

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Students



ICF 201 – Prayer and Spirituality

This course provides a basic introduction to the fundamentals of a Catholic prayer life and spiritual dispositions. Participants will examine what it means to pray, why we pray, and how to have a fruitful prayer life. Practical exercises of traditional Catholic prayers and devotions will be covered so you will learn how to express yourself to God and how to hear his voice in your everyday life.

Texts: Prayer Primer: Igniting a Fire Within, Rev. Thomas Dubay, S.M. (Primer)

WRAP Yourself in Scripture, Karen L. Dwyer, PhD. & Lawrence A. Dwyer, JD
(WRAP)

Supplemental Reading/Additional Resources:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>

The Bible: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>

The Way of Perfection, Saint Teresa of Avila (Perfection)

Introduction to the Devout Life, Saint Frances De Sales (IDL)

The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH):

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdwgilh.htm>

Week 1: What is Prayer and Why Pray?

Weekly Reading Before Class: Primer Chapters 1, 3, 4, 13

Prayer is, in short, our loving **communication** with God, which we are **all** called to. In Scripture, the Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon, shows God as the Lover and us, his people, as the Beloved. Christ is the Bride-Groom and the Church is his Bride. Our prayer is a loving response to God's promptings. He always initiates it as a gift to us.

Do you love God? When you love somebody, you want to spend time with that person. Since prayer is communing between lovers, it is a personal relationship with God, not something we check off on a to-do list for the day. The three **methods of prayer** could be compared to different methods of communication with your Beloved:

- Vocal Prayer
 - ❖ A letter, text message, or email
- Mental/Meditation
 - ❖ Spending time with your Beloved in person
- Contemplation
 - ❖ The marital embrace

If we look at these different forms of communication between yourself and your beloved as something that you need to check off a list, there is something unhealthy about that relationship that needs to be repaired (Confession). Our relationship with God is the same way. He wants to spend time with us, and commune with us. We should want to commune with him as much as possible and make time to do it **daily**.

I don't have the time.

We all have many things in our life vying for our time: work, kids, spouse, upkeep of the home... The list could go on and on. How could we possibly fit something else in? If a relationship is important to you, you make time. It's a matter of prioritizing and realizing that prayer time should not be competing with our other daily activities, but it is the thing that **enriches** all else that we do. Maybe you can start by turning the radio off during your commute and spend that time with God, perhaps praying the rosary. Find a time that works for you, but the strong suggestion from spiritual leaders is to pray first thing in the morning. This time allows many to be most focused because they are not thinking about what they have been doing or will be doing during the day.

Another suggestion is to take a moment before you start an activity and place yourself in God's presence, remembering that he is always with you, and offering to God what you are about to do. A great example of praying throughout the day is called the **Jesus Prayer**. It is very simple and easy to do: as you inhale say, "Jesus Christ, Son of the living God," and as you exhale, "Have mercy on me a sinner." There are a few variations on this, but this will help you to keep yourself in God's presence throughout the day.

Faith In Action

Complete “A Personal Prayer Inventory” found in Appendix 3 pages 2 & 3.

Prayer is **personal** (but not always private) and therefore everyone’s prayer will be unique in some way. In prayer we take our life experiences and bring them into our relationship with God. We will all be starting at different places and move through the prayer life at different paces. There may be some form of prayer which allows you to commune best with God that is different from your friend. It is important not to get caught up in comparing your prayer life to others, but to use devotions or forms of prayers that others tell you about as different tools in your prayer toolbox. Some you will use all of the time, some you may never use. Remember, it is a relationship, not a race.

Vocal Prayer

When you speak, as it is right for you to do, with so great a Lord, it is well that you should think of Who it is that you are addressing, and what you yourself are, if only that you may speak to Him with proper respect. (Perfection pp. 141-142)

- We are bodily and social beings, therefore we should express our prayers at times in bodily ways and in community (cf. CCC 2701)
- Can be a rote prayer or spontaneous
- Vocal prayers can become empty if the heart is not focused on the Lord
 - ❖ Sts. Teresa of Avila and Francis de Sales remarked that it is better to pray one Hail Mary or Our Father with inner attention and love than many with a scattered mind and tepid heart
- Before beginning prayers, stop and focus on what you are about to do
- Spread vocal prayers out over time so as to not overload yourself

