

Prayer journal

**october
november
december**



THE HOLY ROOD
COLLABORATIVE

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential part of any relationship and prayer is how we communicate with God. Therefore, developing a daily habit of prayer is an indispensable part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. For those first starting to pray regularly, setting a daily goal of 15 minutes is a great place to begin. 15 minutes is about 1% of the day, and spending that time with the Lord can make a significant difference in one's life and relationship with God.

Not sure where to start? This first prayer journal includes directions for four ways of praying that have been designated as "family favorites." They are: Praying the Rosary, Praying with Scripture, Praying with Music, and Praying the Examen. Each offers a different way of praying—some may be more your family's style than others. Feel free to pick whatever style works best for your family, rotate between different styles, or use a completely different style that works for you. The important thing is to be spending time with God each day.

THE ROSARY The word rosary comes from the Latin, *rosarim*, meaning "crown of roses" and the Rosary is a devotion that honors the Blessed Mother that dates back to as early as the 6th century. Generally prayed using a set of beads, the Rosary is a pattern of repeated prayers. The rhythm of these prayers helps those praying the Rosary to meditate on key moments in the life of Christ and His mother, known as mysteries.

SCRIPTURE Praying with the word of God is a wonderful way to grow in one's relationship with God. A familiarity with Scripture should be part of every Christian's spiritual practice. Throughout the ages, the saints have encouraged praying in this way. St. Ambrose once said, "*We have been given Sacred Scripture so that God and man may talk together; for we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying.*"

MUSIC Music is a great way to connect with God. Throughout history people have used music to praise and petition God. In fact, Scripture often mentions the people of God turning to God in song in times of triumph as well as in times of trial. Today we are blessed with easy access to a wide variety of sacred music, all of which contain tremendous beauty and the ability to express that which cannot be conveyed through words alone.

EXAMEN First envisioned by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Examen is a way of praying where one prayerfully reflects on the day in the presence of God. Gratitude and contrition are the two primary focuses of this prayer. Gratitude for all of the blessings God has given throughout the day, and contrition for any sins committed in that same period. The Examen also involves looking ahead with a commitment to do better.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN There are as many ways to pray as there are people, and there is no right (or wrong) way to talk to God. The important thing is that you are talking to Him! Finding a way to pray that works for you and your family will make all the difference. If your family has a favorite way of praying, pray that way! Or try different ways until you find something that works for you. Remember it does not matter how you pray; it only matters that you pray every day.

PRAYING THE ROSARY

Pray a traditional Rosary using the directions on the following two pages. Interested in mixing it up? In addition to the traditional Rosary (below), consider one of the variations found on the following page. Need a tech assist? Check out our website—www.theholyrood.org/praying-the-rosary—here you will find suggestions of Rosary apps, videos, podcasts, etc.

When praying the Rosary with others, it is prayed as follows:

Leader: *italics*

Others: **bold**

Everyone: ***bold italics***

• The Traditional Rosary •

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 Our Father

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.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

The Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Mysteries are announced by the leader.

See chart on the following page for a full list of all the mysteries.

