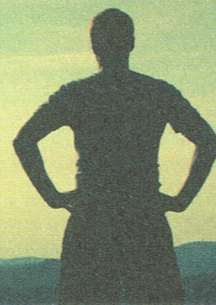


Journey of Faith



In Short:



- We connect to God through personal and traditional prayers.
- The rosary reflects the mystery of Christ.
- There are many traditional Catholic prayers to try.

The Our Father (The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Matthew 6:9–15 and Luke 11:1–4

This is the best-known prayer of Christianity, probably because it's the one Jesus taught his disciples when one of them said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). We are the adopted daughters and sons of God, and so we can call God "Father." We don't pray for ourselves alone but for everyone as members of God's family.

As children of God, we want to honor God.

Hallowed means to "make holy"; we want God's name to be honored by all, and we want God's desire for humanity to be fulfilled. All that Jesus did and taught was the will of God. We pray that we may have help and strength to do God's will. And God's will is for us to have life and to have it fully (John 10:10).

Although spiritually Christ himself is our "bread of life," our daily bread for our life and faith journey, we ask God for all we need to live each day (John 6:35, 48). That includes forgiveness for the wrongs we have done. We recognize our sinfulness and acknowledge God's merciful love and forgiveness. If we hope for forgiveness from God, we must be willing to forgive others. Finally, we pray to be kept safe from the power of evil and all that leads to evil.

Catholic Prayers and Practices

Sometimes we can't find the words to pray. We may feel overwhelmed or unable to concentrate. In those moments, having prayers committed to memory is helpful. *Repeating a prayer can focus our attention on God and quiet our minds.*

Catholics repeat some prayers because we've found they're the best way to express certain thoughts to God. You may frequently say, "I love you" to your family because these are the simplest and clearest words to convey how you feel.

Memorizing prayers makes it easier to pray with others. When we pray together, we both express and enhance our sense of community.

- *What effects and advantages of praying with other people do you see?*



These basic prayers may be used alone or in combination with other Catholic prayers and rites.

You'll learn more about the Lord's Prayer in a later lesson.

- What might it mean to accept God as your "father?" How can prayer help you live out this decision?



The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This blessing dates to the second century when Christians would trace a cross on their foreheads with their thumbs. The gesture is used in the anointing that's a part of baptism and confirmation.

The Sign of the Cross prayer is made by touching the fingertips of your right hand to your forehead, breast, left shoulder, then right shoulder. The gesture is accompanied by the words of the prayer honoring the Trinity. It's the traditional way Catholics begin and end our prayers. We also end most prayers by saying, "**Amen**," which means, "Yes; I believe."

The Hail Mary

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;
blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

The Hail Mary begins with two biblical verses: the words of the Archangel Gabriel—"Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you"—and of Mary's cousin Elizabeth—"Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:28, 42). It concludes with a request that acknowledges Mary as the Mother of our Savior. In this prayer, we don't worship Mary; only God is worthy of our worship. We join God in honoring Mary because of her special relationship to Jesus and pray to be able to follow her example of surrendering to God's will.

The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and
the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.*

The Apostles' Creed "is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith" (CCC 194). From the Latin for "I believe," our **creed** is a basic statement of Christian belief and an instrument of Church unity. It's most often recited at Mass or as part of a **chapel**.

Chaplet: “Beads strung together on which prayers are counted as they are recited,” such as a rosary; also, the series of prayers recited on such beads (*Modern Catholic Dictionary*).

The Rosary



The **rosary** is a meditation on the events (called “mysteries”) in the life of Jesus and Mary. There are four sets, each including five mysteries: the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Glorious Mysteries, and the Luminous Mysteries.

The rosary is an excellent everyday prayer and is especially useful when we want to pray but find it difficult or impossible to pray in our own words. For many Catholics, the rosary offers great comfort in difficult times.

1. Make the sign of the cross and say the Apostles’ Creed.
2. Say the Lord’s Prayer.
3. Say three Hail Marys.

4. Say the Glory Be and announce the first mystery.
5. Say the Lord’s Prayer.
6. Say ten Hail Marys while meditating on the mystery.
7. Repeat steps 4, 5, and 6, continuing with the second, third, fourth, and fifth mysteries.

Other Catholic Prayers and Devotions

The **Liturgy of the Hours** (or **Divine Office**) is a repeating cycle of prayers, hymns, and readings for various “hours” of the day—up to a total of seven. *Hours* refers to how the prayers mark the phases of the day, *not* how long each prayer lasts. This is part of the daily, public prayer of the Church; the other part is the Mass.

Novena, from the Latin word meaning “nine,” refers to a devotion that extends for nine consecutive days (weeks or months). The set number was originally based on the apostles’ nine days of prayer between the ascension of Jesus and the Spirit’s coming at Pentecost.

The **Angelus** is a prayer recounting the events that led up to our Lord’s birth and our redemption. It is recited at 6 AM, noon, and 6 PM.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is the prayerful ceremony in which a host of the Eucharist is exposed for adoration in a **monstrance**.

Genuflection—bending the knee as a sign of reverence for the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Litany—literally a “list” of saints. After each saint is named, we sing or say, “Pray for us.”



Sacramentals are visible signs that draw us to God and make all aspects of life holy. A common part of Catholic prayer and devotion, they may be divided into three broad categories:

1. Sacred actions—signing the cross, genuflecting.
2. Blessings—prayers and rituals, sprinkling or signing with holy water, laying on of hands, incensing.
3. Objects that aid us in worship and devotion—candles, blessed ashes and palms, Bibles, crucifixes, medals, statues, religious art.

The existence and popularity of sacramentals testify to the diversity of prayer in the Church and that prayer can involve all our senses and go beyond words.



Pray a decade of the rosary, part of the Liturgy of the Hours, or the Angelus as a group. Then capture your reaction(s) in your journal:

How did God speak to you in this prayer?

Would you like to pray this again or try a different prayer next session?

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