



Maria Fidelis
Catholic School FCJ

Prayer Book

This booklet contains a selection of prayers to use during form time. When we pray at the beginning of our day, it reminds us that Jesus is at the heart of everything that we do at school. This is apparent through our mission statement: 'Achieving together through Christ' When you pray together as a form, it's nice to be quiet and peaceful. If it would help, you could have a focus for your prayer, through an image and some candles at the front of the room.

“If prayer and the Word of God do not nourish our spiritual life, we run the risk being suffocated by the many cares and concerns of daily existence. Prayer makes us see reality with new eyes and helps us to find our way in the midst of adversity.”

Pope Benedict XVI (Papal Audience, 25th April, 2012)





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Please remember these intentions in your prayers:

Our school community: pupils, staff and parents

Anyone in our school community who is ill

Those who have recently died, or whose anniversaries happen at this time

Introduction

Welcome to your Maria Fidelis Prayer Booklet.

St John of Damascus, a saint from the 9th Century, famously said that, “prayer is the raising of one’s minds and hearts to God.”

St Ignatius of Loyola the founder of the Jesuits said that, in prayer, “We must speak to God as a friend speaks to a friend.”

Pope Francis in speaking to a group last January said, “Some think that to pray is to use many words. I, too, think of many Christians who believe that praying is to talk to God like a parrot. No! Praying is done from the heart, from inside. He does not need anything, our God: in prayer he asks only that we keep open a channel of communication with him to always discover ourselves [to be] his beloved children and [that] he loves us so much.”

We hope that you will find in these pages ways to keep that communication open, ways to speak to God as your friend and to know that you are infinitely loved by our all loving God.

Remember that there is no right or wrong way to talk with your friend as long as you remember to pray always by praying all ways (Ephesians 6:18).

Sr Ellen McCarthy FcJ,
School Chaplain

Traditional Prayers

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

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

Glory be to the Father

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

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy!
Hail 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.

The Apostle's 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.

Morning Offering

Help me today, O Lord, to keep my temper and control my tongue;
to keep my thoughts from wandering and mind from straying;
to quarrel with no one and to be friends with everyone.
So bring me to the end of the day with nothing left undone.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Confiteor

I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-Virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Act of Faith

My God, I believe in You, and in all that Your Church teaches, because You have said it, and Your word is true.

Amen

Act of Hope

O my God, I put my hope in you because I am sure of your promises.

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day.

As we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you with all my heart, With all my soul, and with all my strength. Lord, increase our love. Help us to love one another.

Amen

Act of Love

My God, I love You because You are so good. I want to do Your will in order to please You. For Your sake I love all others as myself, and I will do all I can to help them.

Amen

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against You, because You are so good, and with Your help, I will not sin again.

Amen

Breath Prayers

Breath prayers are short prayers said in one breath. Simple, repetitive and surprisingly ancient; the breath prayer generally involves quietly repeating a chosen phrase for several minutes, allowing the prayer to take on the shape of one's breathing so that the words accompany every breath.

The idea is to pick a meaningful phrase and repeat it until it becomes a part of your being.

Perhaps the most famous breath prayer is the Jesus Prayer. This prayer goes like this:

Lord Jesus Christ (while breathing in),

have mercy on me, a sinner (while breathing out).

This is done repeatedly until all is stilled within your heart.

In the 19th century, an unknown Russian peasant told the story of his search to learn to pray without ceasing in the book, The Way of the Pilgrim. Once he learned the Jesus Prayer, he prayed it continuously until the words becomes such a part of him he was in prayer whether awake or asleep.

The Jesus Prayer grew out of Luke 18:13. Prayers that use breathing this way probably go far back in history, with early breath-prayers based on the refrains of the Psalms. They are brief, simple expressions of the longings of the heart.

Breath prayers can be helpful when you just don't know what to pray, like in times of spiritual dryness or difficulties. This prayer expresses dependence and trust in God that often produces calm and a sense of nearness to the Lord.

Some Possible Breath Prayers....

Lord, whatever happens, I will not be shaken.

(Ps. 15:7)

You, O Lord, are my lamp; my God, you make my darkness bright.

(Ps. 18:29)

Bring us to Your strength that we might bear peace.

(Ps. 29:11)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

(Ps. 51:11)

My soul waits quietly for you. From you comes my deliverance

(Ps. 62:1)

Open my eyes again that I may see, unfold my heart to be open to your love.