The Fatima Prayer

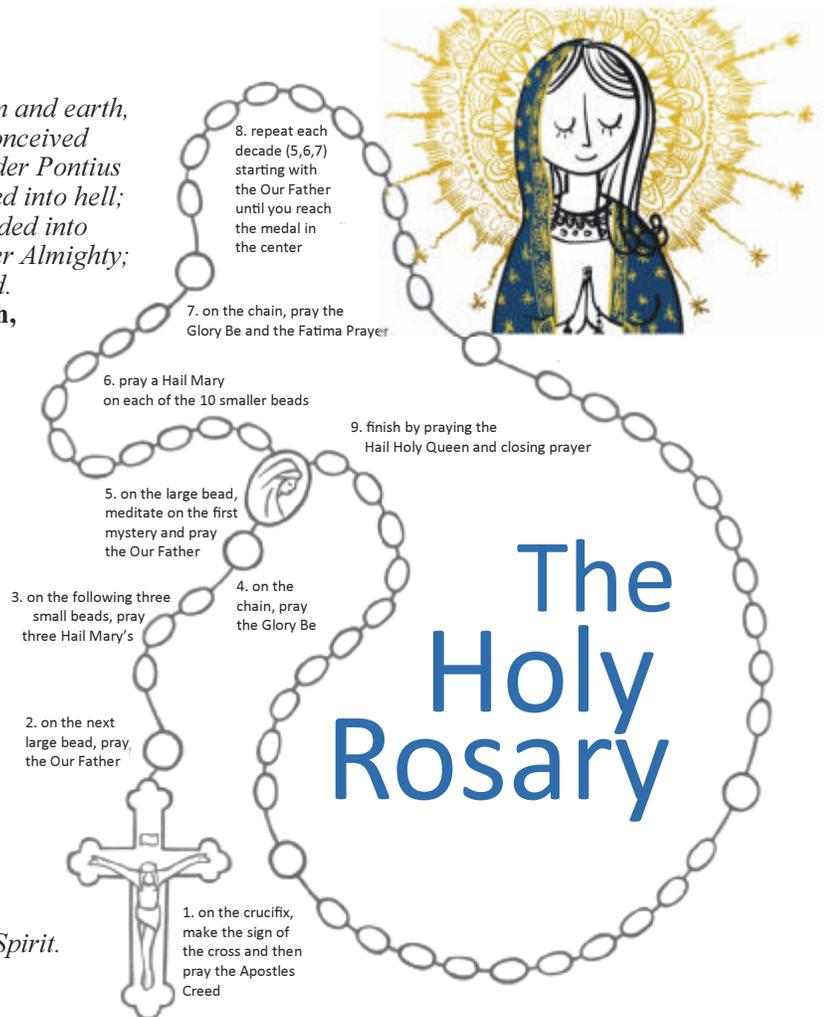
O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your mercy. Amen.

Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Concluding Prayer

O God, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life. Grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating upon these mysteries of The Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



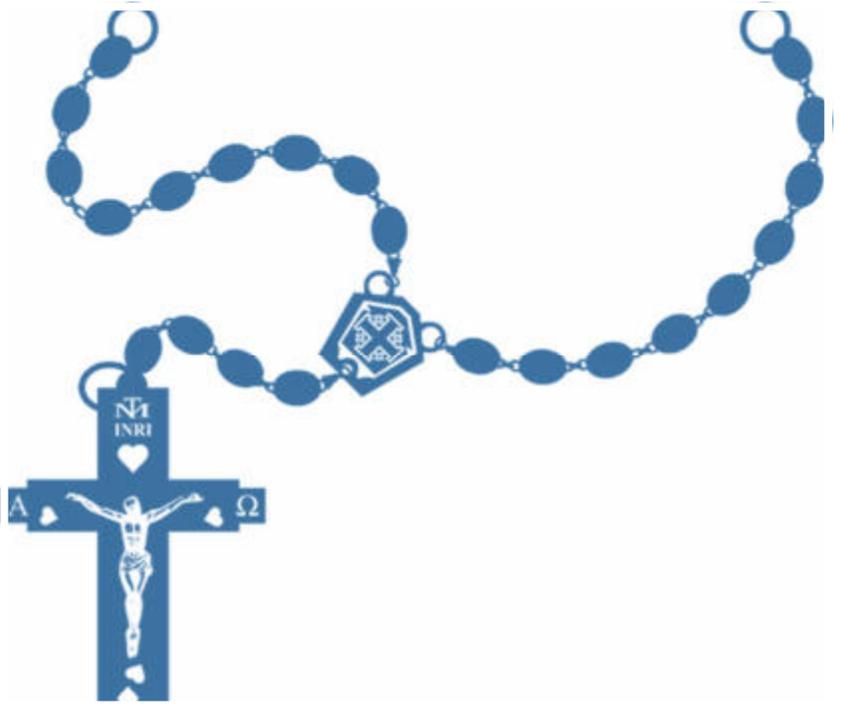
• Variations of the Rosary •

Single Decade

If you do not have enough time to pray a full Rosary, pray just a decade instead. A decade consists of 1 Our Father, 10 Hail Mary's, 1 Glory Be, and 1 Fatima Prayer.

