

Morning Offering Suggestions

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will; all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours. Dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me.

My Queen, my mother,
I give myself entirely to you,
and to show my devotion to you,
I consecrate to you this day
my eyes, my ears,
my mouth, my heart;
my whole being without reserve.

Therefore, good mother,
as I am your own, keep me
and guard me as your
property and possession.

Amen



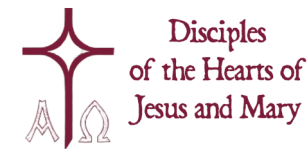
The Annunciation, Francesco Albani

Come Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts in the same yearnings for redemption as the Heart of Christ, so that we truly offer our persons and works, in union with Him for the redemption of the world.

Lord Jesus Christ, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I consecrate myself to your Heart, and I offer myself to the Father with you, in union with your Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I offer you all my prayers, joys, works, and sufferings of this day, in reparation for our sins, so that your Kingdom comes. I ask you especially for the Holy Father and his intentions, for our Bishop and his intentions, for our pastor and his intentions.

Cover Image: *Sermon on the Mount* by [Carl Bloch](#)



Lord, Teach us to Pray



One day, when Jesus was praying, the disciples asked him:
Lord, teach us to pray. (Lk 11:1)

The Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary want to help you enter into the **school of prayer**. In this booklet we invite you to reflect on the importance of a spiritual life and of daily prayer. We offer you some concrete steps: a daily morning offering at the beginning of the day, an examination of love at the end, perhaps the Holy Rosary in the middle, and the Sunday Mass as the beginning and heart of our week.

The Importance of Spiritual Life

The spiritual life is an interpersonal life.

A spiritual life is being open to God, and it is understanding your life is from God, in God and for God. The source of spiritual life does not come from human effort but the divine action of grace. This action comes from the Father of Light, the Source of every gift. From the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, the Holy Spirit enters into us. This is spiritual life.

Faith is the beginning and the foundation.

Through faith we open our hearts to the gift of God, the Holy Spirit. Through it Christ lives in our hearts. It is impossible, therefore, for anyone to have spiritual life unless he has faith in Christ. This faith is the foundation of the whole relationship with God, a lamp and a key for knowing Him.

The fruit of spiritual life is the fullness of eternal happiness.

The Gospel has been written "so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (Jn 20:31) When we do live with faith in Jesus, we shall understand fully, we shall love completely. Then, with all our needs fulfilled, we shall truly know the love that surpasses understanding and so be filled with the fullness of God.

Acknowledge God in our hearts.

The purpose of the spiritual life, which comes to us from God, is to lead us to this fullness. In order to achieve this, we need that personal relationship with Jesus which is strengthened through prayer. If we are to attain the ultimate goal of eternal happiness, we must come with a pure faith to the Father and acknowledge him in our hearts. We must ask him to give us a true knowledge of Jesus Christ and love of him.

By knowing and loving him, we can know the length and breadth and height and depth of his love. (Eph 3:18) Through that knowledge we can come at last to know perfectly and love completely the most blessed Trinity, in whom all that is good and true finds its meaning and fulfillment.

Fruitful Participation at Mass

"The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life" (CCC 2177), this is the Faith of the Church expressed by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Eucharist, the most important of the Sacraments, "is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life" (Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium 11). But do we truly experience the Eucharist and the Holy Mass as the source of our Christian life? Do we receive all the fruits that accompany the celebration of this Sacrament?

"If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy." (St. John Vianney)
The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy gives us a clue: "in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain (Sacrosanctum Concilium 11).

Following are some practical ideas in order to have a more fruitful participation in the Mass.

1. **Prepare the readings.** In our day and age there is no excuse for not knowing what the Sunday Gospel and readings are going to be, as there are many resources readily available. Read the readings in advance, pray with them, and try to see them in their context.
2. **Arrive at Mass earlier.** This will help you to prepare your heart, to start the Mass in a prayerful atmosphere, and allow you to warm up your voice.
3. **Listen to all the prayers.** The readings and the consecration are not the only important prayers during the celebration of the Mass. The Collect prayer, the prayer for the gifts and the prayer after communion, for example, contain a wealth of theology and spirituality.
4. **Sing.** St. Augustine said that: "He who sings prays twice" (CCC 1156). With our voices we join the body of Christ praising the Lord.
5. **Offer thanks right after communion.** This is a moment of great intimacy with our Lord. It should give us energy for our entire day or week. Tell him what is in your heart.
6. **Stay for a moment after the priest leaves.** Give thanks to the Lord for this great gift of the Mass.
7. **Recall and share during the week** the graces you have received at that celebration or what you have learned during the homily.

Praying the Rosary

"Whoever spreads the Rosary is saved!" Blessed Bartolo Longo, a great apostle of the Rosary, heard this inspiration in the depths of his heart and devoted his whole life to spreading this Marian devotion. In 2002, Saint John Paul II proposed the life of Blessed Bartolo as an example of one of the many Saints who discovered in the Rosary a path to grow in holiness.

John Paul II, Benedict XVI and our Holy Father Pope Francis, have encouraged us to rediscover the beauty of the Rosary. We are called to teach it to the younger generation and pray it with our families and communities.



The Rosary is centered on Christ

When we pray the Rosary, we are looking at Christ with the eyes of Mary. The four parts of the Rosary follow the life of Jesus: his joy, light, sorrow and glory. Mary becomes our companion on this path. Saint John Paul II said, in the Rosary, we remember Christ with Mary, we learn Christ from Mary, we are conformed to Christ with Mary, we pray to Christ with Mary and we proclaim Christ with Mary.

The Rosary is the Gospel according to Mary

The Rosary is filled with the Holy Scripture. Saint John Paul II said once that the Rosary is "a compendium of the Gospel." In praying the Rosary we look to Jesus with the eyes, ears, hands, feet, with the Heart, of Mary.

