

An Introduction to the Devout Life ...



Catholic prayer is the spoken and internal conversations people have with God, either alone or together in a group. Jesus did not simply recommend prayer, He reiterated the commandment to prayer just as He had commanded it to the Hebrews. Why a Commandment? For the simple reason that He knows us better than we know ourselves. We need prayer. He does not need prayer. God needs nothing and wants nothing. He commands prayer because all creatures need to communicate and converse with their Creator. The highest example is His own prayer, as a man, to the Father, in His times of need.

This is the personal relationship we have with Him, prayer, and it has a threefold expression in the world:

- **Holy Communion:** Communion is the sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings mentally and spiritually, with God

the Holy Trinity. God cannot be divided, to partaking of His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, communicates to us the whole and living God. And even though we consume His Body and Blood, it is He Who consumes us by drawing us to Himself and giving His grace to us. He tells us this through John, "Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed: and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this Bread, shall live for ever."

- **Prayer:** When we take time to pray, even for a moment, the Holy Spirit is the One Who draws us into this prayer. Even though it is a one way conversation as we speak to Him, in reality it is always a two way conversation as He gives us grace and inspiration in return for speaking, and being, with Him. Prayer can be formal, structured prayer like the Psalter or Breviary, the Rosary, litanies and prayers and devotions like the ones found here, or just talking, or even just listening.
- **Work:** Lastly, living the Christian life causes our work to be sanctified and ordered to Him as prayer if we take care to offer our work up. As the Church has always stated, the Christian life is ora et labora: prayer and work.

He knows that we need to continually come to Him to talk, to share our needs and wants, to thank Him for the gift of Himself, to seek forgiveness from Him when we do not act as we ought, and most especially to simply adore Him. He is Truth

and Goodness itself. When we pray to Him, we learn to live according to His Will and begin and continue and improve the process of involving ourselves in the ways of Heaven, where all there continually adore and praise their God.

Prayer can take many forms.

- The highest form of prayer for a Catholic is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The faithful gather around the altar of the Lord to perpetually offer Sacrifice to the Father:
 - In adoration and praise of God, since He is the highest good we can achieve.
 - In thanksgiving for having given us His saving graces and all the wants we need in life.
 - In petition for spiritual and temporal needs we have, our church and community have, and for the prayers for the world at large.
 - In reparation for the our sins, those in our families, our parishes, our community, our nation, and the world.
- Structured prayer like the Breviary, the Holy Rosary, prayers of the titles of our Lord, Mary, or the other Saints, and can be regular prayers, litanies, chaplets, novenas, and other devotions. These types of prayers allow you to concentrate on the spiritual and meditative part of the prayer, since the words are already there for you.
- Unstructured prayer, conversations, or mental contemplation of God. When the moment comes along or you feel the desire to be with God, but don't have specific prayers to say or things to pray about, it is simple to stop, take a deep breath, quiet yourself and just be with God, to talk, or just listen.

We who build CatholicDevotions.org have always had an interest in collecting prayer books, booklets and cards. Seeing so many different sites that offer collections of Catholic prayers and

devotions, we decided that no one place had an exhaustive encyclopedia of prayer, so that is what gave rise to this site. Whether you need to understand the basic prayers of the Church, the Creeds, prayers for Mass, the Mass prayers themselves, praying the Holy Rosary, personal prayers, prayers to Saints or Blesseds, litanies or novenas, we hope that you find them here, and find them to be a benefit to you.

Future plans include a forum for submitting prayer requests (trying to find a specific prayer) or requests for prayers (when you need others to pray for you). Until then, search or browse the site for the prayers or devotions you need.

Through the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, may God bless you and those for whom you pray.