Meditation

- Meant for all of the faithful, not just mystics (cf. CCC 2707)
- Meditation is the way we get to know God interpersonally by conversing with him in a quiet place
 - ❖ We listen to Christ speaking through various venues and respond with our inner thoughts, applications and words
 - He speaks through the beauties of nature, Sacred Scripture, liturgy, as well as the writings and lives of the Saints (cf. CCC 2705)
- Jesus should be the focal point for all meditation (cf. CCC 2708)
 - ❖ St. Teresa of Avila taught her nuns to mediate on Christ’s passion and death
 - ❖ “But especially I commend earnest mental prayer to you, more particularly such as bears upon the Life and Passion of our Lord.... Believe me, my daughter, there is no way to God save through this door.” (IDL p. 47)
- A Method

- ❖ “The important thing is not to think much, but to love much.” (St. Teresa of Avila)
- ❖ Choose a suitable time and a quiet place
- ❖ “Begin all prayer, whether mental or vocal, by an act of the Presence of God.” (IDL p. 48)
- ❖ Scriptural or spiritual reading
- ❖ Apply the reading to your life and converse with God about it (cf. CCC 2706)
- ❖ Resolve to grow in some way based off of your reading and application
- Important points about methods
 - ❖ A method is a means to an end, not the end in itself
 - ❖ Methods are not permanent. When they have achieved their purpose, let them go
 - ❖ Meditation should be calm and unhurried
 - ❖ Love is the core of meditation, not imagination and reasoning
 - ❖ Dialog with the Trinity includes multiple types of affectivity
 - ❖ Keep it simple, be careful not to be overly concerned with techniques
 - ❖ Pay little attention to the method itself, as it may distract from the Holy Spirit
 - ❖ Difficulty with a method may mean that a new approach is needed
 - ❖ When unity with God is attained (Contemplative Prayer), the method should be left aside
 - ❖ **Christian meditation aims at filling our hearts and minds with God’s word, not in emptying of the self!**

Contemplation

- “A real awareness of God, desiring and loving him, which we do not produce but simply receive from him when we are ready for it” (Primer p. 85)
 - ❖ *What is contemplative prayer? St. Teresa answers: “Contemplative prayer [oracion mental] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.” Contemplative prayer seeks him “whom my soul loves.” It is Jesus, and in him, the Father. We seek him, because to desire him is always the beginning of love, and we seek him in that pure faith which causes us to be born of him and to live in him. In this inner prayer we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself. (CCC 2709)*
- Grows gradually after commitment to meditation and living the Gospel
- Begins with an inclination during prayer to leave thinking and words aside

Faith In Action

Complete “Discovering Your Prayer Personality” found in Appendix 3 pages 4 & 5.

Saint Teresa of Avila describes the **three essentials of a prayer-filled life** as:

- Fraternal Love
- Detachment from Material things
- True Humility

Fraternal Love

...there is nothing, however annoying, that cannot easily be borne by those who love each other, and anything which causes annoyance must be quite exceptional. (Perfection p. 26)

...all true and living devotion presupposes the Love of God; and indeed it is neither more nor less than a very real Love of God, though not always the same kind; for that Love, while shining on the soul we call grace, which makes us acceptable to His Divine Majesty; when it strengthens us to do well, it is called Charity; but when it attains its fullest perfection, in which it not only leads us to do well, but to act carefully, diligently, and promptly, then it is called Devotion....we cannot call him who neglects to observe all God's Commandments either good or devout, because in order to be good, a man must be filled with love, and to be devout, he must further be very ready and apt to perform the deeds of love. (IDL p. 4)

One cannot adore God without loving all men, his creatures. (CCC 2069)

Prayer must bear fruit in our daily lives through the cultivation of virtues, particularly the virtue of charity. Our prayer enriches our daily lives and in turn, if we strive to live virtuously, our daily lives enrich our prayer.

Detachment

It is when I possess least that I have the fewest worries and the Lord knows that, as far as I can tell, I am more afflicted when there is excess of anything than when there is lack of it... (Perfection p. 10)

Detachment (according to our state in life) encourages a total trust in the Lord and helps us to remain undistracted by things of lesser import.

† Occasional or habitual fasting and almsgiving are concrete ways to practice detachment.

