

WHAT IS PRAYER?

God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh.

God invites us into a relationship with Him that is both **personal** and **communal**.

Prayer is an expression of **faith and love**.

Prayer is as necessary to the life of the Church as breathing is to our natural life.

Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.

Prayer is our **response** to God who is already speaking or, better yet, revealing Himself to us.

Prayer is not merely an exchange of words, but it engages the whole person in a **relationship** with God the Father, through His Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

Communication with God is speaking with and listening to God.

The four purposes of prayer are:

1. **Adoration** (to worship)
2. **Thanksgiving** (to thank)
3. **Sorrow** (to say, I'm sorry)
4. **Petition** (to ask)

A **creed** is a form of prayer that tells what Christians believe.

Two forms of the creed are: the **Apostle's Creed** and **Nicene Creed**. The Nicene Creed is used during Mass.

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The **Our Father** is the prayer that Jesus Himself taught us.

Forms of prayer include:

1. **Formal Prayer:** Prayers that contain a set form or words and that many people know (Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.)
2. **Spontaneous Prayer:** Prayer that persons make up by themselves at the moment.
3. **Personal Prayer:** The private prayer of an individual.
4. **Meditation:** A form of mental prayer involving reflection on God or a religious truth.
5. **Contemplation:** A form of mental prayer that involves being aware of God's presence and rejoicing in it.
6. **Shared Prayer:** Spontaneous prayer and/or formal prayer within a group.
7. **Liturgical Prayer:** The official public prayer of the Church, including the Rites of all the sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours.
8. **Eucharist:** The Church's most important prayer.
9. **Devotional Prayer:** Group or private prayer that centers around and honors God, Christ, Mary, or the saints in a particular way. For example, the rosary, the stations of the cross, or novenas.
10. **Rosary:** Form of a devotional prayer honoring Mary.

Prayer Times: You know that God is with you always. He never forgets to pay attention to you. Jesus wants your friendship with him to be strong at all times. Jesus taught us to "**pray always.**" *Luke 18:1*

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Prayer Places: The Holy Spirit helps us pray **anywhere** and at **any time**. Churches are sacred places where people gather to pray with others. Most people have private places where they talk to God by themselves.

Praying is not always easy. We face many distractions. Even saints had difficulty. The important thing is to have faith, be open to conversion, and be vigilant. In other words, **keep trying!**

The **liturgy** is the public worship of the Church. It includes the celebration of the seven sacraments and the prayer called the Liturgy of the Hours.

The **Liturgy of the Hours** includes hymns, psalms, Scripture readings, petitions, the Lord's Prayer, and times of reflective silence. This prayer can be prayed at seven "hours" or times during the day.

Most Christians choose from among these hours (traditional names in parentheses).

- Readings (Matins)
- Morning Prayer (Lauds)
- Daytime Prayer (Terce, Sext, and None)
- Evening Prayer (Vespers)
- Night Prayer (Compline)

Ultimately prayer should lead us to **action** so that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we can serve the needs of others. We should especially serve the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable.

WHAT IS THE MASS?

The Eucharistic celebration, **the Mass**, is the Church's great community prayer. The Order of the Mass includes:

Introductory Rites

- Entrance

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- Greeting
- Penitential Act
- Glory to God
- Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (on Sundays, solemnities, and special occasions)
- Universal Prayer

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Alter
- Prayer over the Offerings
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - Preface
 - Holy, Holy, Holy
 - First half of prayer, including Consecration
 - Mystery of Faith
 - Second half of prayer, ending in Doxology
- The Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

- Optional announcements
- Greeting and Blessing
- Dismissal