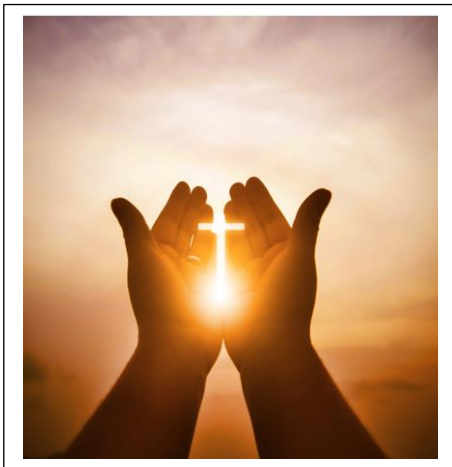


PRAYER

Prayer is nothing less than being on terms of friendship with God. *St Teresa of Avila*

This resource is for those wanting help with their prayer life.



We are all invited into relationship with God and for all of us this relationship is built on prayer. The invitation comes from God, who loves us and is always seeking us, always waiting for us. He is ready, we only need to begin.

We hope this resource will help you to draw closer to and deepen your relationship with God. As this happens you will find yourself going inwards, discovering the God who is at the core of your being and who loves you. This love will enable you to move outwards to meet the needs of others, the wider world and so to the whole of creation. In this way you move, with the help of the Holy Spirit, from being a follower towards becoming a missionary of Jesus Christ

We hope you will find inspiration for your prayer practice and be encouraged to explore new ways to pray.

What is prayer?

Prayer is about spending time with your God; talking and listening.

There are many different ways to pray and throughout our lives we may use some of them. Some involve us talking to God, others demand silence of us. We may recite a prayer or sing (or even dance!) a prayer. We may be indoors or outside, alone or with others.

If you don't feel you know how to pray or are struggling to start, we can recommend this video clip of Bishop Robert Barron's, [Comments on Prayer](https://youtu.be/aR6J1pPiRQo) <https://youtu.be/aR6J1pPiRQo>



How do I start?

There are a few practical decisions to make; when and where you'll pray and for how long. A quiet spot where you're unlikely to be disturbed for ten or fifteen minutes to start with will be a great help. Ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you, just as the disciples asked Jesus. (Luke 11.1). Lighting a candle is a good reminder that the Holy Spirit is with you.

Allow a few moments of silence to settle yourself, noticing your breathing if you wish, or how you are feeling physically . . . try to let go of any thoughts or worries . . . just give this time to God.

However you choose to pray, remember to be honest with God, he knows anyway! And loves you still.

To draw your time of prayer to a close, you may like to say the Glory be, or make the sign of the cross or simply say 'Thank you'.

Why not try ...

Praying with the Word of God <i>Image, open bible</i>	Praying with the Rosary <i>Image Rosary beads</i>	The Examen <i>Image of candle</i>	Praying with the imagination <i>Image of clouds</i>	Praying with the Blessed Sacrament <i>Image of monstrance</i>
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Praying with the Word of God

Many people like to read and reflect on scripture every day. You may like to watch a video by Fr Mike Smitz talking about Ways to read the Bible. (<https://youtu.be/6hb7nSL1gKU>)

Parishioner Tom Woodman, has written a description of how to pray with the Word of God, also known as Lectio Divina. You will need a Bible or an online resource.

Praying with the Word of God or Lectio Divina

I have been asked to write something brief about the very popular form of prayer usually now called “Lectio Divina” (divine reading) although I prefer the alternative title “Prayer with the Word of God”. This is a very simple form of prayer which can be used both in groups and individually, but over time it can help to change people’s whole lives. It is not a form of Bible Study but a recognition that God speaks to us in the here and now through His inspired Word.

All we need to do is to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us at the beginning and have ready some brief story or reading, usually from the New Testament or perhaps from a Psalm. We can use the daily readings of the Church at Mass (obtainable as mentioned elsewhere on the website) or we can read through a gospel bit by bit over a longer period, using only a paragraph, a few verses, for each prayer time. We read over the passage slowly and carefully a couple of times, aloud in a group, silently on our own, and then begin to reflect on it for a few minutes. We notice if any particular phrase strikes us, not so much as an insight but as a stirring of our hearts.

