TAKE TEN
minutes to pray daily

"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart. It is a simple look toward heaven. It is the cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."
- St. Therese of Lisieux -

WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

Prayer is the path by which we can enter into intimate communion with God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. By means of prayer we also communicate with Mary – the Mother of God and Our Mother – and with all the saints in heaven, with whom we form one single Body, one single Church, whose head is Christ. We have constant need of prayer, therefore, in the same way that we need air to breathe. Prayer holds the key to our true happiness, our perseverance in faith and grace, our strength to avoid falling into sin, and our willingness to bear the weight of sorrows and trials. Prayer holds the key to our eternal salvation.

To Praise God - Psalm 150

Hallelujah! Praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise in the mighty dome of heaven. Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him for his great majesty. Give praise with blasts upon the horn, praise him with harp and lyre. Give praise with tambourines and dance, praise him with flutes and strings. Give praise with crashing cymbals, praise him with sounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath give praise to the LORD!

To Seek Mercy - Psalm 130

Out of the depths I call to you; Lord, hear my cry! May your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, LORD, mark our sins, Lord, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness and so you are revered. I wait with longing for the LORD, my soul waits for his word. My soul looks for the Lord more than sentinels for daybreak. More than sentinels for daybreak, let Israel look for the LORD, for with the LORD is kindness, with him is full redemption, and God will redeem Israel from all their sins.

To Examine Your Soul - Daily Examen of Conscience

The *examen of conscience* is a daily prayerful reflection on your service of God. It is an essential part of the spiritual life. There are two basic examens of conscience. One is called the *general examen* and the other the *particular examen*. See www.catholic.net for more information.

General Examen

A general overview of your moral behavior during the past day. We must assume that our conduct has been both praiseworthy and blameworthy. We should also look forward to the next day and prepare ourselves beforehand on how we should do God's will in the immediate future that awaits us. To this end, you can:

- Reflect on what blessings (both pleasant and painful) the Lord has given you during the past day for which you gratefully thank him
- Ask yourself where you have failed to cooperate with the grace that God has given you during the day
- Look forward to what you are to do and avoid doing in the next day

Particular Examen

Concentrates on coping with the predominant moral weakness of our own personality. We have a better chance to master our tendencies if we take them one at a time and concentrate our efforts on the one weakness that now predominates in our lives. Centuries of moral wisdom have shown that it is better to do this than to scatter our energy of will over the whole field of our passions.

HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

Keep in mind that prayer is raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God (CCC 2590). You can pray in any number of ways that fulfill these criteria.

Find Your Routine

Routine is not an excuse for prayer to be mindless or boring. The Catechism teaches that the principal difficulties in the practice of prayer are distraction and dryness (2754). The remedy lies in faith, conversion, and vigilance of heart. By establishing a prayer routine, you can ensure that prayer becomes a part of every day.

Morning Offering: Each morning we offer God praise for his glory, thanksgiving for life, intercession for the needs of the day.
Night Prayer: At night we pray to God in thanksgiving for the day's blessings, for refreshment, to rise again to give him glory and praise.
Daily Mass: The Eucharist is celebrated every day, all around the world. Consider making Mass more than a weekend celebration.
Adoration Chapel: Spend an hour weekly with God. Consider this time of Eucharist Adoration as a date with God. Relax in his Eucharistic presence.

Use Resources

Get prayer instruction and inspiration by using your bible, prayer books, Rosary, sacramental, novenas, chaplets, journals and the like. Remember, we don't pray to these items – they simply help us to focus our prayers.

You. Who. Do. Through.

You: Remember that you are addressing God and you should acknowledge him
Who: Give God recognition for his many works and blessings
Do: Request God's mercy, blessing or whatever you need at the time of your prayer
Through: Make your prayer through Jesus Christ, the one who offers us redemption

Example: (You) Kind and merciful God, (Who) who offers us friendship through Christ Jesus, (Do) please bless our food and the people who will go without food today. (Through) We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Praise. Ask. Listen.

Give **praise** to God for being God. **Ask** God for all of your needs. **Listen** to God speaking to you through prayer.

Lectio Divina - Divine Reading

Lectio Divina is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures.

1. *Lectio* (reading/listening) - Choose a scripture passage and read it slowly, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina* God is teaching us to listen, to seek in silence. God does not reach out and grab us; rather he extends a soft, gentle invitation into Divine Presence.

2. *Meditatio* (meditating) - Embrace the word or phrase. Slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your concerns, memories and ideas. Do not be afraid of "distractions." Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

3. *Oratio* (praying) - Speak to God. Interact with God as you would with one who knows, loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered in yourself during your experience of meditation. Experience God using the word or phrase that he has given you as a means of blessing, of transforming the ideas and memories that your meditation has awakened. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

4. *Contemplatio* (contemplating) - Finally, simply rest in God's embrace. And when God invites you to return to your pondering of the Word or to your inner dialogue with God, do so. Learn to use words when words are helpful, and to let go of words when they no longer are necessary. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.