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volume 14  

 Helping Families to Pray
National Bulletin on Liturgy

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This Bulletin is primarily pastoral in scope, and is prepared for members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, teachers, religious, seminarians, and clergy, and for all who are involved in preparing and celebrating the community liturgy.

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HELPING FAMILIES TO PRAY

Bulletin 80 sets out to understand the prayer needs that Christian families feel today:

- It looks at traditional prayer forms and at new forms which are in the spirit of the renewing Church and its prayer of the hours.

- This issue also suggests practical ways of helping families who wish to grow spiritually by following the principles of the Church's liturgy in their prayer.
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EDITORIAL

FAMILY PRAYER IS OUR CONCERN

We are a people of prayer: God our Father has called us to be his beloved children. He chose us in Christ to be his holy people, a royal kingdom, a holy priesthood, people set apart to sing his praises. He has picked us to pray for the world, in the name of all creation.

We are brothers and sisters of Christ, who is our primary model of prayer. He lives and intercedes for us. Jesus offers our prayers to the Father, and brings him the sacrifice we offer by our holy lives of obedience and love. We pray to Jesus, and we pray with him and all his Church on earth and in heaven.

We are temples of the Spirit, who lives in our hearts and guides our lives. He knows the depths of our hearts and expresses to the Father what we cannot put into words (Rom. 8: 26-27).

Many families are praying, but want to pray better. They know that the liturgy is the center and model of our prayer, but many seem unable to learn from it. How can we help them?

There are families and individuals who do not pray: Some are overwhelmed by obstacles to peaceful family prayer. Some want to pray, but do not know how to pray today; they know only the ways they learned as children, and find these inadequate today. How can we help them?

Concern of the parish: Unless family prayer is strong and growing, the life and worship of the parish community will not be healthy. People cannot pray well in the liturgy when they do not pray well and often at home. People cannot pray in harmony with the liturgy when the directions of their personal prayer run counter to the Church's prayer. Improving the prayer life of the parish community is the concern of all.

May God give us his Spirit to guide us all as we do our best in helping families to pray.

* * *

Blessed are you, Father of all,
and holy is your name.
We praise you for your glory,
for sending us Jesus Christ and his Spirit,
for calling us to be your holy people.

Help us to learn to pray better,
and to guide families to pray better,
so that all your children may praise you
now and for all eternity
in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen!
TRADITION OF PRAYER

Limited as we are in time and space, we need to remember that we are a part of the family of God in time and in eternity. All over the world, for centuries, the Church has carried on the prayer of Christ. Family prayer today — in your family — is part of the great cosmic chorus of praise and petition raised by the Church to the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In this article, we look at the New Testament for its example of prayer by Jesus and the early Christians, at its teaching on prayer, and for its models of prayer.

Our Jewish background: For the Jewish people, prayer played an important part in their individual, family, and community life.

○ A personal God: For the Hebrews, God was not a mute idol or a phenomenon of nature or a human ruler: he was God, the Almighty, the Lord, the Most High. Though maker of heaven and earth, he was still a personal God, to whom each Israelite could speak personally in praise and intercession. (See, for example, Gen. 18: 22-33; Exod. 32: 11-14.) The psalms provide many examples of prayer to a personal God; on the God of the psalter, see Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms, pages 148-149.

○ Intercession: It was the ministry of patriarchs, prophets, and kings to intercede for others, both for individuals and for the nation (1 Kings 13: 6; 1 Sam. 12: 19; Jer. 14: 15; 2 Chron. 32: 20). Just persons may pray for friends who do not live up to God's law (Job 42: 8). Those who intercede for others are blessed (Job 42: 10); it is a sin to refuse to intercede (1 Sam. 12: 23); Job's "comforters" gave a poor example of friendship.

○ During the exile (598-537/458 BC): When the people of God were driven from their land and deprived of the temple sacrifices, they gradually turned to prayer — personal and community — as their only way of worship. Soon, they became known as people of prayer (see Dan. 6: 1-28). Prayer is prominent in the books of Nehemiah (2: 4; 4: 4, 9) and Ezra (8: 21). In Is. 56: 7, written during the exile and quoted by Jesus (Mk. 11: 17, and parallels), we are told that the temple of the future will be a place of prayer and sacrifice offered by all the nations.

○ After the exile: During the next few centuries, the psalms were gathered into collections for public worship, and gradually assumed the shape of the psalter we know today (see Bulletin 75, pages 150-153).

○ Synagogue: The exact origins of the synagogue are disputed by scholars, but it came into being before the time of Christ. The word means assembly, and gradually came to mean the building where the people of God came together for instruction, reading the law and the prophets, and prayer (in place of the sacrifices, which were offered only in the temple: see Bulletin 74, page 104).

○ Some ideals: The tradition grew that each Jewish man should pray three times a day (see Ps. 55: 17; Dan. 6: 10). Family prayer became customary at the
beginning and end of the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{1} The Passover became a family celebration, with ritual foods, ceremonies, and an explanatory \textit{haggadah} or recounting of the story of the exodus. Jewish believers blessed God's name many times a day before any action, work, or pleasure.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Example and Teaching of Jesus}

Jesus teaches us about prayer by his own example and by his words about this important subject.

\textbf{Example of Jesus:} For our Lord, praying is an important part of daily living:

- **Meals:** The accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes mention that Jesus took them, blessed or praised God over them, and distributed the food to all (see Mk. 6: 41; 8: 6-7; and parallels). After the last supper, Jesus and his apostles sang psalms (Mk. 14: 26); these were probably the \textit{hallel} psalms (see Bulletin 75, page 157).

- **Before decisions and action:** Our Lord fasted and prayed for forty days before beginning his mission (Mt. 4: 1-2). He spent the whole night in prayer before he chose his twelve apostles (Lk. 6: 12-13). He prayed alone on many occasions (see Mt. 14: 23; Mk. 1: 35; Lk. 9: 18).

- **In time of need:** Jesus prayed during his agony in the garden (Mk. 14: 32-42); while dying on the cross, he prayed the messianic psalm, Ps. 22 (see Mk. 15: 34).

- **Prayer for others:** Our Lord asked his Father to strengthen Peter so that he could help others (Lk. 22: 32). Even when he was dying, he asked the Father to forgive all who had done this to him (Lk. 23: 34). His high priestly prayer was offered for his disciples in all eras (Jn. 17: 1-26).

- **Synagogue and temple:** Jesus was accustomed to taking part in the synagogue prayer services on the Sabbath (Lk. 4: 16). He cleansed the temple so that it would remain as a house of prayer for all the nations (Mt. 11: 15-18; see Is. 56: 7).

- **Examples of our Lord's own prayers:** These include:
  - Lord's prayer: Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 2-4
  - Prayers of thanks: Mt. 11: 25-26; Lk. 10: 21; Jn. 11: 41-42
  - Prayer of praise: Jn. 12: 27-28
  - High priestly prayer: Jn. 17: 1-26
  - Prayers in Gethsemane: Mt. 26: 39, 42; Mk. 14: 36; Lk. 22: 42
  - Prayers on the cross: Mt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34; Lk. 23: 34, 46.

- **Jesus answers all who come in faith:** The gospels record many occasions when Jesus responded to the faith of the people who came to him for help. The examples of the pagan mother (Mk. 7: 24-30), the Roman centurion (Mt. 8: 5-13),


\textsuperscript{2} Further background information on Jewish practices and examples of prayers are given in \textit{La Liturgie Familiale — Histoire, théologie, pastorale} by Pierre Dufresne (1973, Fides, 245 Dorchester Blvd. East, Montréal, Québéc H2X 1N9): see chapter 1, "L'Ancien Testament et le judaïsme," pages 19-42.
and the sinful woman (Lk. 7: 36-50), show us that it is the faith of the person more than his or her religious or social status that counts before God.

- *Prayer to ‘Abba,’ our beloved Father:* Jesus called his Father *Abba*, using the Aramaic form of childlike love, “beloved Father” (Mk. 14: 36). We reserve this term for our heavenly Father (see Mt. 23: 9). His disciples continued to approach the Father in this direct way: see page 176, below.

- *In the days of his flesh,* our Lord continued to pray, to suffer, and to obey. In this way, he was made perfect and became the source of salvation for all of us who obey him (see Heb. 5: 7-10).

- *Continuing intercession:* The Lord Jesus is now enthroned in glory at the Father’s side, and continues to pray for all (Heb. 7: 25; Rom. 8: 34).

**Teaching of Jesus:** The gospels bring us Christ’s teaching about prayer in many passages:

- *Sermon on the mount:* The best summary of our Lord’s teaching about prayer is in the sermon on the mount (see Matthew, chapters 5-6-7):

  - Pray without showing off: Mt. 6: 5-6.
  - Pray without many words: Mt. 6: 7-8.
  - A model prayer: Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 1-4.
  - Forgive others before prayer or sacrifice: Mt. 6: 14-15; 5: 23-24.
  - Pray for persecutors: Mt. 5: 44-45.
  - God knows our needs: Mt. 6: 8, 32.
  - Ask and receive good things: Mt. 7: 7-11; Lk. 11: 9-13.
  - Obedience to God’s will is necessary for effective prayer: Mt. 7: 21.

- *Other passages on prayer:*

  - Worship from the heart: Mt. 15: 7-9.
  - Prayer can drive out evil: Mk. 9: 29.
  - Pray against temptation: Mk. 14: 38.
  - Persevere in prayer: Lk. 11: 5-9.
  - Be humble in prayer: Lk. 18: 9-14.
  - Don’t misuse prayer: Mk. 12: 40.

- *Constant prayer:* In St. Luke’s gospel, our Lord tells us that we should be praying *continually and at all times* (Lk. 18: 1; 21: 36).

**Teaching of the apostles:** Many suggestions for our prayer life are contained in the epistles. Some of the main ideas are these:

- *We are people set aside to praise God:* Eph. 1: 3-14.
- *The Holy Spirit helps us to pray:* Rom. 8: 26-27.
- *We call God ‘Abba,’ our beloved Father:* Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6.
• *Giving thanks to God*: 1 Cor. 1: 4-9; Col. 3: 15-17; Eph. 5: 18-20; 1 Thess. 5: 17-19; 2 Thess. 1: 3; 2 Tim. 1: 3; Heb. 13: 15-16.

• *We pray through Christ our Lord*: Rom. 16: 27; Heb. 13: 15; we pray in his name: Eph. 5: 20 (see Jn. 15: 16).

• *Our act of faith* is “Jesus is Lord!” See 1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9-10, 13; Phil. 2: 11; 1 Jn. 2: 22-23; 4: 2, 15; 5: 1, 5.

• *We are to pray constantly*: Rom. 12: 12; Eph. 6: 18-20; Col. 4: 2-3; 1 Thess. 5: 17-19; 2 Thess. 1: 11-12.

• *We pray for the world*: 1 Tim. 2: 1-8.

Other references are given in Bulletin 58, pages 76-77.

**New Testament prayers**: There are many examples of prayers in the New Testament that we use today or that we may adapt for our personal, family, and community prayer:

• *Lord’s prayer*: See Mt. 6: 9-13, and Lk. 11: 2-4. The Church prays this prayer solemnly three times a day: in the morning, during the eucharist, and in the evening. (See Didache 8, which does not specify the times of day; and GILH, 3 no. 195, which does.)

