

Journey of Faith



In Short:



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

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 6:9–13).

The Lord's Prayer is the prayer Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him how they should pray. 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 all that he 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 have life fully.

Spiritually, Christ is our daily bread for the great journey, the food for life which we can receive every day in the Eucharist. In addition to this food, we ask God for all that we need to live each day including forgiveness. We recognize our sinfulness, but we also 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, because that is what is so damaging to people and to all creation. You'll learn more about the Lord's Prayer later, in lesson E6.

The Sign of the Cross



Catholic Prayers and Practices

We live in a world filled with nonstop activity, and finding time to pray or talk with God can be just as big a challenge as finding the right words. When you aren't sure where to start, the common prayers Catholics learn can be helpful. Prayers that are memorized or written down also help when we don't know what to say or when we are so upset we can't think clearly. Repeated prayer helps to still our minds and focus our attention on God.

Another big advantage to learning prayers is that it makes it very easy to pray with others. While personal conversation with God is important, community prayer is given the highest regard by Jesus, who assures us that when two or more are gathered in his name, he is there (Matthew 18:20).

The following Catholic prayers are among the most important to Catholics.

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

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

This prayer dates to the second century, when Christians would trace the sign of the cross on their foreheads with their thumbs so they could recognize each other during times of persecution.

Today, Catholics traditionally begin and end their prayers with the sign of the cross, which proclaims their faith in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. When we end on amen, we're saying, "yes, we believe" and confirming what comes before it.

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.

Like the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary comes directly from Scripture. It begins with the words of the Archangel Gabriel in Luke 1:28 and continues with the words of Mary's cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:42, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." The prayer concludes with our petition that Mary intercede for us, because she is the Mother of God, a woman who lived a life of perfect faithfulness to God.

Doxology

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

A **doxology** is a prayer of praise and gratitude to God. Traditionally, Catholics have called this doxology the Glory Be.

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed has its roots in an ancient Roman creed. It is a basic statement of Christian beliefs, simpler than the more detailed Nicene Creed used in Catholic liturgy (see Lesson E4 "The Nicene Creed").

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth

There is only one God, whom Jesus instructed us to call our Father. God created everything there is.

and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord

We believe in Jesus who is God's only Son from all eternity. Jesus is our Master.

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary

Jesus' conception was a miracle of the Holy Spirit, since Mary remained a virgin.

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried

The Roman governor Pilate ordered Jesus' execution. Jesus did die and was buried.

he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead

After he died, but before his resurrection on the Sunday after Good Friday, Jesus went to those people who had died long before him to save them also. This is what the prayer means by "hell."

he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty

Jesus returned to heaven to be with his Father.

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead

Jesus will return to judge all people on Judgment Day.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church

The Holy Spirit exists. The Church is holy because Jesus is its head; it is catholic (small "c") which means universal or everywhere throughout history.

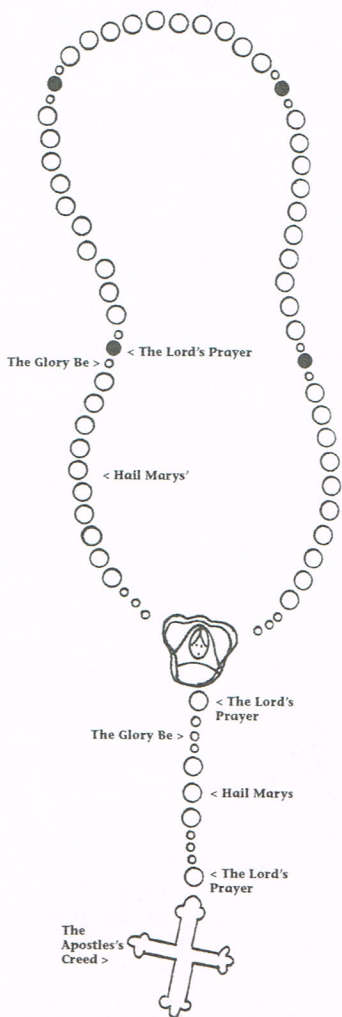
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

All of us—the living and the dead—are united in our dedication to God. Furthermore, through God's mercy, our sins are always forgiven.

the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

We will all rise one day after we have died with glorified bodies, and we will live forever with God.

