

PRAYER

- Is *"Raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God"* (CCC # 2590)
- *"Is a surge of the heart. It is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy."* Therese of Lisieux
- *"Is a vital necessity...if we don't allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin."* CCC #2744. No prayer, we die spiritually. No communication, relationships vanish, diminish. No discipline, health diminishes, deteriorates and is lost. . Prayer is not a luxury, it is more than a friendly invitation – it is a vital necessity.
- **Prayer is gift, covenant and communion** CCC # 2558 – 2565. Prayer is gift because we receive even our hunger for prayer as grace from God. Prayer is covenant because we recognize that it is the heart that prays. Our prayer is our lifeline in our relationship with God; it is the source of our integration as a person and the compass that guides our communication with others. Prayer is communion because in prayer we are resting in and waiting on God as the Holy Trinity.
- **Is being in the presence of God and in communion with God.** Prayer is a living relationship with God in Christ that springs from the Holy Spirit. It is a communion. The communication of prayer leads us to a sense of communion with God in the prayer relationship, which ultimately leads us to community with others. Prayer connects us to the larger community. To be in this relationship is to be transformed by it.
- **Is mystery** within which we believe, celebrate and live our faith
- Christian prayer is a **covenant relationship between God and humans in Christ**. It is the action of God and the action of man / woman, springing forth both from the Holy Spirit and ourselves. . It is the faithful God's initiative of love that always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God reveals Godself to us and we are revealed to ourselves as well, prayer is a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. CCC # 2564, #2567. The life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of God and in communion with God. CCC # 2565
- **Prayer is a conversation with God and goes both ways.** We talk to God and God talks to us. God, like a loving parent, wants to spend time with us. our response is always a response to the call of our loving God. God calls us through nature, other people, our own hearts & minds, events of our life. Part of an ongoing dialogue in the God-human relationship. God takes the initiative, again and again. Prayer requires an attitude of openness. To pay attention to God's presence in our lives is an act of prayer. To feel alienated from God is still to be in relationship. This is especially an important issue for teens. Prayer is an authentic listening; God speaks to us through scripture, through the teaching of the church, in everyday experience and in our hearts.

PRAYER:

- It is the heart that prays – our hidden centre, place of decision and truth where as a person made in God's image, we speak to God, live in God's presence, and hear God speak to us. Heart where relationship with God unfolds.
- We need to approach prayer with humility: being honest about who we are, acknowledging our weaknesses and strengths, our sins and gifts.
- Prayer can be both personal and communal
- At different life stages and stages of relationship there will be different issues and intensity. There are natural highs and lows in relationship. Prayer is part of our journey and pilgrimage as believers.
- Prayer opens us to moments of conversion especially in times of crisis, change, or joy and gladness. Our conversion is to Christ, not to the church.
- Everyone is called to prayer. Prayer about being who God made us to be – one who desires a relationship with the one who called us into existence. Desire for God is built into us: it is a response to God who first and tirelessly calls us to an encounter with God through prayer.

- In prayer we learn about who God is and we learn about who we are. Prayer is a central way God reveals Godself to humankind and throughout the whole of salvation history has shown us who we are
- Changes us; prayer is not passive. It is God who invites us to change, who nudges, challenges our old ways, probes us and gentles us into greater wholeness. In prayer, I am never the same. Transformation happens slowly and then we begin to live differently.
- Stretches us beyond our own small world. Helps us to see we are in relationship with all of Earth's people and the universe. The web of relationship expands with prayer – we begin to understand that we cannot separate ourselves from the rest of humankind and the world.
- Prayer is not always easy; sometimes it is very difficult to pray; physical or mental tiredness, emptiness or hollow inside, confusion or anger, God seems very distant. It may seem as nothing is happening when praying. It is hard during these times to let go and trust God continues to be present in the darkness.
- Prayer is not separate from our lives. We don't pray at a certain time and then live the rest of our lives. At the same time, not everything we do is prayer. We need to set time aside for prayer. Prayer and life is like a tapestry woven together with the threads of who I am and the many ways God enter my life through the daily events, circumstances, activities and people I encounter
- When should I pray: anytime since God is always listening. Can say mini prayers throughout the day as we go about our business; habits of prayer at certain hours because it helps us recognize God and seek God's will at important times of the day – morning, dedicate the day to God as soon as one wakes; beginning of school day or beginning of particular class or school event; at meal time where we recognize our dependence of God's provision; at close of day where we review the day, examine our conscience, say prayer of confession and contrition and praise and thank God for all that God has done and is for us.