• *Gospel canticles*: The Church uses a gospel canticle as the climax of three of the hours: the canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79) at morning prayer; the canticle of Mary (Lk. 1: 46-55) at evening prayer; and the canticle of Simeon (Lk. 2: 29-32) at night prayer. Each of these is said standing (since it is a gospel passage), begins with the sign of the cross, and ends with the doxology (GILH, nos. 50, 138, 263c, 266b; see also no. 123).

• *Doxologies*: A doxology is a brief prayer of praise to God, usually placed at the beginning or end of a letter; in our prayer, it may be used at the beginning or end. See Rom. 9: 5; 16: 25-27; 2 Cor. 1: 3-4; Gal. 1: 5; Eph. 1: 3-10; Phil. 4: 20; 1 Tim. 6: 16; Heb. 13: 21; 1 Pet. 1: 3; 5: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 18; Jude 24-25. Further examples are found throughout the book of Revelation.

**Christians continue biblical traditions**: The scriptures exert a strong influence on our prayer today. Some examples will be recognized by all:

• *Basic attitudes*: We continue the basic biblical attitudes of thanksgiving and praise to God our creator, and of recognizing that creation is good (Gen. 1: 31).

• *Prayer forms*: The Church of our time is returning once more to a fuller appreciation of scriptural prayers; psalms and canticles are coming into broader use outside the liturgy of the hours: see Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms. The berakah or blessing prayer is also becoming more familiar to Christians (see Bulletin 68, pages 73-74). Doxologies (see page 177), hymns, psalms, and canticles (Col. 3: 16-17; Eph. 5: 19-20) are part of our prayer.

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3 GILH: The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours is a pastoral introduction and explanation of the office today. It is found at the beginning of Liturgy of the Hours (1975, Catholic Book, New York), vol. 1, pages 21-98.

4 Vatican II points out how the scriptures influence the symbols, actions, and language of liturgy: see Liturgy constitution, no. 24; on the place of the scriptures in the life of today’s Church, see Constitution on revelation, nos. 21-26.
- **Times of prayer:** Morning and evening prayer, prayer during the day's work, and meal prayers are part of our scriptural heritage, as is prayer that is constant and unending (Lk. 18: 1; 21: 36).

- **Place for prayer:** Christians are encouraged to pray anywhere: outdoors (see Mk. 1: 35), in their room (Mt. 6: 6), and in their place of assembly (see Acts 4: 31).

- **Balanced prayer:** We are encouraged to pray as individuals and with other members of Christ's body. Our prayer includes petition (Lk. 11: 9-13), intercession (1 Tim. 2: 1-4), thanksgiving (1 Thess. 5: 18; Phil. 4: 6; Col. 3: 17; 1 Tim. 2: 1), and adoration (Jn. 12: 28). We are even taught to bless our enemies and pray for them (Mt. 5: 44).

- **Jewish expressions** are included in our prayer: *Amen, Alleluia, Abba, and hosanna* are familiar to all. We are taught to pray to our Father as our beloved *Abba* (Mk. 14: 36; Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6).

- **Calendar:** We continue the early tradition of observing Sunday as the Lord's day (Rev. 1: 10; Liturgy constitution, no. 106), with a week of seven days (Gen. 2: 1-3; Bulletin 47, page 9; no. 78, pages 69-74).

- **Prayer through Christ:** Jesus has invited us to pray through him and in his name (Jn. 15: 16; 16: 23-24; Eph. 5: 20). Christians continue to pray in this way, guided and taught by the Spirit living in their hearts (Rom. 8: 26-27). See Bulletin 62, page 16.

- **Postures:** Some examples of postures in prayer:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Scriptures</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Sam. 1: 26</td>
<td>Mk. 11: 25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mt. 6: 5</td>
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<td>Lk. 18: 11, 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Heb. 10: 11</td>
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<td>Kneeling</td>
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<td>Ps. 95: 6</td>
<td>Lk. 22: 41</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Kings 8: 54</td>
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<td>Acts 20: 36; 21: 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phil. 2: 10</td>
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<td>Prostration (kneeling bow)</td>
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<td>Jos. 5: 14; 7: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hands spread forth</td>
<td>Is. 1: 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hands stretched out</td>
<td>Ps. 143: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hands lifted up</td>
<td>1 Kings 8: 22, 54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ps. 28: 2; 141: 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lk. 24: 50</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Tim. 2: 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laying on of hand(s)</td>
<td>Gen. 48: 14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Num. 8: 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clapping hands</td>
<td>Ps. 47: 2; 98: 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is. 55: 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Striking breast</td>
<td>Nahum 2: 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lk. 18: 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising eyes to heaven</td>
<td>Job 22: 26</td>
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<td>Mt. 14: 19</td>
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</table>
• **Trust:** We pray with confidence, for our Lord assures us that God will listen to our prayers: Mt. 7: 7-11; Mk. 11: 22-24; Lk. 11: 9-13; Jn. 14: 13-14; 15: 16; 16: 23-26.

**Influence on family prayer today:** We might ask some questions that every Christian community and believing family should discuss:

• **What does the New Testament have to say** about our prayer life? What should we be doing about its teaching, its models of prayer, its examples?

• **Do we let the New Testament correct our prayer?** Are there some unfortunate trends, practices, or gaps in our prayer life today?

• **What place does God's word have in our life and prayer?** See Heb. 4: 12: Are we open to God's word, which is alive, active, and probing?

* * *

**Helpful reading:**

*The Prayers of Jesus,* by Joachim Jeremias (1967, Alec R. Allenson, 635 East Ogden Avenue, Naperville, IL).


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**NEXT ISSUE**

Most issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in the past decade have been on one topic, with occasional articles on other subjects. Every two years or so, a general issue provides a chance to reflect more broadly on many aspects of our liturgy and on the prayer life and social responsibilities of the believing community.

**Bulletin 81, Essays on Liturgy: II,** is a general issue. Its purpose is to help build up the body of Christ by encouraging us to think about our liturgy.

Liturgy committees and study groups may benefit from Bulletin 81 by using individual articles for discussion. Catechists and priests may find them helpful in their teaching. The ideas discussed in Bulletin 81 can help each Christian community to deepen its prayer, and make its life of worship more pleasing to our heavenly Father.

**Bulletin 81** will be ready for mailing early in November.
This article considers some basic elements of praying in the morning.

Why do we pray in the morning? There are many aspects to prayer at the beginning of the day. We may recall some of these here:

- **A new beginning:** The sun rises and we wake up to begin a new day. It is like a new creation of which we are part. Gone is the past, and here is a new day in which we are called to work with God in co-creation. The hymn, *Morning has broken* (CBW II, no. 725), reflects this spirit.

- **Resurrection:** Morning recalls the rising of the Lord Jesus. This emphasis is echoed in the morning prayer of the Christian Church (see GILH, no. 38).

- **Daily rhythm:** Morning is a time for getting up, for beginnings, for getting started. A new day stands before us, with its work, its challenges, its graces, and its crosses. With Christ, we stand ready to face it and do our best for God.

- **Dedicating this day to God:** Our first thoughts turn to God our Father: with Christ and with his whole Church, we offer ourselves and this day to our God. In former days, we used the morning offering to express this spirit; now, our community morning prayer expresses publicly our personal self-giving with Jesus and his Church. (See GILH, no. 38.) In this way, God sanctifies our daily living for him, and accepts our personal sacrifice (see Rom. 12: 1).

- **A spirit of praise:** Jesus arose with words of praise on his lips. As his sisters and brothers, we join him in praise of our heavenly Father, giving him glory and thanks both for his works of creation and for what he has done for us in the realm of salvation. As his chosen people, we also voice the praise of the universe he has created.

- **We pray for others:** At the beginning of the day, we pray for ourselves and for others, particularly our family and others who are close to us. We ask the Lord to look after them, to help them this day, to bless them with his loving grace and merciful protection.

- **We ask for guidance:** A child often begins the day by asking, “What do I wear today?” We begin the day by asking our Father for guidance and openness and strength. We ask him to give us his Spirit to lead us this day. What should we do? How should we face the questions and trials we meet today? *Father, I am here, ready to carry out your will!* (See Ps. 40: 7-8; Heb. 10: 7.)

“Morning is a prime time to pray, when you are fresh, the day new, and your plans for the day need guidance from God.”

What is happening in families today? There are many pressures in society today which are affecting families, and indirectly making family prayer more difficult or even impossible. Yet there are positive influences becoming evident.

- **A survey:** A survey of family prayer was included in Bulletin 63, pages 90-94; the results were compiled and analyzed in no. 68, pages 52-65.

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Some background pressures: Our society is proceeding madly with a split-second mentality. Most people are too busy, too rushed, too tired. Work and school schedules are too full. The demands of recreation, community activities, and entertainment are too great. Modern living (if you can call it that) is too hectic and frenetic. Eat-and-run fast-food counters break down the sacramental value of the meal as a family or community celebration.² Mahatma Gandhi's words are ignored: There is more to life than increasing its speed. Pope Paul encouraged families to fight these pressures.³

Some positive points: Many people are beginning to sense that affluence and possessions are not their final goal in life. A growing hunger for prayer has been noticeable for the past dozen years. People are more willing to listen to God's word, and to see the need for some form of family prayer, devotion, or worship.

Elements in our morning prayer: These elements should be present in our prayer at any time:

- Listen: We are open and receptive to God. We see the beauty in his creation, and look for positive things in other people and in events. We recognize the good things we see as reflections of the goodness and beauty of God. We listen to his word, and let him speak to us when he chooses. We look for and reflect on the signs of our times, and try to see what God is telling us.

Reflection, quiet, and silence need to become a more important part of our life and our prayer, in order that we may pray in response to God's action and promptings. (See 1 Pet. 4: 7.)

- Praise: As Christians, we praise our heavenly Father for many reasons: he is great; he gave us Jesus as our savior, and raised him from the dead. God has made us his people, and has allowed us to share in the death and rising of Christ through our baptismal experience. Our heavenly Father calls us to work and pray with Christ in saving the world, in making the kingdom come, in giving glory to the Father through our life and our liturgy. We praise our Father in heaven because he has given us the Spirit of Jesus to live in us as his temples.

It is also our Christian tradition to praise our Lord Jesus Christ, and to glorify him as the Son of God who has become our savior and our brother. (See Bulletin 62, pages 16-30.)

- Offer: Our Lord is described as coming into this world saying, "Here I am, Lord: I have come to do your will" (Heb. 10: 5-9; see Ps. 40: 6-8). Doing God's will and carrying out his work are described as Jesus' food (Jn. 4: 32-34). We should begin each day by dedicating our day's work and activities to our heavenly Father: we seek to live this day for God, eager to do good works, ready to follow Jesus, open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. "Not my will, Father, but your will be done" (see Lk. 22: 42) and "May your will be done" (Mt. 6: 10) should guide our living today.

- Intercede: As God's chosen people of prayer, we are placed here on earth to pray for the world. We ask him to protect his people, the Church. We ask him to lead

² On the human and Christian values that serve as a basis for personal and liturgical prayer, see Directory for Masses with Children, nos. 9-10; Bulletin 63, pages 71-72 and 113.
³ Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary: Apostolic exhortation "Marialis Cultus" of Paul VI, February 2, 1974 (1974, CCC, Ottawa): no. 54 (quoted on page 166, below).
others to faith and life in Jesus Christ. We ask him to send his Spirit into the hearts of world leaders, so that they may become peacemakers. We ask him to strengthen and console those who are persecuted, or who are facing trials and disasters. We pray also for ourselves, our family, for those who are close to us. A list of intentions that may encourage us to pray for others is given in Sunday Mass Book, page 1335, and in Bulletin 58, page 128.