(Ps. 69:34)

O Companioning Presence, make your home in my heart.

(Ps. 74:22)

Even when I don't know my way, I am not lost to You.

(Ps. 139:7)

The Prayer of Listening



When I was a child I never understood when someone would tell me that I had to listen to God. No matter how hard I tried I could not hear any voice. Why did the characters in the bible hear God's voice but I couldn't? As I grew into a more mature spiritual life I discovered that God's voice manifests in so many ways: in scripture, in other people, in my experiences, in my feelings, and in my gifts and talents.

In 1 Samuel 3 we hear the story of Samuel who hears a voice call out to him in the night. He mistakes it for Eli's call and goes to Eli saying, "Here I am." This happens two more times and eventually Eli realizes that it is God who is calling Samuel. The scripture says that Samuel was not familiar with the Lord. He had not prayed before and he did not know anything about how God communicates. Eli tells Samuel that the next time he hears God call him he should respond, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Samuel's first experience of prayer is *listening*.

For most of us, our first experience of prayer is speaking words. Growing up we are told to *say* our prayers. We learn specific prayers like the Lord's Prayer or we are encouraged to ask God for this or that. Seldom are children encouraged to *listen*. Though Samuel was a child, he was encouraged to listen to God. It took a very long time for me to learn how to listen to God, but I wonder if it would have come earlier had I been taught how to listen in prayer as a child.

I would say that the First Commandment of Ignatian prayer is to listen.

We would call it contemplation. It involves listening to our reality through our senses—this is the basis of the Examen. When we imagine a gospel passage unfold in our minds we first observe what happens before we start interacting. We observe Jesus' actions. We listen to what Jesus says to his disciples. We hear

a conversation. And then, slowly, we notice what happens within us. Only once we listen and receive from God can we respond to God. And when we do respond, we must then again pay attention and listen. Eventually this listening and responding and listening becomes a conversation, a colloquy.

Prayerful listening occurs in the everyday, too.

Keep a lookout for God through your day. Ask yourself questions like these:

Where did God appear this week?

What have I learned about myself and God through this experience?

What set my heart on fire?

What are the deep desires within me?

What am I longing for?

How does God feel when God looks upon me?

What does God desire for me?

Prayers for Our School

Lord, we ask You to bless our school.

Be with us as we study, work and play together, but especially when we tackle new problems, and face difficult challenges.

Give us Your grace and help us to grow together in true Christian Spirit as members of one happy family.

Amen

Prayer of dedication

Lord Jesus, I give You my hands to do Your work.

I give You my feet to go Your way.

I give You my eyes to see as You do.

I give You my tongue to speak Your words.

I give You my mind that You may think in me.

I give You my spirit that You may pray to me.

Lord Jesus, who lives and works and prays in me.

Amen

At the beginning of a new term

In this new term, O God, let my work take inspiration from You.

During the next few months, help me to make the most of my chances.

Help me to be pleasant to teach, and a pleasant person to know.

If I do well in my work, remind me not to boast.

If I do badly, help me not to give up.

I pray that my enthusiasm may not wane, and that I may work hard, play hard, and pray hard all through this term.

Amen

Before a holiday

Lord, we have reached the end of another term.

For all that we have achieved and enjoyed, we thank You.

For all that we have failed in, we are sorry.

Now Lord, we look forward to a well earned rest.

Keep us safe, and help our holiday to be a happy one.

Amen

For our teachers

Dear Lord, we pray for our teachers, who give so much time and thought for us. Help us to behave in a way that makes it easy for them to teach, and easy for us to learn.

Amen

A Prayer before study

Lord, help me to concentrate on the work that I am about to do.
Don't let me waste my time with idle thoughts and day-dreams.
Keep my mind open to the thoughts of others, no matter how different from my own.
You understand everything and everyone, and You listen to everything and everyone.
Help me to be open, more like You.
Make my understanding and patience more like yours.
Amen

A Prayer for courtesy and respect

Lord, teach me to respect people, to accept each person as unique and created by You.
Some people seem so unattractive, self centred and demanding, that I want to avoid them.
I find it extremely difficult to see you in them.
Help me to treat them with the consideration that I would like to receive from others.
If I could see myself as others see me, perhaps I would be less critical and more understanding, so please help me to do this.
Amen

Prayer before a Test

My God, enable me to trust in the good outcome of the test I am about to take; help me to contribute my own share of optimism and confidence.
With your grace, Lord, I hope to crown my efforts with success.