In a group anyone who wishes can share what has struck them and after that people can go around and explain briefly why they chose the phrase they did. Those using the practice on their own simply stay with God and listen to Him for a few minutes and thank Him at the end for His presence and love.

For many this becomes a fruitful daily practice, but the only way of finding out why is to give it a try for (say) ten minutes a day or three times a week to start with.

Other resources

Universalis (<https://universalis.com>) for The Order of Mass, also available in many different languages via their app

Bible Alive (<https://www.alivepublishing.co.uk>) an online resource; a printed copy is available to purchase by subscription.

Bible in One Year (<https://bibleinoneyear.org/en/>) a daily commentary from the makers of Alpha

Pray as you go (<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>) offers a daily prayer session; a framework for your own prayer, based on one of the readings of the Mass of the day.

The Examen

The Examen (A Review of the Day)

This prayer is for the end of the day but can also be used to reflect on other endings. It can be done alone or perhaps with your family around the table. You can even adapt it to do with young children at bedtime!

Begin by sitting comfortably; you may like to close your eyes or focus on a lighted candle.

Prepare . . . As you sit here now in stillness God is gazing on you with love and holding you in being. Pause for a moment and think of this and with each breath all His love to fill your whole being.

Ask . . . the Holy Spirit to shine light and understanding on your day, take time to look back over the day allowing what ever comes to surface naturally. Do not search or judge whatever comes up, simply notice it.

As you replay the day ask your self two simple questions such as,

for what moment today am I most grateful?

for what moment today am I least grateful?

Or

when did I feel most alive today?
When did I feel most life draining out of me?
Or
When did I give love today?
When did I receive love today?

Share . . . these moments with God and take time to listen to Him too.

Offer . . . what tomorrow may bring, talking to God about the situations, conversations and people you may encounter.

You might find it helpful to write notes about what comes up for you in this process. Or you might like to draw or paint. There's lots of artwork / stickers available to purchase on Bible journaling websites.

Resource: *Sleeping with Bread*; Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn. Paulist Press ISBN 0809135795

Praying with the imagination

BESIDE THE WELL

Begin by sitting comfortably, lighting a candle perhaps, maybe asking the Holy Spirit to help you as you begin this type of prayer.

Read John 4: 5 – 15, 27 – 30.

Read it slowly and allow yourself to be drawn into the scene by the well.

Could it be you who comes into the presence of Jesus in your thirst?

Do you have an empty water jar?

Does Jesus wait for you in this place?

Does he thirst for a relationship with you?

Does he want to tell you something?

Does he want to ask you for something?

Listen to the conversation as it unfolds in the story . . .

Give me a drink . . .

You ask me for a drink?

If only you knew what God is offering you . .

If you ask me I will give you living water.

I who am speaking to you, I am he.

What does Jesus want to say to you today?

What do you want to say in return?

What is Jesus offering you?

How do you want to respond?

If you have enjoyed this prayer you may like to try some of the Imaginative Contemplation exercises at www.pray-as-you-go.org then click on 'going deeper'

Praying with the Blessed Sacrament

Why Eucharistic Adoration?

In his love, God wants to be as close as possible to us. This is why God became flesh and blood in Jesus. At his last supper Jesus left us with a way to remember he was always with us – through Holy Communion which is another way of saying the Eucharist. So, when we sit in silence with him today it's like we're having some extra time with him.

Sitting in silence might seem awkward, but it's as simple as sunbathing . . . we're just sitting and soaking up God's love in the presence of Jesus.



As you sit here in the presence of Jesus who gives himself to us in this amazing sacrament
Listen to him in silence of your heart
Thank him for being with you now and in every moment of every day
Thank him for all that he has done and continues to do for you
Ask him to be with you in everything you do

You may like to reflect on the poem written Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours

You have blessed us with a beautiful world What have you seen or heard today that makes you long to say 'thank you'?

Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world Bring to mind, one by one; your friends, members of your family - all those who are important to you thank God for them.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good You call me to follow in your footsteps to bring good, to build up; who or what are you worried about. Can you bring them into the light of God's love?

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world You invite me to use my hands for a blessing, can you make a simple act of kindness after you leave this place?

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

A prayer to end

Lord our God,
In this great Sacrament
we come into the presence
of Jesus our Lord
who walks with us
in our journey of faith.
May we always know
his reassuring presence in our lives
and be filled with his peace and courage
to witness to him in all we do.

Amen