Such prayer for others is a sign of our love for them; at the same time our prayer helps us to move into action.

**Our tradition of praying in the morning:** We inherited the idea of praying in the morning from the Jewish tradition. It is a strong acknowledgement that we are God's creatures and his beloved children. The early Christians encouraged this tradition, and formalized it. Lauds or morning praise became the morning prayer of all Christians, and then gradually only of clergy and religious. Further references on morning prayer are given in Bulletin 58, pages 107-110.

The Second Vatican Council restored the liturgy of the hours, especially morning and evening prayer, to all. Gradually more parishes are beginning to provide an opportunity for community celebration of morning prayer.

**Outline of morning prayer:** A simple format of prayer in the morning could follow this format, which reflects the traditional shape of lauds or morning prayer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hymn</th>
<th>Another, simpler outline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psalm</td>
<td>Introductory rites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Psalmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Liturgy of the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercessions</td>
<td>Praise and intercession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord's prayer</td>
<td>Concluding rites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These elements may be developed in various ways:

- **Hymn:** We may sing a hymn of praise or a seasonal hymn; on occasion, prayer could begin with a moment or two of silent reflection.

- **Psalm:** The psalms are songs of praise to God. We may pray one or several. Some psalms that are suitable for praying in the morning include Psalms 3, 5, 8, 15, 24; 47, 51, 57, 63; 65, 93, 95, 98, 100; 117, 140, 145-150. A pause for silent prayer and a psalm prayer may follow each psalm (see GILH, no. 112).

- **Reading from the word of God:** We believe that God speaks to us, his beloved children, when the scriptures are read. In faith, we listen to his words. Through the guidance of his Spirit, he helps us to know his will, and to look at our daily living in the light of his teaching.

  After we hear the reading, it is good to pause for some moments of silent reflection and prayer.

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• **Praise:** The highlight of our morning prayer is a song of praise to God for saving us in Jesus. The traditional song is the canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79). In its place, we may sing another strong hymn of praise, such as *Glory to God in the highest.*

• **Intercessions:** Through Christ we give our day to God, placing ourselves at the disposal of his will for us: we are in his hands. We ask our Father to deepen our love for him, and to keep us faithful today.

We pray for the Church, for the world, for those who are close to us, and for ourselves, so that whatever we do for him today, it will all be for his honor and glory (see 1 Cor. 10: 31).

• **Lord's prayer:** We may sing or say this prayer together. Jesus taught it to us as a model for our prayer. The Church prays it solemnly three times a day: in the morning, during the eucharist, and in the evening. (See *Meditation on the Lord's prayer*, in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159.)

• **Blessing:** We conclude our prayer by asking God to bless us.

At the end of our prayer, it is always appropriate to share a sign of peace with one another.

The value of a structure such as the one given here lies in the fact that it provides both the familiarity and comfort of a repeated ritual, and the room to be flexible within this pattern. The format also gives a balance between praise and petition.

**Praying in the morning:** Some thoughts for further discussion and prayer:

• **Some settings for our prayer:** We may gather for prayer in the church, in the blessed sacrament chapel, in another place, or in a home. Some suggestions for *A place for prayer at home* are given in Bulletin 63, page 86.

• **Gestures and actions:** Jesus Christ died and was raised in order to save each of us: our whole being — and not just our soul — is called to share in his life here and in heaven. (See Vatican II's Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, no. 18.) Many ways of using our bodies, hands, arms, head, and eyes in our prayer are illustrated in *Postures and gestures in our prayer,* in Bulletin 68, pages 66-69; see also *Worship Without Words* (1979, CCCB, Ottawa).

• **Rhythms in our prayer:**

  □ Daily: morning prayer belongs of course to the morning hours, but we may vary the time of our prayer according to circumstances: our prayer may be offered early, after breakfast, before leaving for school or work, after 9:00 o'clock, at school, or during a morning meeting, conference, or convention.

  □ Weekly: We might give special consideration to prayer on Sundays and Fridays. What about Saturdays and holidays? Does the Sunday newspaper create an obstacle to prayer in your home?

  □ Yearly: Our prayer should always be in tune with the liturgical year and the various feasts which the Church celebrates: see pages 183-187, below.
Do we need new forms of prayer? There is always the danger in human affairs of not benefitting from past experience, whether our own or that of others. We just do not seem to learn from history: it seems we always have to reinvent the wheel.

Rather than starting out to develop totally new formulas for our prayer in the morning, it would seem wiser to explore our tradition and to benefit from the experience of twenty centuries of Christian prayer. The form given on page 156, above, tries to do this.

Encouraging prayer in the morning: We can promote better prayer at this time of day if we help people to develop basic attitudes of praise and thanks to God. We glorify him for making the world and ourselves, and for calling us in Jesus to be his beloved people.

Parishes can remind families of the meaning, importance, and attitudes of morning prayer. Resources on prayer (see page 188), including psalms, can be made available. Once a year, a workshop on daily prayer could provide both an opportunity and a reminder for families and individuals to return to the practice of prayer in the morning: see the outline in Bulletin 68, pages 86-87. On special occasions, on days during Lent and Advent, and on Sundays and feasts, the liturgy committee could invite members of the parish to come and celebrate morning prayer. Some parishes provide opportunities for prayer in the morning before the celebration of the eucharist. This could be done daily, or at least several times a week.

Families: No matter what their record may have been in the past, families should try to help little children to experience some brief moments of prayer in the morning. Where some time is taken for prayer at the beginning of the day, the family will begin to grow in prayer. The priest should be happy to help them to make progress in their common prayer. (See A teacher of prayer, in Bulletin 68, pages 70-71.) When a family is not praying at all, members should be encouraged to try to come together for a moment of prayer at least once a week.

Individuals: Single people, widows, widowers, and individual family members need to turn to God at the beginning of each day. Some individuals may be ready to spend more time in a ministry of prayer, setting aside ten or fifteen minutes for prayer in the morning and evening: see Men and women of prayer, in Bulletin 65, pages 234-238. Some may be ready to use Christian Prayer each day, or several times a week (see review in Bulletin 58, pages 117-120). Others may be ready to follow the simple outline given above on page 156.

Other opportunities: How can we encourage prayer in the morning by at least some of the people in the community? Invite the sick to become powerhouses of prayer and witness (see Pastoral Care of the Sick and Rite of Anointing, Introduction, no. 3; Bulletin 35, page 222). Invite mothers to gather once a week in a neighbor's home after school begins. Organize neighborhood groups, and help them to pray together (see Bulletin 51, pages 298-300). Encourage parishioners of all ages to gather once a week for prayer in small groups; larger parishes could have different groups meeting on each day of the week. During Holy Week, prayer may be celebrated in the church each morning, especially on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; on these days, members of all the other groups would gather together for prayer.

We should always remember that these gatherings may be ecumenical in membership and in the prayer forms used (see Bulletin 78, pages 87-88).
Future action: Now that I have read this article, what can I do to improve my personal prayer in the morning? What can I do to help others to pray better and more often at the beginning of the day?

Some resources on morning prayer:

General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 38 and 40.

Mantras for the Morning, by Robert F. Morneau: see review on page 191, below.

National Bulletin on Liturgy:
* No. 58, pages 102 and 107-110.
* No. 63, pages 69, 87-88.
* No. 68, pages 54 and 58.
* No. 70, page 177.
* No. 72, pages 41-43: Celebrating morning prayer.
* No. 75, pages 171-173 and 183.

Catholic Book of Worship II, nos. 72-79.

See also the general titles listed on page 188.

SOME ATTITUDES IN CHRISTIAN PRAYER

God is our loving Father;
we are his beloved children.
May his name be praised!

Our Father loves us so much
that he has sent his only Son to be one of us.
All praise to God on high!

Our heavenly Father has given us his Holy Spirit
to live within our hearts,
to guide us in prayer,
to make us his temples.
Glory to God in the highest!

In loving obedience,
the Lord Jesus submitted to his Father's will,
and stretched out his arms on the cross for us.
Praise and thanks to Jesus for ever!

In loving faithfulness, our Father raised Jesus to glory.
Blessed be God for ever and ever!

Our Father has called us in Christ to be his people of praise;
he has forgiven us, and cleansed us from evil;
he has made us his people of praise for ever:
Glory and praise are yours, Father,
through your Son Jesus Christ,
in the love of your Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen!
MEAL PRAYERS

A meal is much more than a time for refuelling our bodies. It is a time for community, for sharing, for a union of hearts. During a meal we are together and taking part in a life-giving activity. Mealtime is a time of rejoicing and relaxing.

**Jewish meals:** Strongly imbued with a sense of the goodness of creation, the Jewish people in the time of our Lord began and ended their meals with a prayer of blessing (*berakah*). On special occasions or when guests were present, this was done in this way:

- **Blessing of the bread:** At the beginning of the meal, the one who presided over the meal blessed God. Then the head of the household broke the bread and shared it with the others.

- **Cup of blessing:** When the meal was completed, the head of the household or the honored guest took a cup of wine, raised it, and said a prayer of blessing over it. After answering *Amen*, everyone took a drink from the cup of blessing.

The expanded form of the grace after meals is called *birkat ha-mazon*. The one who says this prayer in the name of all praises God, and thanks him for the food they have eaten and for the land of Israel, and prays that Jerusalem be rebuilt.

**Jesus** speaks about meals as a way of expressing and celebrating our joy (see Lk. 15: 6-7, 9-10, 23-24, 27, 32).

- **Eating with sinners:** Our Lord shows his love for sinners by eating with them (Lk. 15: 1-3).

- **Heaven as a banquet:** Jesus describes heaven as a banquet (Mt. 8: 11; Lk. 13: 29; see Rev. 3: 20).

As Christians, we should feel these echoes in our meals today.

**Some scripture references:** The gospels give brief descriptions of the blessing at the beginning of a meal: see Mt. 15: 36; Mk. 8: 6-7; Lk. 9: 16; Lk. 24: 30-31, 35; Jn. 6: 11; see also Acts 27: 35.

In 1 Cor. 15: 30-31, Paul encourages us to do everything — including eating and drinking — for God’s glory. Our thanks in all things are given to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3: 17).

**Meal and eucharist:** Sharing in a friendly meal is one of the human values that children need to experience if they are to be able to appreciate the eucharist. (See Directory for Masses with Children, nos. 9-10; Bulletin 63, pages 71-72, 113.) Good experiences of happy meals as a time for joyful celebration, for remembering, and for being thankful will gradually prepare children to take part in the community Mass with similar but deeper attitudes. (See Bulletin 76, page 196.)

**Christian tradition:** In the early third century, Hippolytus speaks about blessing oil, cheese, olives, and first fruits. Every blessing should end with a doxology or prayer of praise to the Trinity (see Eph. 3: 21). At the *agape* meal, the bishop, priest, or deacon gives the blessing over the food. All are to eat in the name of the Lord Jesus (see Col. 3: 17), and to give glory and thanks to God for all they eat.
As we grew up, grace before and after meals was a firm tradition and a sign of a dedicated Christian. At public functions, a clergyman usually led the grace.