Keep far from me at this moment any presumption that it all depends exclusively on me.

You are next to me, the necessary and welcome presence in all the moments of my life.

I will take this test, because it is important for my personal development.

My God, be the source of my inspiration in my doubts and uncertainties, supporting me with your blessing.

Amen.

An Exam Prayer

Lord, thank you that you are with me now.

Your love surpasses all fear.

I give you the anxiety that I feel.

I surrender all my worries to you.

Clear my mind, calm my heart, still my spirit,

relax my being that I may always glorify you in everything I write, speak and do.

A Student's Prayer

O God, it is good to be alive and here – though it's hard to wait to do all the things I want to do.

You have made the world so rich, so great, so crammed full of possibilities.

You have made it so beautiful.

I thank you for all who have given me this chance to learn, and to get ready for life.

Amen

Prayer for Examinations

O God, help me at my examinations to remember the things which I have learned and studied.

Help me to remember well, and to think clearly.

Help me not to be so nervous and excited that I will not do myself justice, and keep me calm and clear-headed.

Help me to try my hardest and to do my best.

This I ask for Jesus' sake.

Amen

Prayer for Self-Acceptance

Dear Lord,

You have given us all talents and skills to use as best we can.

But the sad thing is that we are dissatisfied with them.

We want to be more successful, more wealthy, more popular than we are.

We bemoan the fact that we are not as clever or as good-looking as other people, and we over-look the good points about ourselves.

Help us Lord, to make the best use of the talents we have and help us to stop envying other people and be satisfied with ourselves as we are.

Amen

Prayer for Vocations (Prayer of Blessed Pope John XXIII)

O Jesus,

Send labourers into your fields, which are awaiting holy apostles, saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated brothers and sisters.

Enkindle in the hearts of men and women the spark of a vocation.

Grant that Christian families may desire to give your Church helpers in the work of tomorrow.

Amen

May All We Do Today

May all we do today be for the healing of the whole.

May all we do today mend our broken world.

May all we do today bring blessing on the earth.

May all we do today be for good of all, all we do today.

Jan Novotka

Prayers of the Saints

Trust in the Lord.

Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you.

All things pass away.

God never changes, patience obtains all things.

He who has God, finds, he lacks nothing; God alone suffices.

Saint Teresa of Avila

Make me an instrument of your peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console.

To be understood and to understand.

To be loved as to love.

For it is giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Saint Francis of Assisi

Prayer for generosity

Lord, teach me to be generous.

Teach me to serve you as you deserve;

to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds,

to toil and not to seek for rest,

to labour and to ask for no reward, save that of knowing that I do your will.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

O Lord, support us all the day long,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, Lord, in Your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest and a peace at last.
Amen.

Cardinal Newman

O gracious and holy Father,
give us wisdom to perceive You,
intelligence to understand You,
diligence to seek You,
patience to wait for You,
eyes to behold You,
a heart to meditate upon You,
and a life to proclaim You.
Through the power of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Saint Benedict

Day after day, I will bless You.
I will praise Your name forever.
Out of your goodness, lord, keep me from sin today.
Blessed are You, Lord, God of our Fathers, worthy You are of praise.
Glorious Your name for ever.
Amen

Saint John Chrysostom

I said a prayer for you today, and know God must have heard,
I felt the answer in my heart, although He spoke no word.
I didn't ask for wealth or fame, I knew you wouldn't mind,
I asked Him to send treasure of a far more lasting kind.
I asked that He'd be near you at the start of each day,
to grant you health and blessings and friends to share your way.
I asked for happiness for you in all things great and small,
but it was for His loving care I prayed for most of all.
Amen

St Teresa of Calcutta

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;

No hands but yours;
No feet but yours:
Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world.
Yours are the feet through which he is to go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all people now.

St Teresa of Avila

St Patrick's Breastplate

Christ be with me,
Christ be beside me,
Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me,
Christ be at my right hand,
Christ be at my left hand.
Christ be with me everywhere I go.
Christ be my friend, for ever end ever.
Amen

Saint Patrick

Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you.

Amen

St Thomas Aquinas

Lord support us all day long, 'til the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy may he give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.

Bl. John Henry Newman

Most Merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly day by day. Amen.

St Richard of Chichester

Gracious God, let us remain in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will.

Let us be bound to one another by the bond of love, respecting each other, caring for each other and bearing with each other in Jesus Christ.

For if we try to be like this, without doubt, you Lord, will be in our midst.