- Lent is the season that the Church traditionally focuses on these practices but also prescribes that every Friday throughout the year be a day of penitence and self-denial. We are encouraged to take the opportunity to abstain from meat, fast, or deny ourselves in some small way on these days.

Humility

Humility is an honest recognition of our dependence on God. We need the graces that he gives us through the Sacraments. We would not exist without him. Humility is the most important of the three essentials mentioned by Saint Teresa of Avila because the others rely on it. All of the different **forms of prayer** flow from humility as well:

- Blessing and Adoration – Humility helps us to realize that we have been given many gifts by God so in blessing we offer those gifts back to God in that we use them in accordance

with God's will. In adoration we use our humility to realize our createdness which is expressed through exalting God whose creation we are.

- Petition and Intercession – Humility shows us our complete and total dependence on God for EVERYTHING so when we, or whomever we are praying for, are in need, we know that we cannot do it on our own and need to approach God.
- Thanksgiving – Humility enables us to thank God for all that we have, because it puts into perspective who we are and all of the great gifts and graces that God has bestowed on us and others.
- Praise - Humility gives us a glimpse of the greatness of God and so enables us to offer him praise because we realize that only he is worthy.

Faith In Action

Create a “prayer corner” in your home. Some place where you can pray every day. Here, keep a book or notepad of petitions, both personal and for others, so that no prayer requests are forgotten. It may also be helpful to keep a list of blessings, moments in your life where you noticed the hand of God. This will provide encouragement in times of distress, trial, or spiritual dryness.

Important Note: The home is the primary school of prayer. We all have the joyful obligation to teach those closest to us how to become close to *Him*.

Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

How are we to pray without ceasing? We have obligations in our lives that we need to fulfill daily as part of our vocations. Most of us are not living in a cloister and even those who are need to sleep sometime, don't they? We can fulfill this command by practicing the presence of God. This means that we are always remembering that God is with us, in every situation of our day. What happens if you forget? How can I focus on the task at hand? It becomes like muscle memory. After placing ourselves in the presence of God repeatedly every time we begin a new task it will become an automatic response for us to always have God on our mind.

Week 2: The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

- Given to us by Jesus, the Lord's Prayer (Oratio Dominica) is the prayer taught to us by Jesus and shows us the proper way to pray and the order in which we should ask for things (cf. CCC 2763)
 - ❖ *After we have placed ourselves in the presence of God our Father to adore and to love and to bless him, the Spirit of adoption stirs up in our hearts seven petitions, seven blessings. The first three, more theological, draw us toward the glory of the Father; the last four, as ways toward him, commend our wretchedness to his grace. "Deep calls to deep." (CCC 2803)*
- Our Father Who Art in Heaven
 - ❖ *Ought not so great a favour as this, Lord, to have come at the end of the prayer? Here, at the very beginning, Thou dost fill our hands and grant us so great a favour that it would be a very great blessing if our understanding could be filled with it so that the will would be occupied and we should be unable to say another word. (Perfection p. 168)*
 - ❖ "Our" indicates that we are God's and that we are in unity with one another (cf. CCC 2786 – 2793)
 - ❖ There is a great boldness in calling God "Father" which we can only do by and through Jesus as adopted children of the Father (cf. CCC 2777 & 2782)
 - ❖ *When we pray to the Father, we are in communion with him and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Then we know and recognize him with an ever new sense of wonder. The first phrase of the Our Father is a blessing of adoration before it is a supplication. For it is the glory of God that we should recognize him as "Father," the true God. We give him thanks for having revealed his name to us, for the gift of believing in it, and for the indwelling of his Presence in us. (CCC 2781)*
 - ❖ *...wherever God is, there is Heaven. (Perfection p. 173)*
 - ❖ *When the Church prays "our Father who art in heaven," she is professing that we are the People of God, already seated "with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and "hidden with Christ in God;" yet at the same time, "here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling." (CCC 2796)*
- Hallowed Be Thy Name
 - ❖ Here, we not only recognize that the name of God is holy in praise and thanksgiving, but we also are petitioning that we be made holy through keeping the name of God holy. (cf. CCC 2807)
- Thy Kingdom Come
 - ❖ In this multifaceted petition we pray not only for the final coming of God's kingdom, but also that God reigns in our hearts and lives so that we may live in his kingdom here and now. (cf. CCC 2818, 2820)
- Thy Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven
 - ❖ *But as it is, though my will is not yet free from self-interest, I give it to Thee freely. For I have proved, by long experience, how much I gain by leaving it freely*

in Thy hands. O friends, what a great gain is this—and how much we lose through not fulfilling our promises to the Lord in the Paternoster, and giving Him what we offer Him! (Perfection p. 206)