Meaning and purpose of meal prayers today: “Grace” means thanks to God.

• Before our meal: Our prayer expresses these ideas:
  □ We bless God, praising him and acknowledging his goodness;
  □ We thank him, for he is good: he has made the world, our family, our friends; he has called us in Christ; he has brought us together for this meal;
  □ We ask him to bless us in his service;
  □ We ask him to bless this food for our use and enjoyment.

Our food is blessed as we bless God over it.

• After our meal:
  □ We give thanks to God for our food and for all his gifts;
  □ We pray to him for others.

The Jewish prayer of grace, birkat ha-mazon (see page 160, above), was adapted by Christians: the eucharistic prayer may be seen as an elaborate form of this prayer of blessing (see Bulletin 54, page 158).

Benefits of meal prayers: When an individual or a family prays grace well and thoughtfully at each meal, these are some of the benefits to be gained:

• At meal times: We begin our meal by pausing to pray. We bless God and reflect on his love for us. We enter our meal with a more positive attitude toward God, toward others, toward these moments of refreshment, and toward our daily life and work in God’s presence. At the end of our meal, we pause once more to praise and thank God before resuming our work.

• Effects in our Christian living: The regular practice of thoughtful grace at meal times helps us to strengthen our positive attitudes toward creation, which is very good because God has made it so: Gen. 1: 31. (See Bulletin 50, pages 262-264.) As sons and daughters of God our Father, as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, we continue to work for the building of the kingdom.

• Effects in our liturgical worship: Our attitude of thanksgiving is also deepened,1 and we are enabled to continue our hymn of praise through Christ (Eph. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 10: 31; 1 Thess. 5: 18). This eucharistic approach to life flows from and brings us back to the community celebration of the eucharist, especially on the Lord’s day.

Some formats for meal prayers: No set format is required or laid down. The family may want to discuss some of these ideas:

• Models: Some basic models of Christian prayer are discussed below on pages 176-178: berakah or blessing, collect, verse and response, intercessions, litanies, doxologies, acclamations, and silence. Other models are the haiku (see page

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180, below), the Christian haggadah (Bulletin 63, pages 109-110), and free flow or spontaneous prayer (pages 173-175).

- **Varying rhythm:** Grace at meals may vary according to the nature of the celebration. Special graces may be prepared for Sunday, Friday, fast days, birthdays, holidays, civil celebrations (such as Labor day and Mother's day), and other events. A pleasant variety will contribute to the prayer life of the family.

- **Brevity:** On ordinary occasions, a brief prayer is adequate — perhaps as long as a collect or the Lord's prayer, or even shorter. In special celebrations, a slightly enlarged format may include a brief reading or a slightly longer prayer. No one appreciates lengthy prayers at public banquets.

### Some Examples

Meal prayers may be adapted according to the liturgical day or season, and to the circumstances of the celebration. These prayers are examples of how grace may be prayed before or after our meals:

**Sunday or feast day:** After all listen to the reading of the day's gospel, the prayer of blessing is said:

- **Blessed are you, Lord God, king of the universe:**
- **you raised your beloved Son from the dead,**
- **and made him Lord of all.**
- **We turn to you in prayer**
- **and ask you to bless us and this food you have given us.**
- **Help us to be generous toward others,**
- **and to work with them so that they too may eat well.**

Father in heaven,  
may we all celebrate together around your table in heaven.  
We praise you and give you glory through Christ our Lord.  
All answer Amen!

**Fast day or lenten weekday:** All listen to one of these readings: Is. 58: 1-9a, or 7-10, or 9b-14, or 1-14; Mt. 6: 1-4, 16-18; Mt. 6: 19-21; Mt. 6: 24-34; Mt. 9: 14-15; Mt. 25: 31-46; Lk. 12: 32-34; Lk. 12: 35-41. One of the penitential psalms may be sung or said.

- **Bless this food, heavenly Father,**  
- **which you have given us in your mercy:**  
- **may it bring us strength to work in your service.**  
- **Bless these alms which we share with others,**  
- **and bless us in your love.**  
- **Forgive us our sins, and lead all people back to you.**

We offer you our prayer and our penance through Christ, our savior and our Lord.  
All answer Amen!

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2 These examples are taken from *Sunday Mass Book* (1976, CCC, Ottawa): see pages 1328-1330.

3 The penitential psalms are Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 145. See Bulletin 75, page 185; the texts are contained in *Sunday Mass Book*, pages 1309-1316.
Friday: We continue the tradition of voluntary penance in union with the suffering of the Lord Jesus. The meal may begin with a short reading from one of the passion narratives (Passion Sunday or Good Friday), followed by a penitential psalm or one taken from the lenten liturgy.

*Heavenly Father,*  
we praise you for having saved us  
through the suffering and death of your Son.  
Forgive us our sins, and lead us to greater dedication:  
teach us to be obedient in faith,  
always ready to serve you  
by serving others in love.  

*Bless + this food, and make us truly grateful  
for all the gifts you have shared with us  
through Christ our Lord.*

All answer *Amen!*

**Other times:** A simple reading and psalm may be chosen, if desired.

*Loving Father,*  
we thank you for gathering us together for this meal:  
may we continue to live in your friendship  
and in harmony with one another.  
*Bless + this food, a sign of your loving care for us,  
and bless + us in our daily lives.  
Bless your Church throughout the world,  
and all those who seek to do your will today.*

*Father of mercy,*  
all praise be to you  
through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

All answer *Amen!*

**Grace after meals:** We close our meal by a prayer of thanks. The family may wish to develop special forms for Sunday and other feasts or fast days.

*Father of mercy,*  
we praise you and give you glory  
for the wonderful gifts you have given us:  
for life and health, for faith and love,  
and for this meal we have shared together.

*Father,*  
we thank you through Christ our Lord.

All answer *Amen!*

or:
Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of the universe: 
you provide us with food and drink 
because you love us.

We thank you for your blessings. 
and ask your help to live this day in your grace.

Leader: 
Blessed is God for ever.

All respond: 
And blessed is his holy name.

Spontaneous meal prayers: With a little practice, it is not difficult to make up a simple prayer before or after a meal. Those who are learning to pray spontaneously usually do best by sticking to one or two basic ideas in a prayer. (See also pages 173-175, below).

* * *

Resources: See also the books listed on page 188.

* Prayers at Mealtime, by Sister Mary Teresa, OP (1972, Paulist, New York; 400 Sette Drive, Paramus, NJ 07652).
* National Bulletin on Liturgy (90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1):
  * No. 37: page 12 — grace before and after meals
  * No. 49: pages 165-166 — grace at meals
    195-197 — blessing of food
  * No. 50: page 272 — grace before meals (placemat); wedding banquet
  * No. 63: page 69 — privileged moments for prayer
  * No. 66: pages 262-265 — prayer life of the parish
  * No. 68: page 54 — question 7; page 58 — question 25.

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ACADEMY REPORTS

The North American Academy of Liturgy brings together many liturgists in the United States and Canada to share their work and projects. A summary of the work group reports from the 1981 meeting in Los Angeles was published in the July issue of Worship, vol. 55, no. 4 (Collegeville, MN 56321).

These reports are helpful because they show us current trends, emphases, and concerns among liturgical scholars in various Christian Churches. We recommend them for your careful study.
PRAYER IN THE EVENING

This article looks at prayer at the end of the day from three perspectives: in the Church's tradition, in light of the modern family situation, and in view of some possible solutions.

Evening Prayer in Our Tradition

Time of day: Evening prayer is celebrated at the end of the day, as daylight begins to fade. In earlier generations, the lighting of the lamps tended to mark the end of the day's work and the beginning of evening.

Spirit of evening prayer: This hour has several facets (see GILH, no. 39):

- **Thanksgiving:** We pray in a spirit of thanks. We thank God our Father for all that he has given us, and for all the good things he has done through us this day. We need not be shy about praising him for what he has done through us to build up his kingdom. (See Heb. 13: 12; Phil. 2: 12-13; GILH, no. 39.)

- **Evening sacrifice of praise:** As we remember our Lord's last supper and his sacrificial death on the cross, we raise our hands to praise the Father (see Ps. 141: 2). Our prayer is related to the praise and thanksgiving we offer in the eucharist.

- **Trust:** We place our hope and trust in Jesus Christ our Lord, for he is the light of the world, and he will bring us into everlasting light. With him and all his Church, we sing the glory of God now, as we will praise him for all eternity. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 8; GILH, nos. 15-16.)

Elements in evening prayer: The traditional elements that make up the Church's evening prayer or vespers are these:

- **Introductory rites**
- **Psalmody**
- **Liturgy of the word**
- **Praise and intercession**
- **Concluding rites.**

Other notes:

- **Key hour:** Evening and morning prayer are the most important hours in the day's prayer. They are called "hinge" hours because they guide the work and prayer of the day as hinges guide a door's movement. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 89a.)

- **Symbols:** Light and darkness are strong natural symbols. For Christians, they have an even fuller meaning: Jesus is the light of the world, who shines on every human person, and illumines our path to the Father of light. Our Lord has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness — the realm of sin and Satan — and has transferred us to his own kingdom, the kingdom of light. As the children of light, we are to be the light of the world, sharing with others the grace we have received. In our evening prayer, celebrated as daylight is fading, we place ourselves once more in the hands of Jesus our Lord, and ask his protection and guidance.
Gestures and postures: There is great scope for worship with our whole person: we may stand, sit, bow, make the sign of the cross, and raise our hands in prayer.¹

Evening Prayer and the Modern Family

What is happening in families tonight?

Families are not praying together in the evening: We can mention many reasons why they are not praying: few members are at home; they are busy at meetings, activities, events, games, entertainments, school, work, shopping; they are too tired; they are watching TV; they lack any interest in prayer or desire to pray; they do not know how to pray in a modern or adult way; they are too embarrassed to be seen taking time for prayer.

Individuals: Are individuals praying in the evening, at the end of the day? Are they praying before going to bed? Why or why not?

Some families would like to pray in the evening, but do not know how to begin.

What are the prayer needs of a modern family at the end of a day at home, at work, at school? After a busy day, a family needs time for silence and reflection; for forgiveness; for encouragement and strength; for satisfaction over good things; for praising and thanking God; for sharing with one another; for asking God's help for themselves and others.

A time of family evening prayer, offered at least several times a week, can provide for these needs.

Some Possible Solutions

Paul VI: "We are well aware that the changed conditions of life today do not make family gatherings easy, and that even when such a gathering is possible many circumstances make it difficult to turn it into an occasion of prayer. There is no doubt of the difficulty. But it is characteristic of the Christian in his manner or life not to give in to circumstances but to overcome them, not to succumb but to make an effort. Families which want to live in full measure the vocation and spirituality proper to the Christian family must therefore devote all their energies to overcoming the pressures that hinder family gatherings and prayer in common."²

Time to slow down: Many people complain about being too busy. Here are some suggestions for doing something about it in our own lives:

Individuals should take a look at what they are doing, set some priorities in their life, drop excessive activities, and have more time for personal growth and for sharing with their family. If they do not want to do this, they need to ask themselves some further questions about their goals and priorities in life, starting with Mk. 8: 36-37.