Amen

St Angela Merici

God has created me to do Him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught.

I shall do good; I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him,
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him.

If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

He does nothing in vain.

He knows what He is about.

He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers.

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me.

Still, He knows what He is about.

Bl. John Henry Newman

FCJ Values Prayer

Dear God,

Please help me throughout this year

And help me to pass my GCSEs with **Excellence**.

Please help me to fulfil my hopes and dreams.

As we celebrate Marie Madeleine's birthday, please lead us through another year with *kindness* to make her proud.

We pray for all the people who have suffered harm this year, that they may experience **justice**.

We also celebrate the birthday of our foundress, Marie Madeleine.

We hope that every *FCJ* school will be brought together in *companionship* to remember what this amazing woman did for us.

Olayinka Adedeji

Prayers for Loss and Bereavement

Almighty God, we rejoice to know that your reign extends far beyond the limits of this life. In the mystery of what lies beyond our sight, we pray that your love may complete its work in those whose days on earth are done. Grant that we who serve you now in this world may at last share with them the glories of your heavenly kingdom; through the love o

Miss me, but let me go... When I come to the end of the road, and the sun has set for me, I want no rights in a sun filled room, why cry for a soul set free? Miss me a little, but not too long, and not with your head bowed low, remember the love that was once shown, miss me, but let me go. For this is a journey that we all must take, it's part of the Master's plan, a step on the road to home. So when you are lonely, sick at heart, go to the friends we know, and bury your sorrows in doing good deeds, miss me, but let me go. Amen

A Celtic Prayer

O God, give me of your wisdom,
O God, give me of you mercy,
O God, give me of your fullness
And of your guidance in face of every strait.

O God, give me of your holiness,
O God, give me of your shielding,
O God, give me of your surrounding,
And of your peace in the knot of my death.

O give me of your surrounding
And of your peace at the hour of my death.

Act of Remembrance

They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Prayer for the dead

Out of the depths have I cried to you Lord, Lord hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
If you, O Lord, shall observe iniquities, Lord, who shall endure it?
For with you there is merciful forgiveness,
and by reason of your law I have waited for you, O Lord.
My soul has relied on his word, my soul has hoped in the Lord.
From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.
For with the Lord there is mercy and with him plentiful redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.

Psalm 129

Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord,
Lord hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.
If you O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere You.
My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.
Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption;
Israel indeed He will redeem from all its iniquity.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful,
grant to the souls of your servants departed,
the remission of all their sins that through our loving supplication they may
obtain the pardon which they have always desired:
through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Let us be like the swan.

When it is dying it gathers all its inner forces and sings with more harmony than ever before in its life.

That is how the saints die.

It is the purest act of their life, the one most burning with love, the most perfect.

St Madeleine Sophie Louise Barat

Prayers for the Sick

Lord Jesus, when You were on Earth, You had pity on the sick and cured their diseases. Hear our prayers now, as we ask You to give Your merciful help to (name) who is sick. Give him/her back their good health, so that he/she may live to praise You and to serve You.

Amen

For the sick, worried, or afraid

Lord Jesus, we ask You to bring Your love and healing touch to those whom we know to be sick, afraid or worried. Bring them Your peace and healing.

Amen

In Your own time Lord Spirit of God, we ask you to touch ...(name)... and bring him/her healing in Your own time and in Your own way.

Amen

Prayers for the World

Lord, help us to realize how lucky we are, having plenty to eat and being properly clothed, when there are children in the world with nothing at all who are dying of hunger.

Lord help us to be generous in giving our time and money to bring them the food and medicine that they need.

Amen

For victims of disasters

Lord, we pray for all victims of disasters, both natural and man-made disasters. While we are bewildered and dismayed by what happened, at the same time we trust in your kindness and love.

May your mercy reach out to all the victims of these disasters, both living and dead.

Amen

For drug addicts

O Lord, we pray for the victims of all forms of drugs.

They will remain helpless and hopeless unless they recognise their condition and seek help. May they have the courage to do so, and may they be cured physically, mentally and spiritually.

Amen

Prayers for the world

O God, we pray for all those in our world who are suffering from injustice.

For those who are discriminated against because of their race, colour or religion.

For those imprisoned for working for the relief of oppression.

For those who are hounded for speaking the inconvenient truth.

For those tempted to violence as a cry against overwhelming hardship.

For those deprived of reasonable health and education.

For those suffering from hunger and famine.