The Rosary is a contemplative prayer

We may think the Rosary is not a helpful devotion because we simply repeat the same prayers without paying attention. But repetition is important in our life. There are so many things we do and say daily like: "Good morning", "How are you doing", "I love you", "Have a nice day" and so on. These are essential sentiments and we repeat them because of love.

You can make the rosary more of a contemplative prayer by leaving a few seconds after the enunciation of each mystery for contemplation. Then, and only then, start the Our Father and the Hail Marys. If you have more time, read the verses from the Bible for each of the mysteries.

Our parish has the honor of bearing the name of the Mother of God. Let us transform Littleton and Denver into the city of the Rosary. Whoever Spreads the Rosary will be saved!

Daily Prayer Life

A Great Desire: My heart with His heart

Why should we have a strong prayer life? The Gospel of Mark 9:2-10 gives us the first answer: Jesus took three disciples and went up a mountain to pray. We want to pray because Jesus is calling us to be with him: we want to because He wants us to.



The Lord's Prayer - James Tissot

But there is a second reason for our prayer. We desire to pray because we want to be with our friend and our beloved, Jesus. As blessed cardinal John Henry Newman liked to say, the heart speaks to the heart. This is prayer: a dialogue of love and affection with our Maker.

Plan it!

But if prayer is something so great, then why do we find it so difficult? Why does prayer remain many times secondary in our schedule? First, I'd say that we wish to pray, but we don't really want to: we have not made a solid decision (when, where, what). We have not planned to pray. Our day starts, we have many things to do, and prayer remains the last and the least. But when we want to enjoy a trip, watch a movie, or practice a sport... we plan it and we include it in the schedule as a commitment. Could we not do the same with our prayer?

Start small

Second, at times we may not pray because we think we need one hour in order to do so. Since we cannot pray one or two hours daily like the monks and nuns, we don't pray at all.

So, I invite you to promise to the Lord a 5-minute daily prayer. Think about and plan when, where, how long and what you will pray, and offer this sacrifice to the Lord.

Pray with Simplicity

You can start easy with the prayer of the children of Fatima and just repeat it five or six times: "Jesus, I believe in you; Jesus, I adore you; Jesus, I hope in you; Jesus, I love you." Pray like a child, pray with simplicity. Afterwards, you can place yourself before God and practice the prayer of thanksgiving. Look at your life – your body, your family, your work, your mission - and give thanks to the Lord.

You can grow in your gratitude, remembering Peter's words in this gospel: "Lord, it is good that we are here" praying with you.

Morning Offering

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High, to proclaim your love at daybreak, your faithfulness in the night."

(Ps 92:2-3)

Morning and light have an important relevance in the Bible. Not in vain, Jesus Christ himself is presented as the Light of the World (Jn 8:12), the light that shines in the darkness, and that the darkness has not overcome (Jn 1:5). He appeared to his disciples and the holy women early in the morning the day he rose from the dead. He himself loved to pray first thing in the morning: "Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed" (Mk 1:35).

Leave behind the deeds of darkness

Morning is a very special moment to pray and consecrate the day to the Lord, before other tasks occupy us. Why? First of all, it acknowledges the new day as a gift from God and at the same time a task to sanctify it with the help of the Lord. It also proclaims that we want to leave behind the deeds of darkness in our lives and bring the light of Christ into the world: "it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is

nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day" (Rm 13:11-12). And St. Paul keeps insisting: "For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness." (1 Th 5:5).

Bring Creation back to God

And what do we have to consecrate to the Lord? In just one word: everything! As in a traditional morning consecration to Mary, we pray: "I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being without reserve." We offer to God everything that is going to be part of our lives that day, the good times and the sorrows, our prayer and our work, our relations and whatever happens to us that day. On one hand, we are united with the Heart of Christ in the redemption of the world, on the other hand we exercise our priestly vocation received at baptism of bringing creation back to God.

See the back page for some examples of daily offerings.



Examination of Love

We are created from God's Love, in His Love and for His Love. Therefore, a Christian examination of conscience has to be an examination of love: we must look to Him and His love for us and think about how we are open to it.

The beginning of wisdom is self-knowledge

We can't know ourselves in truth and depth if we don't first place ourselves before the Mercy of God, His unconditional love for the poor, the weak, the sick and the sinners. It is only His Mercy that stops both the mechanism of defense or self-justification (covering up the truth of myself) and the great tormentor of the human soul, the guilty conscience. Guilt is useless when it doesn't bring me to his Mercy, to conversion, and finally to his Love.

My spiritual life is a reflection of my choices, both internal and external. These choices are the expression and growth of my love for others and for God, and they are what either opens me to or closes me from his grace.

Self-knowledge through examination:

1. Ask God for light, wisdom and insight: *Lord, send your light and your truth that they may guide me to you.*
2. Give thanks to God, the Giver of every good.
3. Place yourself before his Mercy, acknowledging that your weakness is your power before Him. The goal isn't to blame yourself; it is to understand what you have lost because you have not been open to His love and power. Ask for understanding that through your wrong choices your humanity has not grown, harming you as a person and your relationship with God, and with those He has given to you.
4. Reflect on the following questions:
 - Did I live as God's creature and child, acknowledging my dependence on Him?
 - Did I let Him be my Good Shepherd, living in His Providence? Did I love Him?
 - How have I opened my weaknesses to the Mercy of God my Father?
 - Do I embrace my cross, following Jesus?
 - Do I allow Mary to be my mother and to form my heart?
 - How have I received those people God has given me as a Gift?
5. The final step in this examination of love is being more open to the Holy Spirit, who is Love, through repentance and a desire to change, so we can follow Jesus and love as He loves us.