¹ See Worship Without Words (1979, CCCB, Ottawa); and Bulletin 68, pages 66-69.
² Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary: Apostolic exhortation "Marialis Cultus" of Paul VI, February 2, 1974 (1974, CCC, Ottawa): no. 54. This booklet is available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.

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• **Families:** Like individuals, families need to survey what they are doing (or having done to them), and make some more room for what is important in their family life. Parents should curtail some of their own outside activities if necessary, and help their children to make wise decisions about their use of time and energy. Adults and children alike need to learn the value of being together. Time for personal and family prayer will be one of the benefits of controlling their activities outside the home.

• **Parishes** and other religious and community organizations must make sure that they are not exerting excessive pressures on families. Are some persons being called on to do several functions or ministries to the detriment of their home life? Can the workload be shared more equitably? Are all the meetings and gatherings really necessary and valuable?

**Some basic steps in evening prayer:** Here are some suggestions for family discussion and use:

• **Listen, praise, intercede:** See the notes on pages 155-156, above. These also apply to our prayer — both personal and family — in the evening.

• **Start:** At least once or twice a week, take some time to pray together. This may be at the end of a meal, before supper, or at some other convenient time.

• **Participation:** Invite each member of the family to be responsible for one of the times of prayer; or suggest that one prepare a reading for the next time, and another the intercessions.

**Psalms:** Many suggestions for evening psalms are given in Bulletin 75, pages 171-173 and 183-186. Ps. 141 is always appropriate.

**Spirit of evening prayer:** “Stay with us, Lord,” is the Church’s prayer at evening, echoing the invitation of the disciples at Emmaus (see Lk. 24: 29). Christ is always with us, and we are trying to continue to be aware of his presence among us, especially when we gather in his name (Mt. 18: 20).

*Stay with us, Lord Jesus, in our prayer, in your word, in each of us, in all of us when we are together. Guide us, strengthen us, encourage us.*

**Future action:** Now that I have read this article, what can I do to improve my personal prayer in the evening? What can I do to help others to pray at the end of the day?

*   *   *

**Some resources:** As well as the general books mentioned on page 188, this booklet will be found helpful for prayer in the evening:


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PRAYING AT NIGHT

Praying at the end of the day, before we go to bed for a night's rest, is a simple but profound act of faith in God's loving care for us.

Early Church: At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian in Africa speaks of getting up at night to pray. Around 215 in Rome, Hippolytus mentions that Christians pray before going to bed, and that they get up and pray again at midnight, offering a prayer of praise. (See Bulletin 58, pages 81-84.)

An all-night vigil of prayer was celebrated during what we call the Easter vigil as the Christian community watched, ready to meet the bridegroom (see Mt. 25: 6). Our Lord spent an entire night in prayer before he chose the twelve men who were to be his apostles (Lk. 6: 12-13).

St. Benedict included the brief hour of compline in his Rule (chapters 16-18). This was celebrated in the dormitory before all went to bed.

Spirit of prayer at night: Four main elements give compline or night prayer its special character:

- Repentance: At the beginning of the hour we examine our conscience, and ask God to forgive us for our personal sins and faults during this day. Forgiveness depends of course on our continuing willingness to forgive others and to try to do better.

- Praise: The psalm is our prayer of praise to God (see Bulletin 75, page 148).

- Trust: We place ourselves entirely in the hands of our loving Father. This is clearly expressed in the responsory, Into your hands, based on Ps. 31: 5 (see also Lk. 23: 46 and Acts 7: 59).

- Preparation for death: Sleep is an image of death, but for Christians, our death is not the end but the beginning: through baptism we are plunged into the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus and into his victory over death and sin. Our death is Christ's invitation to us to enter fully into his paschal mystery. We stand ready for his call as we pray the canticle of Simeon (Lk. 2: 29-32), and conclude by asking the Father to grant us both "a restful night and a peaceful death."

Outline of night prayer: The renewed form of night prayer is simple, reflective, and prayerful:

- Introductory rites
  Introductory verses
  Examination of conscience
  Hymn

- Psalmody
  Psalm and doxology
  Silence and psalm prayer
  (on Wednesday and Saturday nights, a second psalm is prayed)

- Liturgy of the word
  Reading and silent reflection
  Responsor
  Gospel canticle (Simeon)
- **Concluding rites**
  - Prayer
  - Conclusion
  - Anthem of Mary

A variety of hymns, psalms, readings, and prayers is provided during the week. Night prayer is intended to be celebrated just before going to bed, even if this is after midnight (GILH, no. 84).

It is appropriate to sing any of the parts of night prayer, especially the psalm, responsory, and canticle. We may sit for the psalm and stand for the rest of the prayer. A sign of the cross is made during the opening versicle and at the beginning of the gospel canticle.

Since the middle ages, it has been traditional for Catholics to end night prayer with an anthem or hymn to Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus. This may be sung. (An additional formula is offered in Bulletin 79, page 111.)

**Family night prayer:** Since this is primarily a bedtime prayer, it is not appropriate to celebrate it when we intend to stay up for some hours. When a family has several bedtimes (little children, older children, parents), night prayer might be offered by each individual group while preparing for bed. Parents or an older brother or sister may help little ones in a simple form of prayer. The spirit of the prayer is more important than adherence to official forms.

* * *

**Resources:** Night prayer is contained in *Liturgy of the Hours* and in *Christian Prayer.*

*Night Prayer* (1976, United States Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005): this 86-page booklet is most helpful for families and individuals who want to celebrate night prayer in harmony with the Church of God. A newsprint edition is quite inexpensive, and allows each member to have a personal copy.

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**WAYS OF USING THIS BULLETIN**

Bulletin 80, *Helping Families to Pray,* may be used in a variety of ways in your parish community:

- Use it as a means of promoting discussion with the parish liturgy committee on the state of family prayer life in the parish.

- Share one or more copies with the executive and members of the parish council of the Catholic Women's League.

- Discuss the ideas in this issue with catechists and teachers.

*How can all these groups work together to help families to grow in prayer?*

Extra copies of this issue may be ordered from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
This article offers some simple suggestions to help individuals and families to use the scriptures in their prayer.

Our Teacher of Prayer

God our Father has shown his love for us by sending us his Son to become one of us, and to be the source of our life (Jn. 3: 16-17). Our heavenly Father has also poured the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts, filling us with the gift of love (Rom. 5: 5). The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee to us that he will keep his promises to us (Eph. 1: 13-14). The Spirit leads us in the paths of Christ (Rom. 8: 5-17), teaches us to proclaim that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10: 9; I Cor. 12: 3), and to recognize God as our beloved Father (Rom. 8: 15).

Teacher of prayer: Our heavenly Father calls us to be people of praise and prayer (Eph. 1: 3-14). To help us, he gives his Spirit to each of us so that we may express our prayer to God in a way that is pleasing to him (see Rom. 8: 26-27).

Any time that we want to pray or grow in prayer, we should ask the Holy Spirit for his light and guidance. When we use the scriptures in our prayer, we are using the words and thoughts that he has inspired for our spiritual profit (see 2 Tim. 3: 15-17).

Praying with the Psalms

The book of psalms in the Hebrew scriptures provides us with many examples of prayer.

Inspired models: As part of the word of God, the psalms are prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit. He understands the depths of God (1 Cor. 2: 10) and the full extent of human nature (Rom. 8: 27), and is able to teach us to pray (Rom. 8: 26). The psalms show us the breadth of God's mercy, the wide range of human emotions and needs, and the beauties of creation. Poetic in form, the psalms provide us with many types of prayer.¹

Christian prayer: Though they were written in the sacred books of the covenant with the Hebrews, the psalms are used as prayers by Christians also. We see Jesus using them and referring them to himself, and his Church continues to pray them and to see Christ in them. (See Bulletin 58, pages 96-100; no. 75, pages 162-164.)

Learning to pray the psalms: A few psalms may serve as our introduction to the psalter as a book of prayer for individuals and families. We need to pray these psalms slowly and reflectively, tasting and enjoying their many images and metaphors.

¹ The psalms are described more fully in Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms. Various types of psalms — including prayers of thanksgiving and confidence, entreaties, and hymns of praise — are described on pages 154-158 and 166 of that issue.
• Ps. 8: We praise God who shows his love for us by creating this wonderful world, and placing it in our charge for his glory and our salvation.

• Ps. 23: We see Jesus as our shepherd, looking after us and leading us through difficulties to the promised land. Its Christian meaning comes out strongly when we read Jn. 10: 11-16, and then pray this psalm as a response to God's love for us in Jesus.

• Ps. 1: God shows us the ways of good and evil, and invites us to follow Jesus by choosing good.

• Ps. 63: 1-8: The morning prayer of the people of God. With the risen Lord Jesus, we rejoice in God's gifts, and pray for his help for his people. Other suitable psalms for prayer at the beginning of the day are Psalms 8, 95, 100, and 117.

• Ps. 141: At the end of the day, we let the incense of our daily work rise before God our Father. Our efforts to serve him are united with the evening sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

• Ps. 4: A prayer at the end of the day as we entrust ourselves to God's care for another night. See also Ps. 91.

• Other psalms are described in Bulletin 75, pages 171-173.

Sung prayers: We are helped to pray the psalms more fully when we realize that they are hymns, poetic prayers intended to be sung rather than said. Many musical settings in a variety of styles are given in Catholic Book of Worship II and in other hymn books.

Praying with the Gospel

We may pray with the gospels in several ways:

Gospel canticles: In the first two chapters of Luke's gospel we find three canticles, prayers woven from many passages in the Hebrew scriptures:

• Canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79): A prayer of praise and thanks to God who has given us the promised savior. The Church uses it in morning prayer.

• Canticle of Mary (Lk. 1: 46-55): Thanksgiving to God for his mercy and for his wonderful deeds among us. This is sung in evening prayer.

• Canticle of Simeon (Lk. 2: 29-32): A prayer of thanks to God who saves us through Christ. It is a suitable canticle for night prayer.

While we may pray these canticles at any time of the day in our personal prayer, it is fitting to use them at the hours when the Church prays them in the liturgy.

Praying with a gospel passage: This may be done by an individual or by several members of the family. We set aside a time for praying without disturbance, and choose a passage from the gospel for our prayer. We ask Jesus and his Spirit to help us to pray. We read over the gospel passage slowly and thoughtfully, letting Jesus speak to us by his words and actions. We think about what we are reading, and try to respond personally to our Lord. What is he asking of me? of us? Is there something in our life that is not pleasing to him? Is there more that he wants us to do? Then we
can turn to him in sorrow and in love, and ask him to purify us and help us to come closer to him.

This method may be used with a favorite passage (such as Jn. 15: 1-10, or Mt. 25: 31-46), or with the Sunday gospel.

**Gospel litany:** We may write down the various petitions for help and words of praise or titles addressed to Christ, and form them into a litany for personal or family use. (See Mt. 8: 2, and Jn. 4: 42, for example.) The preparation of such a text could be a family project, using several translations of the gospel to provide variety and new insights. (An example of this type of prayer is given in *A gospel litany*, in Bulletin 44, page 192.)

**Gospel and psalm:** We may wish to select an appropriate psalm to pray after reading a chapter in the gospels. Thus, Ps. 23 could follow Jn. 10, and Ps. 110 could conclude Jn. 8; see also Lk. 7 and Ps. 51; Mt. 5 and Ps. 1; Mt. 27 and Ps. 22; Jn. 15 and Ps. 80. Families could associate other chapters and psalms, and might wish to pencil in the psalm reference at the end of the chapter.