For those too weak to help themselves and who have no one else to help them.

For the unemployed who cry out for work but do not find it.

We pray for anyone we know who is personally affected by injustice.

Show us how we can serve our world and make your love practical.

Amen.

The trade pledge prayer

I dare to pray:

Lord, let the world be changed, for I long to see the end of poverty.

I dare to pray:

Lord, let the rules be changed, for I long to see trade bring justice to the poor.

I dare to pray:

Lord, let my life be changed, for I long to bring hope where good news is needed.

In the strength of your Spirit and inspired by Your compassion, I make this promise to work for change, and wait confidently for the day when You make all things new.

Amen.

Stations of the Cross (abridged)

Opening Devotions

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

“Our Father, who art in heaven....”

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus stands before Pilate, unjustly condemned to death; a victim of the bigotry of religious leaders and the cowardice of the civil authority which takes the easy option - giving in to the crowd. The gospel shows Jesus living as a poor man, taking the side of the poor and the despised, warning of the dangers of riches, standing against the hypocrisy of the establishment.

Jesus, so concerned for others, you are condemned to death with no one to defend you. As we begin this journey with you to Calvary, we ask for the deep faith necessary to see you in the homeless, the refugee, the hungry and the deprived. Our choice is to walk with them as we walk with you.

The Second Station: Jesus Accepts the Cross.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

After scourging, the cruel preliminary to crucifixion, the beam of the cross is lifted onto Jesus' shoulders, and he is led through the city as a spectacle, mocked and jeered on the way.

Have our sins and injustices really deserved this most savage of sentences? Jesus, bearer of our guilt, we are ashamed of our reluctance to follow you unreservedly. Overcome in us our undue concern for the disdain of others. Instil in us a new commitment so that we might work to create a society of justice and concern for all.

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world>*

Drained by a long and harrowing night of torture, weighed down by the cross, and discouraged by the desertion of his followers and the insults of the crowd, Jesus stumbles and falls.

Compassionate Christ, despair can eat into the soul of the despised and the maligned in society - drug addicts, alcoholics, victims of Aids, single parents, even the unemployed and the handicapped. By your own agony of despair as you journeyed to crucifixion, relieve their burden of hopelessness and give us the grace to overcome our own prejudices, seeing in others only the image of God.

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

While others jeer, Mary sees only her holy child, her thoughtful adolescent, the son concerned only for the wellbeing of others. This loving mother would have known the danger threatening her son, and now she shares his suffering in true compassion, bringing a look, a word, of comfort in his misery.

Jesus, at the foot of your cross you gave us all, in the person of John, into the care of your mother. She loves each one of us as she loved you. All the children of God are, to her, her only child. May her care and compassion protect us now and always, and especially when we see those we love suffering sickness and pain. Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted, pray for us.

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Christ said "Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me". Some take up the cross of discipline and penance voluntarily; others have the cross thrust upon them. Simon was coerced into carrying the cross for this condemned stranger; but all have some cross to bear, and inevitably there

come times of regret, self-pity, uselessness, resentment.

Lord, help us to carry our cross willingly, recognising that all comes from your loving hands. When regret or self-pity overwhelms us, let us remember your promise that all who lose their life for your sake will save it. And when our cross is light, open our hearts to the cross of others, compassionate to the suffering of all creatures.

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

What courage it must have taken for this woman to step forward from the crowd and wipe the sweat and blood from Jesus' face. She saw a suffering fellow-being where others saw only a condemned criminal undergoing deserved retribution.

Jesus, you have warned us not to judge lest we ourselves be judged, keep far from us all sentiments of vengeance. Keep us mindful of the human dignity of prisoners, concerned only for their reform and reconciliation. Relieve the many imprisoned unjustly or unfairly; and give to those in authority a true regard for human rights, unswayed by political expediency.

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Christ staggers on, falls again, and is dragged to his feet and pushed along the road. He has no choice. The poor and the homeless throughout the world have no choice either. Bound by the constraints of an unjust society they see no prospect of deliverance, while others are concerned only to conserve their prosperity and privilege, closing their eyes to the unequal distribution, not of wealth, but even of essentials.

Jesus, where we have no choice give us the grace to accept your will for us as your divine gift. But where we have a choice you oblige us, as your disciples, to concern ourselves with the welfare of others, bringing aid direct, or speaking up for justice and fairness, especially for minorities oppressed because of race,

religion or colour, or whose lives have been devastated by war. Help us by your grace.

The Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus had said: "How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused." And now in the midst of his own suffering he sorrows with this group of devout women sorrowing at his plight. "Do not weep for me", he says, "weep rather for yourselves and for your children"; for those who reject me, my values and my message.

Merciful Lord, we too must obey your command to love our enemies, to turn the other cheek, to do good to those who hate us. Your final prayer from the cross begged forgiveness for those who brought you to crucifixion. Give us the grace of an uncondescending and genuine forgiveness when we say: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Approaching the place of execution, Christ, exhausted, falls yet again having to be virtually carried the last few steps. As we have journeyed in his footsteps since our baptism, how many times have we fallen along the way? How much have we added by our sinfulness to his agony? Yet by the grace of God we have staggered to our feet and carried on, confident of his merciful forgiveness.

Jesus, forgive us for our sinfulness. We can see in your agony what our sin has cost you. Revitalise our lukewarm commitment to your values, your interests, your consuming concern for others. Plead with the Father to accept our excuse; we did not know what we were doing.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you, Because by your holy cross you have

redeemed the world.

Already stripped of liberty and respect, Jesus is now stripped of his dignity, his clothing, which the soldiers will divide among themselves. All now remaining to him is life itself, and that soon will be taken from him.

Jesus, you have warned us against storing up treasures on earth, help us now to strip ourselves of our selfishness, our undue seeking after comfort and security. Replace our pride with a true humility, and let our over-riding concern be to share, not only our wealth, but our knowledge, our capabilities and our values, with those in need, giving them the means to improve for themselves the quality of their lives.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"You do not ask for holocaust and victim. Instead, here am I." Christ is cruelly nailed to the cross, his altar. This victim, precious to the Father, takes upon himself our sins and those of all humanity in total expiation.

Crucified Lord, we dare not ask for suffering, to be nailed to the cross with you. Give us grace to ask nothing and to refuse nothing; abandoning ourselves to pure love so that you may crucify and destroy self in us as you see best. By the continued re-enactment of your sacrifice on our altars, may the partaking of your body and blood truly provide the nourishment of our spiritual lives.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all mankind to myself." Christ in his torment sees himself abandoned even by the Father. Such is the burden of sin he has taken on himself. He says: "It is accomplished", and bowing his head gives up his spirit.

Glorified King, the cross has become your throne. Draw all mankind to yourself. Let us, your disciples, place no obstacles in the way of others by judging or

condemning their path to God. Rather, may we recognise the love of God in them, and share with them wherever possible in bringing that love into the lives of others.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

The body of Jesus is taken down by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea and placed in the arms of his mother. Her sorrow, foretold by Simeon, is now complete. For the apostles too all seems to be over, and they hide themselves away in fear.

Mother of Sorrows, comfort us when sorrows and disappointments overwhelm us. We can never see the whole picture, our place in God's plan; or how our disappointments and failures, the suffering of all creation, can have a positive value. Nurture in us a Christ like compassion for the suffering of others; and in the love of our heavenly father may we unite our suffering and theirs with the suffering of your son. Mother of Christ, our Mother, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb.

*We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Accompanied by the mother of Jesus and by Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, Joseph and Nicodemus lay Jesus in the tomb. St Paul reminds us that "when we were baptised we went down into the tomb with Christ and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life."

Jesus, who loved us unto death, we have our different gifts, our lives follow different paths. May we always be mindful that we are each part of your one mystical body; that for all there is only your one commandment: "Love one another, as I have loved you." Good Shepherd, who laid down your life for us, be with us always.

Closing Prayer.

Lord Jesus, who in the Blessed Eucharist left us the perpetual memorial of your passion, may we approach your sacred mysteries with reverence and love, always mindful of your promise that when we eat your body and drink your blood we live in you and you live in us.

By our sharing in the Eucharistic Sacrifice may your universal love and compassion, with a concern for all creation, come to fulfilment in us. Amen.

Morning Offering Eternal Father, I offer you everything I do this day – my thoughts, works, joys and sufferings. Grant that, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and united to Jesus in the Eucharist, my life this day may be of service to you and to others. And with Mary and the whole Church I pray especially for the Pope's missionary intention this month.

Amen

Staff Prayers

A Teacher's Prayer

I want to teach my students more than lessons in a book,
I want to teach them deeper things that people overlook.
The value of a rose in bloom, its use and beauty too,
A sense of curiosity to discover what is true,
How to think and how to choose the right above the wrong,
How to live and learn each day and grow up to be strong,
To teach them always how to gain in wisdom and in grace,
So they will someday make the world a brighter, better place.
Lord, let me be a friend and guide to give these minds a start
Upon their way down life's long road,
Then I'll have done my part.