- ❖ In Christ, the will of the Father has been perfectly fulfilled and in our sinfulness we fall short of fulfilling his will. We here ask that our will be joined to that of Christ so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may do the will of the Father. (cf. CCC 2825)
- ❖ This must be a sincere act of resolution: *For if you give Him your will in any other way, you are just showing Him a jewel, making as if to give it to Him and begging Him to take it, and then, when He puts out His hand to do so, taking it back and holding on to it tightly.* (Perfection p. 208)
- ❖ *By prayer we can discern "what is the will of God" and obtain the endurance to do it. Jesus teaches us that one enters the kingdom of heaven not by speaking words, but by doing "the will of my Father in heaven."* (CCC 2826)
- Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread
 - ❖ We acknowledge God's goodness and recognize our covenant with him as his adopted children as we bring before him our needs as well as the needs of others. (cf. CCC 2828-2831)
 - ❖ *This bread, then, is ours daily, it seems to me, because we have Him here on earth, since He has remained with us here and we receive Him; and, if we profit by His company, we shall also have Him in Heaven, for the only reason He remains with us is to help and encourage and sustain us so that we shall do that will, which, as we have said, is to be fulfilled in us.... As for that other bread, have no anxiety about it if you have truly resigned yourselves to God's will. I mean that at these hours of prayer you are dealing with more important matters and there is time enough for you to labour and earn your daily bread.* (Perfection pp. 218-221)
 - ❖ *"Pray and work." "Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you." Even when we have done our work, the food we receive is still a gift from our Father; it is good to ask him for it and to thank him, as Christian families do when saying grace at meals.* (CCC 2834)
- And Forgive Us Our Trespasses as We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us
 - ❖ This petition is distinct in that it has a qualifier attached to it; we must forgive others. Our participation is required.
 - ❖ *Now - and this is daunting - this outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see. In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love; but in confessing our sins, our hearts are opened to his grace.* (CCC 2840)
 - ❖ *I cannot believe that a soul which has approached so nearly to Mercy Itself, and has learned to know itself and the greatness of God's pardon, will not immediately and readily forgive, and be mollified and remain on good terms with*

a person who has done it wrong. For such a soul remembers the consolation and grace which He has shown it, in which it has recognized the signs of great love, and it is glad that the occasion presents itself for showing Him some love in return. (Perfection p. 241)

- And Lead Us Not Into Temptation
 - ❖ We ask that God not *allow* us to enter into temptation and sin. We ask for strength as we discern the trials of life that we may serve only God and have no other master. (cf. CCC 2846-2849)
- But Deliver Us from Evil
 - ❖ *When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with deliverance from the evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ's return. By praying in this way, she anticipates in humility of faith the gathering together of everyone and everything in him who has "the keys of Death and Hades," who "is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (CCC 2854)*
- The Final Doxology
 - ❖ *"For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever," takes up again, by inclusion, the first three petitions to our Father: the glorification of his name, the coming of his reign, and the power of his saving will. But these prayers are now proclaimed as adoration and thanksgiving, as in the liturgy of heaven. The ruler of this world has mendaciously attributed to himself the three titles of kingship, power, and glory. Christ, the Lord, restores them to his Father and our Father, until he hands over the kingdom to him when the mystery of salvation will be brought to its completion and God will be all in all. (CCC 2855)*

Faith In Action

Slowly pray the Our Father with the class taking time to reflect on the meaning of the words.

Distractions

- If you have the experience of trying to pray, but your mind keeps drifting to something that you have to do that day or something that you should have done the previous day, consider two possibilities:
 - ❖ God may want to address whatever keeps popping up in your mind. Maybe you need to pray about it.
 - ❖ Sometimes when we try to push things out of our minds to deal with later, they just come back all the more. Try writing down recurring thoughts during prayer and deal with them after prayer time is over.