Intercessions

Pray the Rosary for specific intentions. Make sure to name out loud who or what you are praying for; this can be done in a variety of ways. The entire Rosary can be prayed for one thing (e.g. "We pray this Rosary for those who are suffering from cancer."); each decade can be dedicated to a different intention, to be stated when the mystery is announced (e.g. "The 2nd Luminous Mystery, The Wedding at Cana. We pray this decade for everyone in our family."); each bead can be offered for a specific person or cause (e.g. "For Patrick, Our Father.... For Danielle, Hail Mary... For the homeless, Hail Mary...")



Thanksgiving

Pray the Rosary in gratitude for the blessings God has given. As with intercessions, make sure to name that which you are grateful for at the start of either the whole Rosary, each decade, or each bead.

Rosary with Scripture

Read a Scripture passage related to the mystery for each decade. An entire Scripture passage can be read when announcing the mystery at the beginning of the decade or the Scripture can be broken up and a verse or two read before each bead. Suggested Scripture can be found in the chart found on the following page.

The Glorious Mysteries

traditionally prayed Sundays and Wednesdays

Introductory Prayers
1st Mystery: The Resurrection Matthew 28: 1-10
2nd Mystery: The Ascension Acts 1: 6-12
3rd Mystery: The Descent of the Holy Spirit Acts 2: 1-4
4th Mystery: The Assumption Psalm 45: 11-18
5th Mystery: The Crowning of Mary Judith 13: 18-20
Closing Prayers

The Joyful Mysteries

traditionally prayed Mondays and Saturdays

Introductory Prayers
1st Mystery: The Annunciation Luke 1: 26-38
2nd Mystery: The Visitation Luke 1: 39-45
3rd Mystery: The Nativity Luke 2: 1-7
4th Mystery: The Presentation Luke 2: 22-32
5th Mystery: The Finding of Jesus Luke 2: 41-52
Closing Prayers

The Sorrowful Mysteries

traditionally prayed Tuesdays and Fridays

Introductory Prayers
1st Mystery: The Agony in the Garden Luke 22: 39-46
2nd Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar Matthew 27: 22-26
3rd Mystery: The Crowning with Thorns Mark 15: 16-20
4th Mystery: The Carrying of the Cross Luke 23: 26-32
5th Mystery: The Crucifixion Luke 23: 44-49
Closing Prayers

The Luminous Mysteries

traditionally prayed Thursdays

Introductory Prayers
1st Mystery: Baptism in the Jordan Luke 3: 21-22
2nd Mystery: Wedding at Cana John 2: 1-12
3rd Mystery: The Proclamation of the Kingdom Mark 1: 14-15
4th Mystery: The Transfiguration Mark 9: 2-8
5th Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist Matthew 26: 26-30
Closing Prayers

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

There are many, many ways to dive deeper into the Word of God. Three more common ways of praying with Scripture—Lectio Divina, Visio Divina, Ignatian Contemplation—are outlined here. For suggestions of good Scripture passages or Biblical art to use for these prayer methods, as well as other helpful resources (apps, videos, etc.), visit www.theholyyood.org/praying-with-scripture.

● Lectio Divina ●

Lectio Divina consists of reading a single Scripture passage several times, engaging with the passage and with God in prayer a little deeper each time. This is done in four steps and can be done using any Scripture passage. Each step can either be done silently by individuals or out loud as part of a group.

Steps for Lectio Divina

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross ●

Lectio (Read)

Read the passage for a first time and then pause for either prayer or discussion. This step is focused on understanding the passage generally. Time should be spent making sure the passage makes sense to those praying. A good question to ask in this step is, “What does this passage say to everyone?”

Meditatio (Reflect)

Read the passage for a second time and then pause for either prayer or discussion. This step is focused on any part(s) of the passage that jumps out to those praying. Time should be spent reflecting on why particular words/phrases might be standing out. A good question to ask in this step is, “What is God saying to me/us through this passage?”

