

nine ways to pray

Try out these ways to pray, and then make those that you find most helpful a practice in your daily life!

THE NEWSPAPER PRAYER

Look through a print or online newspaper to find a news article about an issue that affects your community or the world. Cut out (or print out) the article and bring it with you to a quiet place where you can pray. Think about how human dignity is affected by the issue or situation. Pray for God's healing and transformation for all people impacted, lawmakers, and others. Ask God how he is asking you to respond to this issue.

BECOMING A CHARACTER IN THE PARABLES

Becoming a Character in the Parables: Read slowly one of the following Gospel readings: John 5:1-15; Luke 8:40-56; Mark 1:40-45; or Mt. 20:29-34. Then read it again, imagining that you are the character in the story with whom Jesus interacts. Imagine how it would be to be in that character's place. How do you feel before you meet Jesus? How do you feel physically (what do all five senses experience in that time and place?), emotionally, and spiritually? What happens when you encounter Jesus? What is that experience like? Imagine every detail of the story. Next, imagine the story again in your mind, but this time, substitute a modern-day person, for example, someone who is homeless or a person who is sick with cancer or AIDS but has no health insurance. Let this exercise lead you into prayer for real people who are suffering in the world. Pray for justice and for realization of your role in making justice a reality.

JOURNALING

Read slowly one of the following quotes and write in your prayer journal about what strikes you about the quote and how it relates to you personally. Pray for understanding and the grace to respond to God's call.

"Living our Baptism to the full... also means not accustoming ourselves to the situations of degradation and misery that we encounter as we walk along the streets of our cities and towns... We become accustomed to brothers and sisters sleeping on the streets, who have no roof to shelter them. We become accustomed to refugees seeking freedom and dignity, who are not received as they ought to be. . .Lent comes to us as a providential time to change course, to recover the ability to react to the reality of evil which always challenges us.

“Love of God and love of neighbor have become one: in the least of our brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God.”

BENEDICT XVI, DEUS CARITAS EST, NO. 15

Lent is to be lived as a time of conversion, as a time of renewal for individuals and communities, by drawing close to God and by trustfully adhering to the Gospel. In this way, it also allows us to look with new eyes at our brothers and sisters and their needs." - Pope Francis, General Audience, 3/5/14

"For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others... with our faith we must create a 'culture of encounter', a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith.

They all have something in common with us: they are images of God, they are children of God." - Pope Francis, Q&A Session with members of movements, communities and ecclesial associations, 5/18/13

A.C.T.S.

This acronym stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. You can use the acronym to help you pray for those who are poor and vulnerable and for help in discerning how to respond.

Adoration

Praise God for his love for humanity, and for creating each human being with dignity. Express wonder for life and beauty, and the basic goodness of human beings.

Confession

Express your sorrow for an issue—a collective or social sin of humanity — that is facing the world today. This could include poverty, abortion, environmental destruction, or another issue. Take a moment to also recognize how you may have participated in the collective sin or issue, perhaps by your failure to do something about it.

Thanksgiving

Thank God for his forgiveness and for maintaining hope in the world and in humans despite our failures. Express thanks for the talents that God has given humans and the inspiration to use these talents to address issues like the one you have mentioned.

Supplication

Supplication is another word for intercession, or asking. Ask God to help bring about a positive solution to the issue you have identified – for an end to the social injustice. Ask him to help you see how you are called to be involved in addressing the issue. Invite the Spirit into your heart to inspire you.

THE MAP PRAYER

On a map or globe, pick a country with which you are not very familiar. Visit the [USCCB website](#) or the [Catholic Relief Services map page](#) to read about issues that might be impacting those countries. Spend some quiet prayer time praying for the people in those countries.

JUST LISTENING

For many of the holiest people in history, listening was a major part of their prayer. To practice Just Listening, find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for 10-15 minutes. Sit or kneel in a comfortable, upright position. Take several deep breaths and be aware of the air coming in and out of your lungs and notice the quiet around you. Ask God what he would like to tell you and the world about the social issues you are concerned about. Try to sense God's love and other feelings for you, your community and the world. You may wish to sit in stillness, or you might try writing down what you think God might be saying to you and to your community/world.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS AND YOU

In a quiet place where you will not be disturbed, read slowly one of the following readings from the Old Testament: Jer. 1:4-10 and 22:1-3; or Is. 58. In silence, prayerfully consider the following questions: What stands out to you about the reading? What was God saying to his people through the prophet? What might the reading mean for the world today? Are you open to being a modern day prophet? What message might God be calling you to proclaim? Ask God to be with you and to guide you as you reflect on these questions. Pray for the strength to respond to whatever God might be asking of you.

THE PRAYER BOX

Using a shoe box or another similarly-sized box, create your own personal prayer box. You may choose to cover your box with paper or decorate it in some way, or you can simply leave it plain. On small slips of paper, write issues about which you are concerned. Put the papers inside the box. During your prayer time each day, pick one or two slips of paper out of the box and pray for those impacted by injustices related to the issues, for policymakers, and for the ability to listen to how God might be calling you to respond.

THE SERVICE PRAYER

Seeing God in the poor and vulnerable can help move you to work for justice. Make a special effort to arrange to spend time with a vulnerable population – for example, you could visit the elderly in a nursing home or serve food at a homeless shelter. Before you serve, ask God to be with you and to help you to recognize his presence in every person with whom you interact. During your service, be especially attentive to God’s presence in each person you serve, and the dignity that is in each of them. You might want to try saying a short prayer before you speak with different persons or serve food (for example, “God, be with this person who is made in your image”). After your service time is over, go to a quiet place and think about the ways you saw God in each person. Try to remember details about individuals that you met. Ask for God’s blessing on each and then ask God how he might be calling you to work to address the root causes of the challenges they face.