- Other exterior distractions can be a real obstacle to prayer.
 - ❖ Pray early in the morning. If you have young children or someone else that you have to care for, getting up before they normally do will give you some undistracted time for prayer. Praying in the evening after your dependents go to bed is another option; however, people are more readily focused in the morning.
 - ❖ Create a private, quiet place in your home where you can pray. Leave all of the phones, tablets, and other devices in another room.

Spiritual Dryness

- Spiritual dryness is when we pray but do not “feel” anything. There is no perceived communication by God. Perhaps we even feel abandoned.
- This is a common stage in prayer development experienced by many saints. Mother Theresa was in a state of spiritual dryness, also known as the “Dark Night of the Soul,” for most of her ministry.
- The first step in dealing with this is to diagnose yourself and do an examination of conscience.
 - ❖ Is there some sin in my life keeping me from God?
 - ❖ What am I holding back from God? Am I giving my entire life over to him?
- Typically this stage in prayer life is God bringing us above what we think we need and removing our attachments. If our prayer lives become about the “consolations” or “sweetness’s” of the “feelings” that we have when we pray, we are not focused properly on God, but on the “feelings.”
- Saint John of the Cross describes it like a mother weening off a child from breast milk to solid foods. As we grow, we need more nutrition than we can get from the milk so we need to move to solid foods. It is the same in our spiritual lives.

Week 3: Liturgical Prayer

Weekly Reading Before Class: Primer Chapters 10, 11

Liturgy of the Hours

- Also known as Christian Prayer, Divine Office, or Breviary
- Derived mainly from scripture with excerpts from the writings of the Saints and theologians
- Compliments the Liturgical seasons and feasts
- Can be prayed both in community and in private
- Meant to be prayed in conjunction with the liturgy and acts both as preparation for, as well as an extension of, the Eucharistic Liturgy
- Many priests and religious are required to pray the Office and all of the laity is invited to join in the official prayer of the Church
- Prayer at fixed hours throughout the day consecrates the whole day to God
 - ❖ The first hour prayed each day is begun with the Invitatory
 - ❖ Office of Readings: At Vatican II it was formed out of Matins, the night or vigils prayers proper to the Liturgy of the Hours. It can be prayed at any time of the day.
 - ❖ Morning Prayer (Lauds meaning “praise”): Traditionally prayed at 6:00 AM
 - ❖ Mid-Morning Prayer (Terce meaning “third hour”): Traditionally prayed at 9:00 AM
 - ❖ Mid-Day Prayer (Sext meaning “sixth hour”): Traditionally prayed at Noon
 - ❖ Mid-Afternoon Prayer (None meaning “ninth hour”): Traditionally prayed at 3:00 PM
 - ❖ Evening Prayer (Vespers meaning “evening”): Traditionally prayed at 6:00 PM
 - ❖ Night Prayer (Compline meaning “complete”): Traditionally prayed at 9:00 PM
- General flow of the Hours
 - ❖ Each Hour begins with a verse and response
 - God, come to my assistance...
 - ❖ Hymn
 - ❖ Psalmody
 - “In the liturgy of the hours the Church in large measure prays through the magnificent songs that the Old Testament authors composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The origin of these verses gives them great power to raise the mind to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in times of favor, and to bring consolation and courage in times of trial.” (GILH, 100)
 - ❖ Reading
 - The Office of Readings has two longer readings, one biblical, and one by a Saint or theologian, while the other hours have one shorter biblical reading
 - ❖ Responsory
 - ❖ Gospel Canticle

- Only for Lauds and Vespers
- Lauds: Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)
- Vespers: Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)
- ❖ Intercessions
 - Only for Lauds and Vespers
- ❖ The Lord's Prayer
 - Only for Lauds and Vespers
- ❖ Concluding Prayer
- ❖ Dismissal
 - Lauds and Vespers (In the absence of a priest or deacon): "May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen"
 - Office of Readings, Terce, Sext, and None: "Let us praise the Lord. And give him thanks.
 - Compline: "May the all-powerful Lord grant us a restful night and a peaceful death. Amen."