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 Practices

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

A benediction is a blessing of the people. Here the people are blessed with the sacred host (the Eucharist is kept in a **monstrance**, a vessel constructed of precious metals in such a way that the consecrated host is clearly visible). The blessing begins with readings from Scripture, hymns, prayers, and silent worship. The Benediction focuses on the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

Blessing

This is the placing of a person or object under the care of God or dedicating a person or thing to the service of God. A simple blessing is usually made with the sign of the cross, sometimes along with the sprinkling of holy water. The Church also has a large number of specific blessings for various times and special occasions.

Contemplation

Contemplation is a form of silent, meditative prayer in which a person rests in the knowledge and love of God.

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

The fourteen works are rooted in the Scriptures. The corporal works of mercy are: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, and bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are: counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently, pray for the living and the dead.

Fasting and Abstinence

Fasting involves not eating between meals and eating less at regular meals. Fasting is required only on Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent) and Good Friday for those in good health from ages eighteen through fifty-nine. Abstinence is refraining from eating meat. Abstinence is required on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays during Lent for those in good health who are fourteen years old and older.

Genuflection

This is the act of bending down on the right knee while entering a pew or crossing in front of the tabernacle. It is a sign of faith and an act of reverence (respect) for the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Retreat

A retreat is a period of time dedicated to prayer, reflection, and solitude. Its purpose is to deepen our relationship with God.

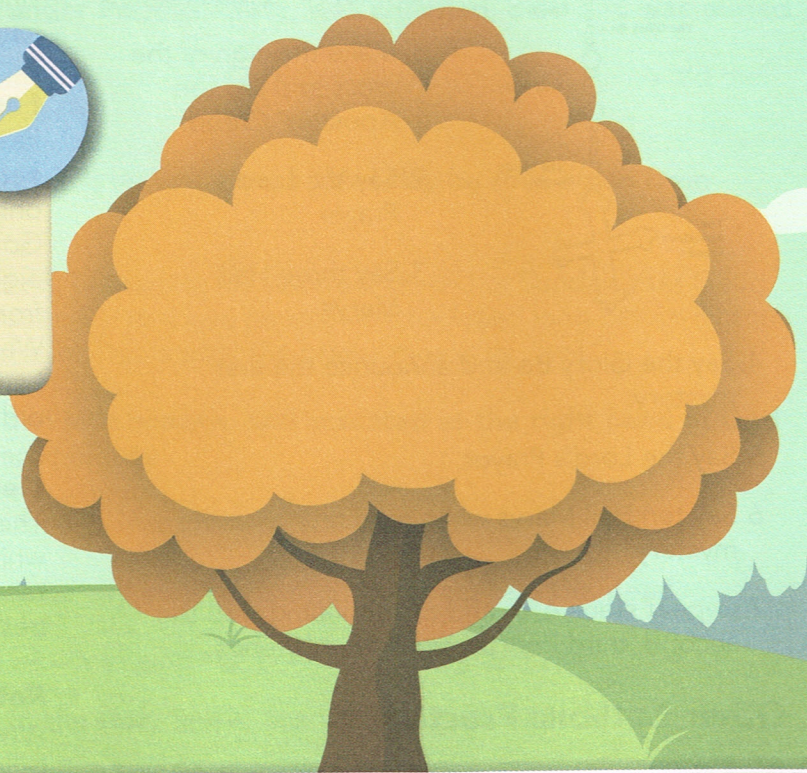
Sacramentals

These are sacred signs and symbols that help to make our faith more meaningful. Examples of sacramentals include blessed palms, blessed ashes, blessed candles, blessed medals, and holy water.

As a group, list any other prayers or practices you've heard about or observed but don't really understand. If you have time, discuss or research their origin in class. If not, pick one or two to research with your sponsor.

Do any of the Catholic prayers discussed in this lesson resonate with you?

Are any of them confusing or intimidating? Why?



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