Oratio (Respond)

Read the passage for a third time and then pause for prayer. This step is focused on having a conversation with God about the passage and anything it brought up for those praying. Time should be spent talking with God about what He might be communicating through the passage and any thoughts or feelings it brought up. A good question to ask in this step is, “What do I want to say to God about this passage?”

Contemplatio (Rest)

Read the passage for a fourth and final time and then pause for prayer. This step is focused on simply sitting in the presence of God. Time should be spent quieting the mind, opening the heart, and letting God work. A good question to ask in this step is, “How do I experience God with and in me?”

- End with a Glory Be and the Sign of the Cross ●

listen
to the
story

• Visio Divina •

Visio Divina is very similar to Lectio Divina, except that it makes use of a visual depiction of a Scripture passage. As with Lectio Divina, Visio Divina is done in four steps, can be done with any artistic representation of Scripture, and can be done individually or in a group setting.

praying
with your
eyes

Steps for Visio Divina

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross •

Read Scripture

Read the Scripture passage that the image is depicting.

Big Picture

Look at the big picture. Spend a few minutes just taking in the entire picture. Pay attention to any initial thoughts about or reactions to the pictures. Some good questions to ask here are: *What is my first impression of this picture? What are things that I like or dislike about this picture? In what ways does this picture match (or not) how I have imagined this scene before?*

Details

Next look at the details. Spend a few minutes closely examining the picture. Pay attention to the details and what little things jump out. Some good questions to ask here are: *What little things jump out at me? What things do I notice while looking closer that I did not notice before? Why might that detail/those details be included?*

Prayer

Finally have a conversation with God. Spend a few minutes talking to God about any thoughts, feelings, etc. that arose while looking at the picture. Some good questions to ask here are: *What might God be trying to say to me through this picture? What do I want to say to God because of this picture? Does this picture make me think of anyone or anything I should pray for or about? Does this picture make me think of something I should do?*

- End with a Glory Be and the Sign of the Cross •



• Ignatian Contemplation •

Ignatian Contemplation is a prayer practice where the imagination is used to place oneself in a scene in Scripture and see what God might be inviting one to experience. Ignatian Contemplation should be done with narrative portions of Scripture. While the actual imagining will be done individually, groups can discuss what they experienced afterwards.

step into the story

Steps for Ignatian Contemplation

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross •

Read Scripture

Read the Scripture passage.

Familiarize

As you are reading the scripture passage for the first time, familiarize yourself with what is happening. After the passage has been read, pause for prayer or discussion. Some good questions here are: *Where and when does it take place? Who is there? What happens? Etc.*

Place

Read the passage a second time, placing oneself in the passage. After the passage has been read, pause for prayer or discussion. Some good questions here are: *Who will I be in this story (a named character? an unnamed character? a bystander? someone watching in the distance? etc.)? What am I experiencing with my senses: seeing? hearing? smelling? tasting? feeling?*

Imagine

Read the passage a third time, experiencing the story as the person selected in the previous step and using the details determined in the previous reading. After the passage has been read, pause for prayer. During the pause for prayer let one's imagination, guided by the Holy Spirit, drift. One could be invited to return to a particular point of the story and experience it with new or greater detail. One could be invited to experience a continuation of the story, past where the Scripture passage ends. After the story has unfolded, talk with God about what was experienced and what He might be trying to communicate through this experience. Some good questions here are: *What did I notice in the story? What thoughts and feelings did I have while experiencing the story? What do I want to say to God about this experience? What might God be trying to say to me through this experience?*

- End with a Glory Be and the Sign of the Cross •

PRAYING WITH MUSIC

There are a variety of ways to pray with music. One of the simplest ways and one that will work with any style of Christian music is described below. There are also countless songs that will work for prayer in a diverse range of styles. Themed playlists with suggested songs can be found here—www.theholyrood.org/praying-with-music—but feel free to choose your own!

• Choosing Music for Prayer •

When choosing music for prayer it will be helpful to keep three things in mind.