**Scriptural Prayers**

There are many other examples and models of prayer in the scriptures:

**The Lord's prayer:** Jesus taught this prayer to his disciples (Lk. 11: 1-4; Mt. 6: 9-13). It is the prayer of all who follow him, for he leads us to the Father: with Jesus we are the children of God. Christians need to say this prayer carefully, and reflect on its words and its meaning for them. (See *Meditation on the Lord's prayer*, in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159; page 176, below.)

**Other prayers of Jesus:** Other examples of Jesus' own prayers are also given in the New Testament: see pages 149-150, above.

**Canticles:** Some gospel canticles are mentioned above. There are many other canticles in the New Testament (such as Eph. 1: 3-10; Phil. 2: 6-11; Rev. 4: 11; Rev. 5: 9-10), and in the Hebrew scriptures (such as the canticle of Moses, Exod. 15: 1-19; and the canticle of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2: 1-10). Many of these are included in the liturgy of the hours at morning and evening prayer: see *Canticles*, in Bulletin 75, page 176.

**Other forms of prayer** in the bible include the prayer in Acts 4: 24-30, and the fine prayer in Eph. 3: 14-21, as well as doxologies (page 151, above) and blessings (page 176).

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**Helpful reading:** As well as the references on pages 148-153, above, the following are useful:


*Prayer*, no. 237 (Christopher News Notes, 12 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017).
SPONTANEOUS PRAYER

Spontaneous prayer is not new in the life of the Church: it has been part of the prayer life of individuals and of the community's liturgy since the beginning. In our day, we are moving into a fresh blending of traditional forms and free personal forms of prayer. There is much room for this new blending in our personal prayer, and some room for it in the liturgy.

What is spontaneous prayer? The word “spontaneous” comes from the Latin sponte, an adverb which has several meanings. Referring mainly to something that comes from our own free will, it can sometimes mean something impulsive or unpremeditated. Here, however, we are using it to indicate that which flows freely from ourselves.

• One way of describing spontaneous prayer: It is a free response in faith to the constant prompting of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us to teach us to pray (Rom. 8: 26-27). The eternal teacher of prayer encourages us, his living temples, to respond in prayer to some person, knowledge, event, or situation which touches our life.

• Spontaneity is much broader than a knowledge of prayer structures or an ability to put our feelings into words. It flows from an attitude of openness to the Spirit, and from a willingness to follow his guidance in our prayer.

Times for spontaneous prayer? Can you have “times” for spontaneous prayer? We cannot schedule spontaneous prayer, but we can leave space for it by silence, by careful listening to God's word, by song, and by gesture and posture. During intercessions, a moment may be left for individuals to add other petitions, either in silence or aloud.

• Encouraging spontaneous prayer: Time for spontaneous prayer should be included regularly in family prayer: in morning and evening devotions, at meal times, and in times of special needs. Parents may encourage their children to pray for themselves, their family, and for others often. An occasional pause in the midst of our daily work to breathe a short prayer is in keeping with the spirit of daytime prayer in the liturgy of the hours.

Two comments on spontaneity: These two quotations help us to understand spontaneity much better:

• Clarence Rivers: “Many people would say that actions have to be spontaneous to be genuine. Fr. Clarence Rivers, a black Roman Catholic priest, has given the best answer I have heard:

Don’t be fooled. Spontaneity takes a great deal of practice. Spontaneity is an illusion. A great deal of exercise is required before an expression can appear spontaneous. For example, when a youngster is beginning a course in gymnastics, he or she is terribly awkward, but really very spontaneous. A veteran gymnast, on the other hand, appears to be completely spontaneous, and yet his or her appearance of spontaneity is something that has taken years and years of practice.”

• Martha Graham: "Spontaneity, a word much abused by those who don't want the pressures of discipline and dedication, is something else that Miss Graham explains. As it applies to the dancer, she says:

It takes time. It takes about ten years of study. Someone said that everyone is born a genius but that some people only keep it a few minutes. In other words, what happens when you have to work ten years? You get tired. But those who press through finally arrive at a moment when they don't have to dance in groups of forty or fourteen. They become one of four. Or even one. They are really individuals now. They have reached the full maturity in their craft. At last they have spontaneity. Now they can make everything they do seem as though it is being done for the first time. They have reached clarity."

Spontaneity and structured prayers: Structures and traditional prayer forms show us how previous generations have praised God and prayed to him. They are the way we learn to pray and to become familiar with our Christian and Jewish tradition and heritage.

These forms help us to pray most of the time, particularly when we are tired, sick, or weak: we can let the prayer forms guide us in our prayer.

Scriptural prayers, and especially the psalms, are particularly helpful in teaching us to pray in accordance with the mind of Christ. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, these prayers are ways in which the Spirit teaches us to pray: see Rom. 8: 26-27; Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms.

• In family and personal prayer, there are times when traditional prayers are more helpful, and other occasions when a person is ready to pray a spontaneous prayer that meets the needs of the situation. We should feel free to encourage both forms of prayer.

Keeping our balance: It is easy — but unwise — to take extreme positions in the matter of spontaneous prayer. There are always some who want to retain only the old (i.e., the written or traditional) prayer forms of the Church; others may want to throw out all the old forms, and use only spontaneous prayer.

In personal prayer, we are free to follow either way, but we would be wise to consider the example of the renewed liturgy, where the Church is leading us in a more balanced direction:

• Retain the traditional structures and forms;
• Vary them within their framework;
• Use a variety of choices;
• Leave room for some creativity;
• Make sure that prayer, and not novelty, is your goal.

Growing in spontaneous prayer: There are several steps we may take in learning to pray spontaneously. They are all important, and several may be taking place on any particular day.

2 Quoted in Everybody Steals from God: Communication as Worship, by Edward Fischer (1977, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556): page 57.
• **Pray to the Holy Spirit:** He is the teacher of prayer. Ask him to help you to grow in prayer as you continue to follow Jesus as closely as possible in your daily living. (P.S. Praying in your own words is already a form of spontaneous prayer!)

• **Read the scriptures:** How often? Each day. How long? As long as possible. A quarter of an hour of prayerful reading of the gospel, the epistles, or the psalms, for example, will help you to become more familiar and comfortable with the mind and heart of Christ.

• **Take an active part in the liturgy:** Participate fully in the eucharist and the liturgy of the hours; when possible, take part in other liturgical celebrations. Full participation in the liturgy is the *primary and indispensable source* of the true spirit of Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). The liturgy is an excellent model for our personal prayers of praise and petition.

• **Become familiar with various models of prayer:** Learn how a collect, a litany, a *berakah*, and other traditional prayer forms are built (see pages 176-178), and use them. You may have to begin by using others' prayers, and then move to writing out your own. With practice it will become easier to use these models as frameworks for prayers you compose.

• **Ask the Holy Spirit** for strength to remain open to his inspirations, and to see his finger in the prayer traditions of the Church. Ask him also to help you to respond by prayer to many situations. Then go ahead and pray in your own words, spontaneously.

• **Keep repeating steps 1-5.**

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**BULLETINS FOR THIS YEAR**

It is still not too late to subscribe to the 1981 issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. Bulletins 77-81 look at these practical topics in a pastoral way:

- No. 77: *Sunday Eucharist: II*
- No. 78: *Ecumenism and Liturgy*
- No. 79: *Sunday Liturgy: When Lay People Preside*
- No. 80: *Helping Families to Pray*
- No. 81: *Essays in Liturgy: II*

Subscriptions for 1981, for nos. 77-81, are $6.00 in Canada, and $8.00 (U.S. funds) in other countries; airmail to other countries, $4.00 (U.S. funds) extra. Ask for a 1981 subscription, and send your cheque or money order to Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1, Canada.
EXPLORING OUR PRAYER FORMS

We are the people of God, called to be people of prayer. As a Church, we go back 2,000 years: twenty centuries, countless generations of men and women and children of prayer. Christians have inherited many of the attitudes and prayer forms of the Jewish people, who go back further centuries to Abraham.

Value of traditional prayers: Every generation needs to learn to pray, but it does not have to reinvent the wheel. Prayers that have been tried and proven for centuries provide us with texts, models, frameworks, and guidelines for our personal, family, and community prayer. Traditional prayer forms are an aid to spontaneous prayer, but also retain their own value as prayer.

Exploring our traditional prayer forms: When we look at prayers that form part of our tradition, we are exploring our spiritual roots.

○ Psalms: We are beginning to know ourselves when we look at the psalms as prayers, for Jesus was formed by the psalms, and so are we. Our attitudes of praise, of reflecting on the wonders of creation, on seeing God's hand at work in nature are influenced by the psalms. The psalms are explored more fully in Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms.

○ Our Father: Jesus taught us this prayer to his Father and to ours. It is an excellent prayer for use as it comes to us in the gospels (see Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 2-4), and also as a model for both personal and public prayer. Tertullian calls this prayer a summary of the whole gospel. With its acclamation ("For the kingdom"), this prayer is recorded in the Didache, which says that we should pray it three times a day. This idea is picked up in today's Church, where the Lord's prayer is prayed solemnly three times a day — in morning and evening prayer, and in the eucharist (GILH, no. 195).

□ The basic directions of this prayer may also serve as models for our personal prayer and living: our first concerns are for God and his kingdom (see Mt. 6: 33), and then for ourselves (rather than "myself" only). The Lord's prayer also serves as a model for the intercessions of morning and evening prayer (see GILH, no. 185).

□ It is good to explore the Our Father, and to taste its many thoughts and expressions. An individual could easily spend a half hour in silent reflection on this prayer every so often. See also Meditation on the Lord's prayer, in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159.

Some Other Traditional Forms

Exploring prayer forms: Individuals, families, and parish prayer groups may wish to explore the structure, meaning, and use of some of these prayer forms:

○ Berakah or blessing: This prayer of praise comes to us from the Jewish scriptures and prayer traditions: it is the familiar "Blessed are you, Lord God" form. The Roman eucharistic prayers are expanded from this simple prayer form. The structure of the berakah prayer is examined in Bulletin 68, pages 73-74; see also Sunday Mass Book, page 1318. Many examples are given in Bulletin 49, and in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa).
• Collect: In the Roman liturgy, this is the form used for the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts, and the prayer after communion. The structure of the prayer is studied in Bulletin 68, page 74.

• Intercessions: We are told that we should make our petitions to God our Father even though he already knows what we need (Mt. 6: 8). As Christians, it is our responsibility to pray for the world (1 Tim. 2: 1-4, 8). Some models for our prayer for others are found in the Lord's prayer, in the prayer of Jesus for his Church (Jn. 17: 1-26), and in the prayers of Jesus and Stephen for their persecutors (Lk. 23: 34; Acts 7: 60). See also the prayer in Eph. 3: 14-21.

  □ In the liturgy today, we find the prayer of the faithful in the liturgy of the word in the Mass, and the intercessions at the end of morning and evening prayer.

  □ In family and personal prayer, we may pray for any good intentions. Some suggestions are listed in Sunday Mass Book, page 1335, and in Prayer for all people, in Bulletin 58, page 128.

  □ Other thoughts on intercessions are given in Bulletin 68, pages 74-75.

• Litanies: The word “litany” is derived from the Greek litaneuein, to pray. A litany is flexible in its format, including intercessions and words of praise, and invites the community to participate by singing or saying their response(s).