DOES GOD HEAR OUR PRAYER / DISCERNMENT

- John 11:42 "Father ... I (know) that you always hear me." God hears our prayers and answers them. We pray with trust to God who listens to our prayers, confident that God wants what's best for us, knows what's best for us. Our prayers should always ask for God's will.
- **How do I know when God is talking:**
 - Need to give God time to talk, a few quiet moments when we listen for God. On these occasions we might have thoughts or impressions come into our mind from God: a word of comfort, a solution to a problem, a prompting to take a particular action.
 - Can listen to God through reading Scripture or spiritual books – God can speak to us through the printed word
 - God can speak to us through others who say that we came to their mind during their own prayer.
 - Sometimes God speaks through situations, opening one door and closing another.
 - When we intentionally place ourselves in prayer posture and genuinely listen to the words we are saying, we allow ourselves to become aware of God's presence. God speaks to us; we become better listeners and receivers of insights from God.
- **God's answer is not always the one we are hoping for.**
 - Sometimes we ask for wrong things – things we would regret if God gave them to us.
 - Sometimes what we want doesn't fit into the bigger, wiser plan God has for us and for those around us.
 - Sometimes God is allowing us to develop patience or to grow in some way

JESUS AS MODEL OF PRAYER

- Our prayer is always through Jesus, and he is our model of prayer.
- Jesus is the way we understand God as immanent (here among us) as well as transcendent.

- Christ bonds us to the community – his body
- Jesus was a devout Jew who prayed morning, afternoon and evening. He would have prayed a blessing on every action he would undertake in the day. He prayed alone and with his community at the synagogue. For Jesus prayer was like breathing, a consistent, rhythmic life force that kept time in response to God's presence. His ministry developed in an atmosphere of prayer. Jesus seemed to pray anywhere, yet he also sought quiet solitude. Jesus prayed so often and with such focused concentration that people noticed. The gospels have him especially praying at time of crisis or major decisions. He also prayed at key moments involving his apostles. He taught his followers how to pray. The Lord's Prayer.
- Jesus' prayer includes: prayers of praise to God, forgiveness, petition, inclusion, surrender, trust in God, confusion when feeling abandoned on cross, thanksgiving.
- Abba – intimate relationship.
- Jesus' filial prayer is the perfect model of prayer in the New Testament. Often done in solitude and in secret, the prayer of Jesus involves a loving adherence to the will of the Father even to the cross and an absolute confidence in being heard.
- Jesus teaches his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and preserving faith, with the boldness of a son or daughter of God. He calls them to vigilance and to presenting their petitions to God in his name. Jesus Christ himself answers prayers addressed to him.