1. Will you be praying with one song or multiple songs? Praying with just one song for a period of prayer allows one to go deeper with the music and lyrics while praying with multiple songs allows for wider opportunities for reflection. Either way has its benefits, as does sometimes praying with one song and sometimes praying with more than one song.
2. How many songs (or repetitions of the same song) will be needed for the amount of time you will be praying? Knowing and picking the appropriate number of songs (e.g., selecting 3 songs that are approximately 5 mins. apiece) ahead of time will allow you to focus on the prayer, and not the clock, as you listen.
3. What kind of music do you want to pray with today? There are many styles of Christian music from Traditional Gregorian Chant to Contemporary Praise & Worship and everything in between. All are beautiful and have something to offer the spiritual life. Beyond style there is the content of each specific song. Maybe you want a song focused on a particular topic such as peace or hope; maybe you are looking for something to fit in with the season; maybe you want to be surprised and see what the Holy Spirit has in store for you; etc. What will be most helpful in prayer will depend both on the person and the circumstances. Whether you go with something upbeat you can sing along with or something more solemn you simply listen to, it is important to pick something that helps you focus on God and having a conversation with Him.

There are many ways to pray with music but one of the simplest is keeping the pattern of *Listen, Speak/Sing, Listen* in mind. Before beginning take a moment to settle down and call to mind that you are in the presence of God then begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Steps for Praying with Music

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross •

Listen

Simply listen to the song. Become familiar with the lyrics. See if any part of the song strikes you in a particular way. Spend some time reflecting on what that part may be standing out to you.



Speak

Listen to the song again (or the next song on your playlist). While it is playing, speak to God about whatever the music brought up for you today or whatever it is you came with to prayer today. This can be done out loud, silently in your head, or even by singing along with the song(s) if the lyrics already express what it is you are thinking/feeling.

Listen

Listen to the song again (or the next song on your playlist) or sit in silence. Now listen for what God may be saying to you, either through the music or in the quiet of your heart.

Repeat

Repeat the pattern of Listen-Speak-Listen as many—or as few—times as needed.

Gratitude

When you come to the end of your period of prayer, thank God for the time and anything He may have said to you in prayer.

- Close with a common prayer such as the Glory Be or an Our Father and the Sign of the Cross•



PRAYING THE EXAMEN

The Examen is a way of reflecting on the past day in prayer. Time is spent thanking God for the blessings He has given throughout the day. Time is also spent acknowledging ways one may have turned away from God through sin during the day. This can be done individually in quiet or through discussion as a group. Further resources for praying the Examen can be found on our website, www.theholyrood.org/praying-the-examen.

Steps for Praying the Examen

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross ●

Enter Prayer

Spend a few moments settling into prayer. Quiet your body and your mind. Remind yourself that you are in the presence of a God who loves you. Invite God into this period of prayer, asking Him to help you see what you need to see.

Give Thanks

Think of the ways that God has blessed you today. These could be big blessings or little blessings. These could be blessings that are specific to today or blessings that are present generally in your life. With each blessing you think of, spend a few moments savoring it in your mind; re-live the experience of the blessing and how it made you feel. Then thank God for this blessing.

Review the Day

In your mind, replay your day hour by hour, minute by minute. As you do so pay attention to moments where you felt close to God and moments where you felt far from God; pay attention to times where you chose to move closer to God and times where you chose to move away from God. After reviewing your whole day, pick one occasion where the feeling of God's presence or absence was particularly strong and talk to God about it. What were your emotions and thoughts? Why do you think it made you feel near or separated from God? Etc.

Express Contrition and Express Forgiveness

Call to mind your sins from the day. Name each sin, as specifically as possible, to God. Share with God that you are sorry for having committed this sin. Know that nothing you do will ever stop God from loving us. Appreciate God's loving mercy and feel His forgiveness for each sin.

Make a Resolution

With God, make a definite, useful, and achievable resolution for tomorrow that will help you grow closer to Him. This resolution need not be anything grand, instead most often it will be something small and simple. Each day your resolution may be very different from the previous day's resolution depending on how the day went and where you feel God guiding you today in prayer.

Quiet Time

As at the beginning of the Examen, spend a few moments simply sitting in the presence of the Lord. Enjoy the ways He has been with you, is with you now, and will be with you in the future.

- End with a Glory Be and the Sign of the Cross ●





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