  □ Ps. 136 is a litany in its form, and invites additional verses applicable to our Christian mysteries and our family or community circumstances. (See CBW II, no. 434.)

  □ The litany of the saints, sung in the Easter vigil and at ordinations, may easily be used by families and individuals in prayer. There is room for adaptation to local needs near the end of the litany. See CBW II, no. 193, and Sunday Mass Book, pages 459-461.

  □ A brief form of the litany of the saints is used in the baptism of children, and may be adapted for family use: see CBW II, no. 8, and Sunday Mass Book, page 1075.

  □ See also A gospel litany, in Bulletin 44, page 192; a brief Christmas litany is included in Bulletin 55, page 212, with suggestions for adding to it; and see above, page 172.

• Doxologies: This word comes from the Greek words for a word or saying of glory or praise. We are familiar with the Glory to the Father at the end of a psalm or a decade of the rosary, and with a verse praising the Trinity at the end of a hymn. These are doxologies. During a doxology, it is fitting to bow as a sign of reverence to God.

  □ In personal and family prayer, it is good to pray or sing the Glory to the Father. The Glory to God is sometimes called the greater doxology. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” (CBW II, no. 622) is a strong doxology, and may be sung to close a meeting, after a talk or discussion, at the end of a family celebration or time of prayer, or in a moment of great joy.

  □ When we pray or sing a doxology, we are summing up all that we are doing, and are offering it to God for his glory: see 1 Cor. 10: 31.
Further notes are given in Bulletin 68, page 73, and in Sunday Mass Book, page 1291. See also page 151, above.

- **Acclamations:** An acclamation is a brief shout or cry of praise. Some familiar ones are these:

  - Alleluia!
  - Amen!
  - Hosanna!
  - Praise the Lord!
  - Glory to God in the highest!
  - Thanks be to God!

  They may be repeated several times, and are most expressive when sung.

- **Silence:** Public worship and prayer need quiet moments of silent reflection: see *Silence is necessary!* in Bulletin 71, pages 204-205. In personal and family prayer, pauses for silence are also deeply beneficial: they give us time to listen to the Spirit within us, and let us reflect on God's word.

  Appropriate times for silent prayer are these: after a reading from scripture; after the *Glory to the Father* which follows a psalm; during prayers of intercession; when reflecting on God's good actions in us and through us and for us; when examining our conscience; before beginning a time of prayer, and afterward as well. As we grow accustomed to using these moments for silent prayer, we will find our desire for them growing. In our public worship too, we will find that we are better able to use the brief pauses for deeper personal prayer.

**Rosary**

In its origin, the rosary was a simple substitute for the psalter, with the *Hail, Mary* being said 150 times, once for each of the psalms. The rosary is thus related to the Church's liturgy of the hours, which shares in Christ's unending hymn of praise to the Father. The Church now sees the rosary as a *gospel prayer*, reflecting on its events, and inviting us to meditate on the saving acts of our Lord's life and his paschal mystery.

- **Traditional prayers:** The prayers which make up the rosary are part of our Christian heritage:

  - *Our Father:* Jesus himself taught us this prayer as a model for our own. (See Lk. 11: 2-4, and Mt. 6: 9-13.)

  - *Hail, Mary:* This prayer has been developed by the Church. The first half is based on the words of Gabriel (Lk. 1: 28) and Elizabeth (Lk. 1: 42). This prayer is repeated in five decades or sets of ten.

  - *Glory to the Father:* This doxology closes each of the decades, just as it is sung or said after each psalm in the liturgy of the hours.

  In Canada, it is our custom to add these prayers at the beginning of the five decades:

    - *Sign of the cross:* This may also be made at the end of our prayer.

    - *Apostles' creed:* This profession of our faith is an echo of our baptismal vows, and is placed at the beginning of the rosary.
Meditation on the gospel mysteries: While praying the rosary, we are encouraged to meditate on God's plan for saving the world by sending his Son as our savior. This is done by reflecting on the mysteries or events of the life of the Lord Jesus.

• Joyful mysteries: These center around the events in the childhood of Christ, and emphasize that Jesus is the Son of God who became one of us, the one whom the Father has sent to save us from our sins. The seasons of Advent and Christmas celebrate these same events. The joyful mysteries are:

   □ Annunciation of our Lord
   Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth
   Birth of our Lord
   Jesus is presented in the temple
   Jesus is found in the temple.

• Sorrowful mysteries: These mysteries meditate on some events in the passion of our Lord, the suffering servant. After the Father has raised Jesus from the dead and proclaimed him Lord, we are able to understand the mystery of the cross a little better. The season of Lent and the liturgy of Holy Week celebrate these same events. The sorrowful mysteries are:

   □ Agony of Jesus in the garden
   Jesus is scourged
   Jesus is crowned with thorns
   Jesus carries his cross
   Jesus is crucified for our salvation.

• Glorious mysteries: These mysteries present further aspects of Christ's paschal mystery. They center on the risen Lord Jesus, who continues to share with us the benefits of his death and rising. Every Sunday and during the Easter season we celebrate some of these events. The glorious mysteries are:

   □ Jesus is raised from the dead
   Jesus ascends into heaven
   Jesus sends his Spirit upon the Church
   Mary is assumed into heaven
   Mary is crowned queen of heaven.

Family prayer: Pope Paul VI told us that the celebration of the liturgy of the hours is the highest type of family prayer; next to it comes the family rosary, celebrated as a meditative prayer. Family prayer is more necessary than ever today if the Church is to carry out its vocation of prayer.1

Other Notes

Modern prayers: There is a growing number of books about prayer and books of prayers to be found in bookstores today. A family may wish to explore some of these, perhaps as a lenten project. Modern prayers sometimes tend to be wordy and subjective.

Develop a simple profession of faith: Occasionally it is good for a family or other group to write out a simple profession of their faith in response to God's word. Further thoughts on this are developed in *Creative creed*, in Bulletin 38, pages 102-103.

“Haiku” prayers: The *haiku* is a formal structure used in Japanese poetry which has found a place in English writing as well. In only 17 syllables, arranged in three lines (5-7-5), the writer has room to express one thought or flash of insight.

This format is suggested as an interesting one for occasional prayer and meditation. Examples of *haiku* prayers were published in Bulletins 62, 63, and 64 in 1978, and in some issues since then.

- **Advantages**: Simple enough for a child in grade two to compose, and giving scope for an adult, the *haiku* prayer invites reflection and creativity. It is a way in which we can express our wonder and thanks for creation and grace, and ask for God's help. Learning to use this prayer can also be a first step toward developing greater creativity in prayer and worship.

- **Encouraging their use**: This may be done through the parish bulletin, as part of a workshop or class, in a group or at home.

- **Examples**:

  - *Thank you for sunshine:*
  - *you made it to guide our ways.*
  - *Jesus, I love you.*

  - *Help me, Lord, to pray:*
  - *you know my sins and my needs.*
  - *Lord, open my lips.*

* * *

**Helpful reading**: See the titles suggested on pages 188-189.


BRIEF PRAYERS

Before the Council, we Catholics had a practice of saying "ejaculations," short prayers which could be said in a few seconds.

Except those contained in the litany of the saints, the baptiral litany, and in the prayers for the dying, few one-line prayers are in the revised liturgy. Brief acclamations, however, have been added to our liturgical repertoire (see page 178, above).

Brief Biblical Prayers

From the scriptures: The Vatican Council noted that many liturgical prayers are taken from or reflect the scriptures (Liturgy constitution, no. 24); new hymns should be drawn from the bible and liturgical sources (no. 121).

Individuals and families may wish to use brief biblical prayers in their prayer. Many prayers of praise and of petition may be found in or adapted from the scriptures.

Examples: Some examples of these prayers are suggested here for further exploration by individuals and families:

- Praise:
  - Glory be to Christ for ever! (See Heb. 13: 21.)
  - Praise and honor be to God for ever (see Rev. 5: 13).

See Rom. 16: 25a; Rom. 16: 27; Jn. 12: 28; Jn. 20: 28; Ps. 146: 1; Ps. 150: 6; Ps. 75: 1; Ps. 103: 1.

- Thanks:
  - Thanks be to God! (See Rom. 6: 17.)

See also Eph. 1: 3a; Ps. 111: 1. Many brief prayers of praise and thanks are given at the beginning and end of the New Testament epistles.

- Faith:
  - I believe that you are the savior of the world (see Jn. 4: 42).
  - Jesus is Lord! (See 1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9.)

See also Mt. 16: 16.

- Petition: See also Ps. 143: 9; Ps. 143: 10; and many verses of Ps. 119.
  - Father, bless those who persecute me (see Rom. 12: 14; Mt. 5: 44-45).
  - Lord Jesus, help us to live as people of light (see Rom. 13: 13; Eph. 5: 8; Mt. 5: 14-16).

  - Lord, help me to be patient and kind (see 1 Cor. 13: 4-7).
  - Father, send us your Spirit (see Lk. 11: 13).
  - Help us to imitate you, Lord Jesus (see 1 Cor. 11: 1).
Many similar prayers may be found in the psalms, the gospels, the epistles, and in the books of the Old Testament. Further suggestions are given on page 172, above.

* * *

Using the Jesus Prayer

**Scripture**: The Old and New Testament speak of the name of God as a way of referring reverently to God himself. When we praise and glorify his name, we are giving him honor (see Ps. 72: 19; Ps. 148: 13). We can place our trust in his name (Ps. 33: 21) and find God’s help (Ps. 124: 8).

The New Testament tells us that it is the Spirit who moves us to make the Christian act of faith, Jesus is Lord! (See 1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9; Phil. 2: 9-11.)

**An Eastern prayer**: The Jesus prayer is a simple one-line prayer which echoes the spirit of the scriptures:

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*

The prayer arose in the Eastern Churches, and has come to the West only in recent years.

**Spirit of this prayer**: The first six words are an act of faith, recognizing Jesus as Son of God and our Lord. The petition — which may be prayed in the plural, *have mercy on us* — is a prayer for forgiveness and salvation. The prayer is in keeping with the spirit of the eucharist and the liturgy of the hours.

**Using the Jesus prayer**: We may use this prayer at any time of the day or night, while working or playing or resting. We may pray it in happy moments and sad ones, in joy and in pain, in trial and in temptation. We may pray for ourselves and for others.

**Some variations**: In Advent, or in time of great need, we may adapt the prayer in the spirit of Rev. 22: 20:

*Come, Lord Jesus, Son of God:
have mercy on us.*

The liturgy uses *Lord, have mercy*, which is a brief form of the Jesus prayer.

* * *

**Helpful reading**:


*La prière de Jésus: Sa genèse, son développement et sa pratique dans la tradition religieuse byzantino-slave*, by a monk of the Eastern Church (1963, Chevetogne, 27 rue Jacob, Paris VI).
IN TUNE WITH THE LITURGICAL YEAR

During the year, the Church of God celebrates the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus, especially in its Sunday liturgies. The liturgical seasons help us to reflect on the many-sided richness of God's loving grace. In family prayer, we may seek to move with the Church by letting our prayer move with the seasons and feasts.

Outline of the liturgical year:

- **Sunday:** The Lord's day is the heart of the liturgical year, and the primary feast (Liturgy constitution, no. 106).