FCJ Staff Prayer

We pray to you, Lord, for the gift of grace and balance.
May our lives be blessed with gracious, harmonious balance.
May we invest ourselves in our work,
Yet not forget that it is you who is working through us.
May we invest ourselves in activity,
Yet not neglect the precious prayer and reflection that gives our activity depth.
May we invest ourselves in our tasks, yet not lack appreciation for the
relationships close to our hearts.
Grant that we may be both serious and happy,
Both hard –working and relaxed,
Both passionate and at peace.
Amen

'Have courage and confidence. We must never say 'I cannot do that; I am not capable of doing this job'. God will not fail to give you the grace to do all that he has asked of you'.

Marie Madeleine

Blessing for a Leader

May you have the grace and wisdom
To act kindly, learning to distinguish between what is personal and not.
May you be hospitable to criticism.
May you never put yourself at the centre of things.
May you act not from arrogance but out of service.
May you work on yourself,
Building up and refining the ways of your mind.
May those who work for you know you see and respect them.
May you learn to cultivate the art of presence in order to engage with those
who meet you.
When someone fails or disappoints you,
May the graciousness with which you engage
Be their stairway to renewal and refinement.
May you treasure the gifts of the mind,
Through reading and creative thinking,
So that you continue as a servant of the frontier
Where the new will draw its enrichment from the old
And you never become functionary.
May you know the wisdom of deep listening,
The healing of the wholesome words,
The encouragement of the appreciative gaze,
The decorum of held dignity,
The springtime edge of the bleak question.
May you have a mind that love frontiers
So that you evoke the bright fields
That lie beyond the view of the regular eye
May you have good friends
To mirror blind spots
May leadership be for you
A true Adventure of growth.
Amen

John O'Donoghue

Prayer for Artists

Bless the creators, O God of creation,
who by their gifts make the world a more joyful and beautiful realm.
Through their labours they teach us to see more clearly the truth around us.
In their inspiration they call forth wonder and awe in our own living.
In their hope and vision they remind us that life is holy.
Bless all who create in your image, O God of creation.
Pour your Spirit upon them that their hearts may sing and their works be fulfilling.
Amen

Staff Meeting Prayer

We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

St Paul teaches that the Christian Community is made up of people with different gifts – as we give thanks for the individual gifts of all of us here.

As it is, there are many parts but one body. So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” Nor can the head say to the feet “Well, I don’t need you!”

On the contrary, we cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker.

And so there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern to one another.

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it. We invite the Holy Spirit to come upon our meeting as we say: “Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.”

Prayer before Governor/Interview Meetings

We stand before you, Holy Spirit, conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in your name.

Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts.

Give us light and strength to know your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power, for you are God, sharing glory of Father and Son.

You desire justice for all: enable us to uphold the rights of others; do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favour.

Unite us to yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in your name may we temper justice with love, so that all our decisions may be pleasing to you, and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants.

You live and reign with the Father and the Son, one God, forever and ever.

Amen

(Prayer used at Vatican II)

God,

Grant me the serenity to appreciate the unique gifts of my students, courage to challenge them to do their best, and wisdom to help them become all that you created them to be.

Amen

Daily Examen

Many people speak of wanting to ‘do God’s will’ in their lives, but how do we find what that is?

St Ignatius of Loyola discovered that God’s will for each of us is not something preordained and external. He learnt in the context of livening out his faith and reflecting on the graces he received that God’s will is revealed through our honest responses to what we really believe is right in the ups and downs of daily life.

The prayer of awareness or ‘examen’ of the Ignatian spiritual tradition helps us become sensitive to how God speaks to us day by day. This daily examen was important to Marie Madeleine:

Thanksgiving Spirit of Gratitude	<p>I become still in the presence of God who created me and looks at me with love. I bring to mind all the gifts of creation, the gift of my very self – forgiven, called by Christ and graced by the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>I bring to mind the particular gifts of this day.</p> <p>What am I especially grateful for in the past day ..</p> <p>The gift of another day?</p> <p>The love and support I have received?</p> <p>The courage I have mustered?</p> <p>An event that took place today?</p>
Petition Seeking Light	<p>I ask for God’s light to help me to see in my experience what God wants me to see.</p> <p>Where have I felt God’s Spirit to be near and where have I felt isolated from God?</p>
Review of my day	<p>I ask for the light to know God and to know myself as God sees me.</p> <p>God is always at work in my life, labouring to bring about my greatest good and the good of others. I am invited to cooperate with the action of God in my life, so I look for those moments in the day when I have been open to God and have experienced God’s grace and the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22).</p> <p>I pay attention to these times of life, light and energy whether they were striking or modest.</p> <p>I also become aware of any sense of distance and dislocation when I felt far away from God’s grace. I try not to be judgemental but simply to notice.</p> <p>These questions might help me to get in touch with the movement in my spirit;</p> <p>Where have I felt true joy today?</p> <p>What has troubled me?</p> <p>What has challenged me?</p> <p>Where and when did I pause today?</p> <p>Have I noticed God’s presence in any of this?</p>
Response	<p>Deepening my desire to cooperate with God’s action in my life. In light of my review, what is my response to the God of my life?</p> <p>I speak with God as one friend speaks to another.</p>
A Look ahead in the light of God’s Grace	<p>As I look ahead what comes to mind? With what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow? I ask for the graces I need to live more faithfully in the way I am being drawn by the Spirit of Christ.</p>

Meditations and Reflections

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

St Oscar Romero

Meditation

Christian Meditation is part of the ancient but on-going contemplative prayer. When we are teaching children to meditate we are teaching them how to seek God and open themselves to his love and his plans.

Meditation is to help me to meet the living God hence it has many forms. It needs some preparation some stilling, quietening so that I am aware of myself and aware of God.

This is prayer.

It is for this stillness, this greater calm that I can look at God and find a bridge – the bridge can be a scene in Gospel a phrase in Scripture or something that allows me to look into God. It is then that I can begin to think about God and me or to think about me and God and as I begin to think about God and me and me and God I am already in the process of meditation.

How do we meditate?

We need to experience meditation to start to understand it.

- The recommended time for children is one minute per year of chronological age.
- Take a comfortable, upright seating position. Place your hands on your lap.
- Silently repeat a single word/mantra e.g. “Jesus I love you”. or “Do not be afraid”.
- Close your eyes. Sit relaxed but alert.
- Find your inner room, your heart, and let God be with you.
- Silently say your mantra.
- Listen to the mantra as you say it, gently and continuously. If distractions come, gently return to your mantra.

Prayer for Stillness

God of stillness and creative action,
help us to find space for quietness today that we may live creatively,
discover the inner meaning of silence,
and learn the wisdom that heals the world.
Send peace and joy to each quiet place,

to all who are waiting and listening.
May your still small voice be heard through Christ,
in the love of the Spirit.
Amen

Lectio Divina

“Lectio Divina” a Latin term meaning “divine reading” describes a way of praying Scripture. It was introduced in the 12th Century by a Carthusian monk called Guigo II to help young people who joined the Order to pray with Scripture.

It follows 4 stages or 4 stepping stones:

- First stage: Lectio (reading)
- Second stage: Meditatio (reflection)
- Third stage: Oratio (response)
- Fourth stage: Contemplatio (rest)

The following has been developed for individual group or class context:

1. Reading

Read the text and ask, what is going on? Details? Actions?

2. Reflection

What does it mean for us? Read the text again. What phrase do you like in the text and why? What word attracts you? How does the text speak to you in the various places and situations you find yourself?

3. Response

Make some prayers. Read the text again We have heard God’s word and tries to see what it means. We can talk to Jesus about his message. It can be a prayer you know or one you make up.

4. Rest

Enjoy the text. Read the text again. Pause - a minute or two of silence with the text. Invite pupils to take away a few words from this time of reflection, prayer or meditation as a message for today.

A very precious way to pray is just through silence.
No thoughts or words, just wanting to be silent in the presence of God.
Perhaps one of the high points in prayer is where two silences meet: God's
silence and our silence.
No need for thoughts – and words get in the way.

Cardinal Basil Hume

A Concluding Prayer

“There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the
encounter with Christ.”

A man who afterwards became a prominent Christian said that his idea of God
was revolutionised when, as a little boy, he was taken to visit an old lady. The
old lady pointed out to him a text on her wall – ‘Thou, God, seest me’ - and she
said to him, ‘You watch those words. They do not mean God is always watching
you to see what you are doing wrong, they mean he loves you so much that he
cannot take his eyes off you’.

Benedict XVI