SOME TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC PRAYERS

- **Mass and Eucharistic Adoration:** "The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer; it is the pure offering of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name and according to the traditions of east and West, it is the sacrifice of praise. CCC # 2643
- **Liturgy of the Hours:** The public prayer of the church for praising God and sanctifying the day. It is required for priests and religious and highly recommended for laity. The psalms, biblical and non-biblical readings are reflected upon during morning, daytime, evening and night prayers.
- **Stations of the Cross:** a form of devotion commemorating the passion and death of Christ, consisting of meditations, also called the Way of the Cross. There are 14 traditional stations that begin with Jesus is condemned to death and end with Jesus is buried.
- **Forty Hours Devotion:** a three day period of worship & prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, approximately equalling the time Jesus lay in the tomb. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed in a monstrance during this time,
- **First Friday Devotion:** this is a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that involves receiving the Eucharist on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month.
- **Novena to / Litany to Mary & the Saints :** We can pray with and to Mary. The prayer of the church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with her in hope CCC #2679 Those who have gone before us, particularly the saints, share in the tradition of prayer by their example, their writings, and their prayer today.. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world. CCC # 2683 **A novena** is a public or private prayer that extends for a period of nine days. In some cases a novena is offered on a designated day for nine weeks or for nine months. A litany is a prayer that includes some repetition so that the person praying the litany gets caught up in the prayer itself. It is generally a two part prayer that involves a leader and a responder. Each statement is followed by a common response such as "Have mercy on us"
- **Benediction:** is another name for a blessing prayer. It most often refers to the prayer in which the Blessed Sacrament is used to bless the people
- **Rosary:** A form of mental and vocal prayer centered on the mysteries or events of Jesus and Mary, most often said with beads. Prayer includes the Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Fatima Prayer, & Hail Holy Queen
- **Scripture:** Can be strength for our faith, food for the soul and a font of spiritual life.

- **Jesus Prayer:** is an ancient and still popular way to open ourselves to a deeper relationship with Jesus. The biblical roots of this prayer are in the story of the blind Bartimaeus who cries out to Jesus from the roadside.
- **Act of Contrition:** is a prayer of sorrow for one's sins, a promise to make things right, and a commitment to avoid those things that lead to sin. Such a prayer can be said anytime, but is always part of the sacrament of reconciliation.
- **Act of Faith:** is an old and traditional prayer of the church. People pray it as a sign of commitment to the core truths of the faith.
- **The Magnificat:** is Mary's prayer of praise when she visited her cousin Elizabeth. It is recorded in Luke 1:46 – 55. The name of the prayer is the first word of the prayer in Latin, which means "Magnify"
- **Prayers for all times and occasions:** we pray to celebrate good times and to ask for strength and perseverance in bad times. We pray for the living and for the dead.

FORMS OF PRAYER:

- **BLESSING:** Prayer of blessing expresses basic movement of Christian prayer. It is our response to God, who out of unconditional love, blesses us. The human heart in return blesses God, who is the source of all blessing. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Blessed be the God of Israel and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens." Ephesians 1:3 In some blessings, you or someone else actually invokes God's power and care on another person, place, thing, or undertaking. The gestures or touch that often accompany these blessings symbolize the bestowal of God's grace on the receiver.
- **ADORATION:** Prayer of adoration exalts the greatness of God who made us. Adore suggests a particular posture, both intellectual and emotional. The posture of adoration calls for a humble heart. When we adore God, we acknowledge that we are a creature before the One who created us. We realize without God's amazing love we would be nothing. Let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord who made us. For this is our God, whose people we are, God's well-tended flock. Psalm 95:6 – 7
- **PETITION:** Prayer of petition expresses an understanding of our relationship with God. We express our needs in prayer. Asking God for something we need. It is the most spontaneous form of prayer; it arises naturally from the depths of our heart, where we are aware of our relationship with God, where we know we are dependent on God and that God cares for us. . In this form which is also called supplication, we ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, struggle in prayer. **Three movements to prayer of petition:** *asking for forgiveness*, acknowledge our shortcomings and turning back to God; **every need** can be brought to prayer. "Ask, and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you." Luke 11:9 **kingdom of God**, before all else the prayer of petition seeks the coming of the kingdom – the plan of the Father and mission and work of Christ and the Spirit. Think of a small child who is hungry. If the child comes to their parent asking for food, the parent is delighted to answer that request. And if human parents know how to give good gifts to their children when asked, " how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask." Matt 7:9 – 11. We ask God to provide for us, guide us and protect us. God is delighted to answer our prayers. "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" Phil 4:6
- **INTERCESSION:** The prayer of intercession is asking on behalf of another. It knows no boundaries, it moves us out of ourselves to address the needs of others, whether we know them, are comfortable with them, or even if they have harmed us. Because God is love, we inherit the task to love, to bring order out of chaos, to be Christ in the world. In prayer of intercession we join our human love for another person with God's love for them. You allow your heart to become like a magnifying glass, channelling God's love in a way that will forever change you and the person for whom you are praying. Even though they are praying for themselves, we join them in their requests. Helps our heart

to grow and to enable us to help people in other ways as well. Praying for people who have hurt us actually makes it easier to forgive them and to see them more as God sees them. It can also help us to recognize more clearly the times when we have offended others.

