wreath candles, three purple and one pink, are put on display in homes, churches, and schools to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The pink candle is lit on Laetare Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent. Laetare means joyful, so we are reminded of the joy of Christ's birth. Purple symbolizes our longing for the coming of our Saviour as a baby born of Mary. The Advent Wreath builds the anticipation and excitement of Christmas on a spiritual level which keeps us faithful to the Christian meaning of this beautiful coming of Our Lord.

Each day of Advent candles are lit, one purple for the first week, two purple for the second week, two purple and one pink for the third week, and all four candles on the fourth week which ends with the Feast of Christmas. It is customary to say a short prayer each time the candles are lit.

**Advent Prayer**

O God,  
as light comes from this candle,  
may the blessing of Christ come to us,  
warming our hearts and  
brightening our way.

May Christ our Saviour bring light  
into the darkness of this world,  
and to us, as we wait for his coming.

1st Week: O Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, come and dwell with us.

Desire of all nations, Gift to every generation,  
Come make your home with us.

2nd Week O Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, come and save your people.  
Joy of every heart, Strength of those who are poor,  
Come quickly to help us.

3rd Week O Jesus Christ, Key of David, come and set your people free.  
Open the gates of heaven for us;  
Come deliver us from evil.

4th Week O Jesus Christ, Holy Wisdom, come and teach us your way.  
Word of life, Word made flesh,  
Come, speak your truth.

### **The Christmas Tree**

During the Middle Ages, religious plays were performed in churches and town squares of Europe during the Advent Season. The plays told the story of the human race from the creation of Adam and Eve to the Birth of Jesus.

On stage, a great tree, hung with apples, symbolized the Garden of Paradise. People soon saw in this tree which they began to place in their homes a symbol of Paradise, regained by the cross of Christ. They saw in this Paradise Tree, the tree spoken of by St. John the Apostle in the book of Revelations " a tree of life, which yields twelve crops of fruit, one for each month of the year, for the healing of nations." Our Christmas tree reminds us of the joy of giving, and of the generosity of all people towards those in need not just at Christmas but for the whole year.

### **A Christmas Prayer**

Lord Our God, the heavens are the work of your hands, the moon and the stars you made; the earth and the sea, and every living creature came into being by your word. And all of us too. Jesus your Word made flesh brought us redemption, and through him, we too can bring light and life and beauty to our world. Let us celebrate this Christmas Season, in the knowledge and joy of that first Christmas.

### **The Christmas Manger**

St. Francis of Assisi was the first person to create a live manger scene at Christmas time. He invited all the local people to come and pray at the manger, just like the shepherds and Kings of the gospels

.Since the 1200's we have created the manger scene as a focal point of our celebrations at Christmas. Many customs keep the statue or figurine of the child Jesus out until Christmas morning.

Place a manger scene in your home at Christmas time. Small children as well as older ones love the Christmas story, so let them assemble the manger and play with it a little.

### **A Manger Prayer.**

Dear Jesus, lead us to Bethlehem, where Mary gave birth to you. On this night the Angels sang with joy to shepherds on the hillsides. Let us always see you, Lord, in the poor places of the world and let us hear the Angels sing at your presence there. On this night the animals kept you and Mary and Joseph warm. Let us always be thankful for all God's creation and the good it brings us. Bless this family, Lord on this Christmas night.

### **Prayer for the Family at Christmas**

O God, bless our family and all its members and friends; bind us together by your love. Give us kindness and patience to support each other; and wisdom in all we do. Let the gift of your peace come into our hearts, and remain with us. May we rejoice in your blessings for all our days. Amen.

### **Psalm prayer for Easter.**

Lord Jesus Christ, by your cross and resurrection, you have destroyed death and brought life to those in the grave. May your blessed passion be the joy of the whole world, and may the glory of your rising from the tomb ever be our song. O Saviour of the world, living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

### **Marian Anthem for Eastertide: Regina Coeli.**

Joy fill your heart, O Queen most high, alleluia!  
Your Son, who in the tomb did lie, alleluia!  
Has risen as He did prophesy, alleluia!  
Pray for us Mother, when we die, alleluia! ( Trans. J. Quinn, S.J.)

### **An Easter Prayer**

" He is risen"  
That through him we may discover faith:  
in ourselves  
in our world  
in our God.  
" He is risen"  
That in him we may rekindle hope:  
for the abandoned  
for the despairing  
for the dreamless.  
" He is risen"  
That in him we may restore love:  
to those from whom we have kept it  
to those who are most near us  
to those we will never meet--  
to all and everything.  
" He is risen"  
Amen. ( Christopher Prayers for Today)

## Sacraments

Jesus is the greatest sign of God's love for us. We prepare within our families for the Sacraments which we will receive. The Church is the visible sign of Jesus in the world. Our families are sustained on our journey through life by the Sanctifying Grace given to us when we receive the sacraments.

There are Seven Special Signs of God's Love for us which are recognized by the Church. Through the reception of the Sacraments Jesus makes us holy. In order to celebrate a sacrament we need faith. Every sacrament is a sacrament of faith, which nourishes the faith and life of God's people. Sacraments are real spiritual food for the journey of life itself.

The first sacrament we receive is **Baptism**, then **Penance**, which is also called **Reconciliation**. Next we receive the **Eucharist**, and a few years later, **Confirmation**. For those who wish to marry there is the Sacrament of Matrimony; and for those who wish to become Priests, Deacons, or Bishops there is the **Sacrament of Holy Orders**.

**Communion of the Sick** for those who are confined to home or hospital because of illness, may be brought to the sick person daily. Anointing of the Sick is for persons who are dangerously ill, or who are aged and in a weak condition. The sick person and others who so desire should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the Rite of Anointing begins.

## Holy Water

Holy water is a reminder of our baptismal vows, of our personal covenant with God. When we bless ourselves with holy water we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross. We are marking ourselves with the cross of Christ who is our refuge and strength when we go out into the world.

Holy water reminds us that we have renounced Satan and all his works and all his empty promises. We must renounce evil daily as we meet it on our way. Holy water, blessed for our use by the priest, reminds us of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus taught us that true happiness lies in service to others.

We are reminded when we bless ourselves with holy water of the words of John the Baptist after he had baptized Jesus, " I must grow smaller, He must grow greater. Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life." ( John 3: 28-36)

Holy water is blessed each time Baptism is celebrated. It is a Sacramental and may be used in the blessing of religious articles, homes, automobiles, and other items. Sacramentals are those material things which are blessed for use in the Sacraments and for our prayer life. Rosaries, medals, scapulars, crucifixes, holy oil, holy water, blessed salt, are the sacramentals in use most frequently.

The receptacle at the Church door containing holy water is called a Holy Water Font. Small fonts are made for use at home and are usually kept near the front door. Those who are leaving to go to work or school can bless themselves and put themselves under the protection of The Blessed Trinity for the day.

When you are making your home a holy place remember the Holy Water Font and all the

sacramentals!