Eucharistic Liturgy

- Can be described as a sort of conversation with God where he offers himself to us through his word and the Eucharist, and we respond by offering ourselves back to him through our prayers and responses.
- Liturgy of the Word
 - ❖ A series of God speaking to us, through the Scriptures and Homily, and our response to his word via our prayers and responses
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - ❖ The highest form of prayer
 - *The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."* (CCC 1324)
 - ❖ "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word for *thanksgiving*
 - ❖ Christ is **REALLY** present in the Eucharist, body, blood, soul, and divinity (CCC 1374)
 - A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Eucharist prior to sacramental confession (Code of Canon Law, Can. 916)
 - Must fast for at least one hour before reception of Holy Communion (Can. 919)
 - Obligated to receive the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season (Can. 920)
 - ❖ *When you have received the Lord, and are in His very presence, try to shut the bodily eyes and to open the eyes of the soul and to look into your own hearts... if you practice this habit of staying with Him, not just once or twice, but whenever you communicate, and strive to keep your conscience clear so that you can often rejoice in this your Good, He will not, as I have said, come so much disguised as to*

be unable to make His presence known to you in many ways, according to the desire which you have of seeing Him. So great indeed may be your longing for Him that he will reveal Himself to you wholly. (Perfection pp. 226-227)

- We are called to prepare ourselves to receive Jesus prior to the Mass.
 - ❖ Reading and praying with the Scriptures for that Mass
 - ❖ Examination of conscience and the Sacrament of Confession
 - ❖ Fasting for one hour prior to Mass
 - ❖ Appropriate dress
 - Wearing our “Sunday Best” to Mass each week is a sign of respect as well as a prayer to God that we are giving our very best to Him.
 - ❖ Praying a Rosary before Mass is a traditional Catholic practice
 - Mary was so receptive to God’s Word that it literally took flesh within her. Here we pray that we too may be receptive as Mary was to Christ in both the hearing of His Word in the Scriptures and in the receiving of His Body in the Eucharist.
 - ❖ Arrive a few minutes early so that you can take some time to focus and place yourself in the presence of God.

Sharing in the Eucharist is the heart of Sunday, but the duty to keep Sunday holy cannot be reduced to this. In fact, the Lord's Day is lived well if it is marked from beginning to end by grateful and active remembrance of God's saving work. This commits each of Christ's disciples to shape the other moments of the day — those outside the liturgical context: family life, social relationships, moments of relaxation — in such a way that the peace and joy of the Risen Lord will emerge in the ordinary events of life. For example, the relaxed gathering of parents and children can be an opportunity not only to listen to one another but also to share a few formative and more reflective moments. Even in lay life, when possible, why not make provision for special times of prayer — especially the solemn celebration of Vespers, for example — or moments of catechesis, which on the eve of Sunday or on Sunday afternoon might prepare for or complete the gift of the Eucharist in people's hearts?

This rather traditional way of keeping Sunday holy has perhaps become more difficult for many people; but the Church shows her faith in the strength of the Risen Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit by making it known that, today more than ever, she is unwilling to settle for minimalism and mediocrity at the level of faith. She wants to help Christians to do what is most correct and pleasing to the Lord. And despite the difficulties, there are positive and encouraging signs. In many parts of the Church, a new need for prayer in its many forms is being felt; and this is a gift of the Holy Spirit. There is also a rediscovery of ancient religious practices, such as pilgrimages; and often the faithful take advantage of Sunday rest to visit a Shrine where, with the whole family perhaps, they can spend time in a more intense experience of faith. These are moments of grace which must be fostered through evangelization and guided by genuine pastoral wisdom. (St. John Paul II, Dies Domni, 52; cf. 55-73)

Eucharistic Adoration

- The exposition of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist for adoration by all of the faithful
- Here we spend time with Christ to love and communicate with him.
- Adoration comes from the Latin “ad-oratio” meaning “mouth-to-mouth” and so Adoration is an intimate embrace or kiss.
- Adoration is an extension of the Eucharistic Celebration
- When the Eucharist is exposed, that is outside of the tabernacle, at least 2 adorers are required at all times with the Blessed Sacrament
- The solemn exposition will typically involve incense, scripture readings, hymns, prayers, time for silent prayers, and a Benediction (A blessing of the people with the Blessed Sacrament).
- Benediction is done at the end of Adoration and ends when the Eucharist is reposed in the tabernacle.