- **THANKSGIVING:** In the prayer of thanksgiving we remember that we are creatures and God is our creator. We remember all that we have is a gift and God is the giver. The more we pray thanksgiving, the more we grow in awareness that all we have comes to us as a gift from God's abundant love. The Greek word Eucharist means thanksgiving. We are to "in all circumstances give thanks.." I Thess 5:18 Eucharist is the great prayer of thanksgiving of the church.– confidence that God is loving us, even in middle of difficulties, even when we can't see the purpose of our suffering, even when there is no end in sight. Involves deep faith in the Paschal Mystery – the mystery that life and growth come through death and suffering.
- **PRAISE:** Prayer of praise is powerful because in praising God we enter into a new level of intimacy with God that cannot be duplicated. Praise is the form of prayer that expresses our love for God simply because God IS. We give praise to God for everything in our life, the good and the bad. We acknowledge that bad and good which are part of our life lead us to God. It is our faith and trust in God that leads us to see that everything in our life is in some way connected to God. We acclaim God's love for us and caring presence with us in all things. It is our recognition of God's ever faithful, caring presence in our lives. We give thanks to God who saved us through an act of great personal sacrifice.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

- Gift from Jesus to us which tells us to ask God for all we need. Here Jesus teaches us how to pray.
- "Is the summary of the whole Gospel" Tertullian. It expresses the desire of our hearts to seek God above all things, to share in the love of God, and to surrender to the mercy of God. The prayer places our fundamental needs at the feet of God in honour and trust.
- "The Lord's prayer is the most perfect of prayers ... In it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them." St. Thomas Aquinas
- Was central to the early Christian community and continues to be the focal prayer of the Christian community.
- Luke 11:32 – 4 contains a short version; Matt 6:9 – 13 contains a version that is most like the prayer we use today.
- **Begins with an address** Our father who are in heaven. Then seven petitions follow. A petition is a request for God to do something for us. Because Jesus gave these petitions to us, they are more than just simple request. They teach us what we really need to live holy, happy, moral lives.
- Opening address helps us place ourselves in presence of God and in proper frame of mind. First three petitions are theological (are oriented toward God and help us grow closer to God). The last four petitions are oriented to human need. They teach us to ask for what we truly need, not just for ourselves but for whole human family.
- **Our:** means we are God's People and God is our Father, we are God's children forever even when body dies, profession of Trinity – when we pray to the Father, we pray too to Jesus and Spirit; acknowledges we pray with the whole church, all the baptized. It leaves our individualism behind. It is an expression of God's care for all people, even those who do not know Christ.
 - When I say Our how am I challenged to keep the needs of others in mind?
- **Father:** God as Father is more than any earthly image we have – meet the Father Jesus reveals to us. Jesus reveals who God is, not in terms of physical appearance , but through his actions and his words. Because Jesus is God the resemblance is identical. We are brothers and sisters to Jesus and adopted children of God. All people are brothers and sisters and Jesus is our brother as well. Jesus used the language of Abba – which is very intimate and shows that Jesus has a close relationship with God and is inviting us to do the same.