Sacramentals

- Sacramentals are physical symbols of the graces that we receive in the Sacraments.
- When sacramentals are blessed by a priest and are used devoutly as an article of devotion, the faithful using them receive a partial indulgence.
 - ❖ It is not the object itself that provides the grace, but the devotion that it inspires in us that provides the grace and compels us towards Sainthood. It does one no good to simply wear a scapular or saint medal but not pray or have a conversion of heart.
- Some examples:
 - ❖ Crucifix
 - ❖ Rosary
 - ❖ Sacred Images
 - ❖ Saint Medals
 - ❖ Holy Water
 - ❖ Scapulars

Indulgences

- *An indulgence is the remission before God of the temporal punishment due sins already forgiven as far as their guilt is concerned, which the follower of Christ with the proper dispositions and under certain determined conditions acquires through the intervention of the Church which, as minister of the Redemption, authoritatively dispenses and applies the treasury of the satisfaction won by Christ and the saints.* (Pope Paul VI, Indulgentiarum Doctrina, Norm 1; c.f. CCC 1471-1479)
- Can be applied to the living or the dead.
- All indulgences have specific and general conditions
- Two kinds of indulgences:
 - ❖ Partial

- General Condition: Requires the faithful to be in the state of grace at the time of the completion of the work.
- ❖ Plenary
 - 4 General conditions:
 - Interior disposition of complete detachment from sin
 - Sacramental Confession
 - Eucharistic Communion
 - Prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father
- There are 4 General Grants of Indulgences:
 - ❖ A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who, in the performance of their duties and bearing the trials of life, raise their mind with humble confidence to God, adding even if only mentally – some pious invocation.
 - ❖ A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful, who in a spirit of faith and mercy give of themselves or of their goods to serve their brothers in need.
 - ❖ A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful, who in a spirit of penance voluntarily deprive themselves of what is licit and pleasing to them.
 - ❖ A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who, in the particular circumstances of daily life, voluntarily give explicit witness to their faith before others.
- There are over 70 other indulgences listed in *The Enchiridion of Indulgences* which points out 4 plenary indulgences as deserving special mention:
 - ❖ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for at least on half an hour
 - ❖ Devout reading of the Sacred Scriptures for at least one half and hour
 - ❖ The pious exercise of the Way of the Cross
 - ❖ The recitation of the Marian Rosary in a church or public oratory or in a family group, a religious Community or pious Association.
- There are also special indulgences attached to jubilee years or pilgrimages that are declared by the pope.

Novenas

- A Novena is a series of specific prayers that a person prays for nine consecutive days, or one day for nine weeks in order to obtain a special grace. The prayers are usually in honor of a specific saint or commemorate something specific about Christ.

Week 4: Lectio Divina and Other Devotions

Weekly Reading Before Class: WRAP

Lectio Divina

- Latin for *Divine Reading*
- A great way to prepare for Mass!
- A method of praying with scripture
 - ❖ *...the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer... (CCC 1177)*
- *It consists in pouring over a biblical text for some time, reading it and rereading it, as it were, "ruminating" on it as the Fathers say and squeezing from it, so to speak, all its "juice", so that it may nourish meditation and contemplation and, like water, succeed in irrigating life itself. (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, November 6, 2005)*
- *One condition for Lectio divina is that the mind and heart be illumined by the Holy Spirit, that is, by the same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, and that they be approached with an attitude of "reverential hearing". (Ibid)*
- There are 4 stages of Lectio Divina:
 - ❖ Reading (Lectio)
 - Read the Scripture passage a few times and look for some part, a phrase or word that grabs your attention.
 - ❖ Reflecting (Meditatio)
 - Ponder the word(s) that grabbed your attention in the previous step.
 - What does Jesus want to communicate to you through in/them?
 - How does this apply to your life?
 - ❖ Praying (Oratio)
 - Pray to Christ about the word that you have received. Converse with him about it. Ask for the graces to live out the application of Jesus' word to you.
 - ❖ Resting (Contemplatio)
 - Calmly place yourself in the presence of the Lord focusing all your attention on him and let the word and conversation sink in.
 - Thank Jesus for your time with him.
- WRAP
 - ❖ WRAP is an acronym for a method of praying the lectio divina with journaling.
 - ❖ Each letter stands for a different step in the journaling process:
 - Write
 - Reflect
 - Apply
 - Praise
 - ❖ In the WRITE stage you write down the verse or verses that stood out to you when reading the passage. Underline any specific words which speak to you most.
 - ❖ In the REFLECT stage there are some options depending on your preferences and what works best for you. Here, you can look at the passage analytically and

write down what it means. Or you can imagine yourself in the scene, either as an observer or participant, and write down what you see and feel.

- ❖ In the APPLY stage you respond to what you reflected on and decide how you will let it impact your life in a concrete way.
- ❖ In the Praise stage you write a prayer of thanksgiving for your time with the Lord.

Faith In Action

Use either the Gospel reading for today or the upcoming Sunday in the WRAP method of Lectio Divina. A WRAP Journal sheet for this exercise can be found on page 6 of Appendix 3.

Rosary

The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight and to keep oneself from sin...If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the Rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labors. (Pope Pius XI)

- The Rosary is a series of prayers prayed while meditating on different mysteries of Christ.
- The repetitive nature of the prayers fosters meditation on the mysteries.
- There are 4 sets of 5 mysteries:
 - ❖ **Joyful Mysteries** (Traditionally prayed on Mondays and Saturdays)
 1. **The Annunciation** (Luke 1: 26-38; John 1:14)
 2. **The Visitation** (Luke 1: 39-56)
 3. **The Birth of Our Lord** (Luke 2: 6-20; Matthew 1:18-25)
 4. **The Presentation in the Temple** (Luke 2: 22-39)
 5. **The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple** (Luke 2: 41-51)
 - ❖ **Luminous Mysteries** (Traditionally prayed on Thursdays)
 1. **The Baptism in the Jordan** (Matthew 3:11-17; Luke 3:15-22; John 1:22-34)
 2. **The Wedding at Cana** (John 2: 1-12)
 3. **The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God** (Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 5:1-8; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:21)
 4. **The Transfiguration** (Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8)
 5. **The Institution of the Eucharist** (Matthew 26:26-28; John 6: 33-59)
 - ❖ **Sorrowful Mysteries** (Traditionally prayed on Tuesdays and Fridays)
 1. **The Agony in the Garden** (Matthew 26: 36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22: 39-46)
 2. **The Scourging at the Pillar** (Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1)
 3. **The Crowning with Thorns** (Matthew 27:29-30; Mark 15:16-20; John 1: 2-3)

4. **The Carrying of the Cross** (Luke 23: 26-32; Matthew 27:31-32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23: 26-32)
5. **The Crucifixion** (Luke 23: 33-46; Matthew 27: 33-54; Mark 15: 22-39; Luke 23: 33-47; John 19: 17-37)

❖ **Glorious Mysteries** (Traditionally prayed on Sundays and Wednesdays)

1. **The Resurrection** (Matthew 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-18; Luke 24: 1-49; John 20:1-29)
 2. **The Ascension of Our Lord** (Mark: 16: 19-20; Luke 24: 50-51; Acts 1: 6-11)
 3. **The Descent of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2: 1-41)
 4. **The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven** (Revelation 12:1)
 5. **The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (Revelation 12:1)
- There is an instruction on how to pray the Rosary included in with the Rosary that you were given at the beginning of the class.
 - To help in meditation, you are encouraged to pray a Scriptural Rosary which entails the reading of the scripture verses above at the beginning of each decade or breaking up the passages and reading a verse before each Hail Mary.

Divine Mercy Chaplet

- The Chaplet of Divine Mercy was given to St. Maria Faustina Kowalska by Jesus in 1935.
- Jesus asked that she not only pray this chaplet in reparation for all of our sins, but also that she spread the message of his Divine Mercy throughout the world.
- The Divine Mercy Chaplet uses a standard Rosary to keep track of the prayers.
- A holy card with instructions on how to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy has been included with the Rosary given to you for this class.

Divine Mercy Sunday

- Declared a feast of the Universal Church by St. John Paul II in 2000, Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter.
- There is both a plenary and a partial indulgence available on this day.
 - ❖ A plenary indulgence, granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honour of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!")
 - ❖ A partial indulgence, granted to the faithful who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation.

Devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

- In 1672 Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and asked her to spread the message about a devotion to his Most Sacred Heart.
- There are several aspects of this devotion including:
 - ❖ Consecration
 - ❖ First Fridays (12 promises tied to this devotion)
 - ❖ Novena

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- Has a long history in the Church but was popularized after the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima.
- Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is deeply connected with the Devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- Our Lady gave 15 promises to those who pray the Rosary