- When I say Father, how do I acknowledge God's name and role in my life?
- **Who art in heaven:** Heaven has to do with being in God's love rather than a physical place. Heaven is more a way of being rather than a place, a state of deep happiness and loving communion with God. Expression of our desire to be in union with God, who is holy, majestic, and transcendent. It expresses our desire that God dwells in our heart and helps us to love as God loves. Also refers to our eternal destiny. The world is our temporary home. We are God's people, made for something greater than this life – our true home is in heaven.
 - When I say who art in heaven, how do I show my desire to be truly in union with God?
- **Hallowed be Thy name:** Jesus is telling us to recognize God's name as holy and to treat God in a holy way. To Hebrew scripture people, revealing your name was pretty much the same as revealing who you were as a person. In baptism we are made holy in name of Jesus and Spirit. We cannot make God unholy. Because of Baptism, God's name is blessed when we live well and cursed when we do not. Do people in your life see how you honour God in everything you do. Tells us to hallow God's name in all things.
 - When I say hallowed be thy name, how do I treat God's name with care?
- **Thy Kingdom come:** Kingdom lies ahead of us, is brought near in Jesus, is proclaimed throughout the Gospel and since Pentecost has been coming through the work of the Spirit. This petition primarily refers to final coming of reign of God through Christ's return. The Parousia, the glorious return and appearance of Jesus at the end of time, as judge of the living and the dead. Church is sign and presence of the kingdom of God in world now. By saying this you commit yourself to Jesus' mission here on earth – to bring love, peace and justice into the world. Day by day we are faced by pressures and situations that draw us away from God. How do we live reign of justice and peace, love and care for others.
 - When I say thy kingdom come, in what ways do my actions help to bring about the Kingdom of God in the world?
- **Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:** The commandment Jesus gave his disciples at the Last Supper "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" John 13:34, summarizes God's entire will. This means that love is mandatory for Christians. God's will is that we love everyone, even our enemies with a love that includes serving, forgiving, sometimes suffering without receiving love in return. When we pray this, it develops in us the will to become more like God and fosters in us a humble and trusting heart.
 - When I pray thy will be done as it is in heaven, how am I challenged to hear God's call in my life?
- **Give us this day our daily bread:** In every moment and ultimately, we depend not on our own abilities or the abilities of others, but on God. We ask, as child of God, in trust for what we need and acknowledge the goodness of the One who gives us what we need. Ask for daily bread – sign of radical dependence on God. Ask for bread for one day, tomorrow have to ask again. Bread represents all essential things we need to sustain our lives. One of ways God provides is by giving us gifts to share with the world. Reminds us to reflect God's care for the world by distributing the world's abundance responsibly. Refers to spiritual nourishment as well. Pray for ourselves and for all the world. This is a petition that there be enough bread for all.
- **Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us:** confession of our sinfulness and need for God's mercy. We can pray for God's forgiveness because God is rich in compassion and full of mercy. We are to forgive as God forgives, including forgiving our enemies. Can only accomplish this through power of the Spirit. We are forgivable and are challenged to forgive – no qualifications or boundaries.
- **Lead us not into temptation:** asking God not to let us yield to temptation – do not let us fall when we are tempted is more accurate translation from the Greek. Through regular prayer Spirit makes us vigilant to possibilities of temptations. Helps us to request the presence of God during those times.
- **But deliver us from evil:** moves from our personal struggle with evil to pray with the whole church about the distress of the world. We ask to be delivered from evil and strengthened to persevere against the

evils of the world. Deliverance of whole human family from all evils. When you are focused on God and the teachings of Jesus you will recognize evil when you meet it. We are requesting God's help in resisting it; we are claiming a place at God's side – on the side of goodness and love. It is a statement of identity. We are a child of God and a sister or brother of Jesus.

- **Doxology: For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.** States clearly that God is almighty and deserves all our praise.
- **Amen.** I believe – a way of signing our name to the prayer and turning all our requests over to the will of God.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

- Need to help students name what they are already doing as prayer.
- Need to provide opportunities for them to feel comfortable praying together with other students.
- Need to encourage students to spend time alone with God in prayer
- Our goal as Christians is to become one with Christ. Indeed the oneness is there, it just needs to be discovered. Such a discovery takes place whenever persons respond to the invitation of God to awaken to the divine presence within. It is our role as teacher to help our students not only know that God calls them into an intimate relationship, but also to give them the tools they need to prepare their hearts for such a relationship.