- **Easter cycle:**
  - Preparation: Lent — Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday
  - Celebration: Easter triduum — Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday evening
  - Continuation: Easter season — Easter Monday to Pentecost Sunday.

- **Christmas cycle:**
  - Preparation: Advent
  - Celebration: Christmas eve to January 1
  - Continuation: January 2 to Baptism of the Lord.

- **Ordinary time** is celebrated in two stages:
  - Monday after Baptism of the Lord to Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
  - Monday after Pentecost to Saturday before First Sunday in Advent.

Helpful reading on the liturgical year:

Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 102-111.


Bulletin 70, *Liturgical Year and Spirituality*, on the spirit of each season.

Bulletin 47, *Year of Praise*, on the history of the seasons and feasts during the liturgical year.

*A family calendar of celebrations*, in Bulletin 68, pages 78-80.

*Year of praise and prayer*, in Bulletin 63, pages 103-110; *Role of the parish community* (in helping families to pray better), in Bulletin 63, pages 95-102.

Other helpful references are listed in Bulletin 63, page 110; see also pages 188-189, below.

Christmas Cycle

Advent:

- **Spirit of the season:** Advent is a time of joy and expectation, as we look forward to the coming of the Lord at the end of time; from Dec. 17 to 24, we prepare for the Christmas celebrations of the coming of Jesus among us as our savior. “Make straight the way of the Lord” is the watchword of the season of Advent.
Scriptures: Sunday lectionary, nos. 1-12; weekday lectionary, nos. 176-202.1

Seasonal psalms: Ps. 25; Ps. 85. (See CBW II for settings.)

Appropriate prayers for Advent include: The Lord's prayer; “Come, Lord Jesus” (see 1 Cor. 16: 22; Rev. 22: 20; Didache, 8: 6); "Not my will, Father, but your will be done" (see Mt. 26: 39); "May your kingdom come, and your will be done" (see Mt. 6: 10-11); canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79); O antiphons (see Bulletin 55, pages 200-204); Angelus (based on Lk. 1: 26-38, 42); Glory to the Father.

Family practices: Advent wreath: see Bulletin 70, page 168; no. 55, page 210; Jesse tree, no. 70, pages 168-169; Advent calendar, in no. 41, pages 309-311; Christmas tree and crib: see under Christmas, below; Advent in the family: no. 63, page 103, and no. 67, page 23.

Patron saints: Mary, John the Baptist, and Joseph are appropriate patrons for this season: see Bulletin 36, page 246; others are mentioned in no. 41, pages 263-264 and 270-272. On Mary, see also no. 62, pages 47-51; no. 70, pages 178-183; no. 79, page 111. The CCCB has also published a leaflet, Mother of Our Lord (1980, CCCB, Ottawa), which will be helpful for families.


Christmas and Epiphany:

Spirit of the season: We praise God our Father and celebrate with joy because he loves us so much, and sends his Son to be one of us (Jn. 3: 16-17). Our celebration centers on the mystery of the incarnation of the Word of God as our Lord, our savior, and our brother, and on the beginning of his ministry among us.


Seasonal psalms: Ps. 98 for the whole season; Ps. 72 for the final week between Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord.

Appropriate prayers for the Christmas season include Mary's canticle of praise (Lk. 1: 46-55); and Hail, Mary (based in part on Lk. 1: 28 and 42).

Family practices: On the preparation of a family crib and its significance, see Bulletin 36, pages 262-264; no. 41, pages 312-313; no. 55, pages 211-212; Christmas tree: see no. 55, pages 213-214; family activities, no. 63, pages 103-106.

Other references: See Sunday Mass Book, pages 89-139; CBW II, nos. 124-132; Bulletins 36, 41, and 55; history of the season, in no. 47, pages 19-27; spirituality, in no. 70, pages 170-173.

1 The CCCB has prepared study editions of the Lectionary for Sundays and Solemnities and of the Weekday Lectionary. These are available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
**Easter Cycle**

**Lent:** During this season the Church calls us to be renewed by coming back to our Christian initiation as the source of our conversion to God. Emphasis is placed on reading the scriptures, prayer, penance, and participation in the liturgy. In the family, members support and encourage one another in their lenten projects and prayers.

- **Scripture:** Sunday lectionary, nos. 22-38; weekday lectionary, nos. 220-260.
- **Seasonal psalms:** Ps. 51; Ps. 91; Ps. 130; Holy Week, Ps. 22.
- **Appropriate prayers:** These include “Not my will, Father, but your will be done” (see Mt. 26: 39); “May your kingdom come, and your will be done” (see Mt. 6: 10-11); a simple act of sorrow (such as one based on Lk. 15: 21 and Ezek. 36: 25-27; see Bulletin 36, page 253); phrases from the seasonal psalms.
- **Family practices:** See Bulletin 63, page 106.
- **Other references:** See Sunday Mass Book, pages 249-381; CBW II, nos. 133-163; history of the season, in Bulletin 47, pages 31-33; spirituality, in no. 70, pages 153-157.

**Easter triduum:** During these three days we seek to enter more fully into the dying and rising of Jesus through listening to the scriptures, quiet reflection, prayer, and penance. We take part in the liturgical celebrations in our parish, and let our family prayer be influenced by the spirit of the liturgy in these days.

- **Scripture:** Sunday lectionary, nos. 40-43.
- **Appropriate prayers:** See notes on Lent, above.
- **Family practices:** See Bulletin 63, page 107.
- **Other references:** See Sunday Mass Book, pages 382-476; CBW II, pages 164-203; history of these days, in Bulletin 47, pages 28-30 and 37-52; spirituality, in no. 70, pages 159-161.

**Easter season:** Our joy over the rising of Jesus flows into our daily living. We celebrate with Jesus and his Church because we share through our baptism in his victory over sin. With Jesus we are raised to new life for God, for we share in the Spirit. In the Sunday gospels we reflect on the continuing presence of Jesus among us through his Spirit.

- **Scripture:** Sunday lectionary, nos. 44-64; weekday lectionary, nos. 261-304.
- **Seasonal psalms:** Ps. 118; Ps. 66; Ascension, Ps. 47; Pentecost, Ps. 104.
- **Appropriate prayers:** Prayers of praise, thanks, and glory are suitable during this season. *Alleluia* may be sung with daily prayers, at grace, and as a burst of praise. A verse of any of the Easter hymns, particularly the doxology, is always appropriate.

“Jesus is Lord!” (see 1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9) is an act of faith, inspired by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. See also Phil. 2: 6-11, which may be used as a prayer of praise. Prayers to the Spirit are recommended throughout the season.

Other references: See Sunday Mass Book, pages 477-573; CBW II, nos. 198, 204-222; history of the season, in Bulletin 47, pages 52-54; spirituality, in no. 70, pages 161, and 164-166.

Ordinary Time

Ordinary time: During this season we reflect on the gospel, and let it lead us to know Christ better (see Bulletin 56, pages 293-295). We measure our daily living by the gospel standards, and keep Jesus' way of life before us.

Scripture: Sunday lectionary, nos. 65-164, 165-175; weekday lectionary, nos. 305-509.

Seasonal psalms: Psalms 19, 27, 34, 63, 95; Psalms 100, 103, 145, and 122.

Appropriate prayers: Ordinary time is a good time to encourage family prayer at regular times (morning, mealtime, evening); spontaneous prayer; prayer from the gospels; prayer of praise; prayer of intercession. Families could sing some of the shorter passages from the Mass (such as Lord, have mercy; Holy, holy, holy Lord; and the refrain from the responsorial psalm) in their prayer.

Family practices: See Bulletin 63, pages 106 and 108.


Feasts of saints: Mary and the saints are persons who have served God faithfully in their daily living on earth. Now the Church holds them before us as models and as intercessors. Families are encouraged to celebrate the feasts of saints who are particular patrons: those they are named after, parish patrons, patrons of their country and of their ethnic background.

Scripture: Weekday lectionary, nos. 510-700; the common readings are in nos. 707-742.

Appropriate prayers: A simple prayer may be addressed to one's patron saint: "St. N., pray for us." The short litany of the saints and the longer form may be used on these feasts, with the patrons of the family added (see Sunday Mass Book, pages 1075 and 459-461; CBW II, nos. 8 and 193).


Other references: See Sunday Mass Book, pages 1181-1273; CBW II, nos. 331-337; history, in Bulletin 47, pages 59-62; Mary and the saints, in no. 70, pages 178-183; Blessed for all ages, in no. 62, pages 47-51; Those who follow Christ, in no. 62, pages 52-54.

Days of prayer and penance: Jesus promised that his followers would fast after his return to his Father's side (see Mt. 9: 14-15). The Catholic Church has tried, with varying success, to remain faithful to this command. Around the year 100, we read in the Didache of fasting twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday (see Lk. 18: 12 — the Pharisees fasted on Tuesdays and Thursdays). A century later, Tertullian refers to these as weekly station days, when Christians fast and pray.
Over the centuries, fast days, rogation days, ember days, and vigils were introduced as days of prayer and penance. For a long time, Friday was a day of abstinence from meat. (See Bulletin 47, pages 63-64; no. 62, pages 25-26.)

Since 1966, we are invited to rediscover the spirit of penance, and encouraged to make our penance more personal (see Bulletin 10, pages 7-12).

- **Friday:** Each week we remember that Jesus has died for each of us because he loves us (see Gal. 2: 20). We respond to his personal love and try to do an act of penance or extra kindness. We may also mark the day with a special prayer or form of grace (see Bulletin 49, page 196; Sunday Mass Book, page 1329). See also Friday is a special day, in Bulletin 42, pages 18-19 and 30-31; Friday: gone or still here? in no. 33, pages 75-76; no. 62, pages 25-26; no. 63, page 108.

- **Lent:** The spirit of our fasting is described in Mt. 6: 16-18. Every weekday in Lent is penitential, with special attention paid to Fridays and to Ash Wednesday.

- **Paschal fast:** On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we are called to observe the paschal fast of the early Church as a special preparation for the Easter vigil celebrations (Liturgy constitution, no. 110).

  *Each family could ask itself about the place or lack of penance in its life; each parish too could examine its conscience about the guidance and encouragement it is giving in this area.*

**Back to Our Roots**

*These paragraphs are based on Bulletin 63, pages 109-110.*

"Tell the next generation" (Ps. 48: 13-14): The Jewish people retain a beautiful custom at the time of the Passover. As they gather around the table to eat this sacred meal, the youngest child present asks what these rites mean. In answer, the father of the family describes how the Lord God brought his people out of Egypt, and commanded them to observe these rites each year (Exod. 12: 26-27; Exod. 13: 8-10; Deut. 6: 20-25; see also Esther 4: 17m).

This custom could be adapted and used by Christian families at some of the major times described in this article. Thus a child will learn the meaning of our faith in the bosom of his or her family, which is the first school of faith (see Esther 4: 17m).

- The question and answer could well be part of the homily, and could be included in the parish bulletin as well. (Some ideas for the answer are contained in the seasonal references; in the introduction to Sunday Mass Book, pages 20-22, and in the brief notes at the beginning of each season's Masses.)

- The parish liturgy committee could prepare an answer for each season as a model for the parents' response, and put it in the Sunday bulletin.

- It is suggested that both parents share in giving the answer. About one or two paragraphs in length would be adequate. The words should be simple, and may echo the scriptures. No attempt need be made to memorize the answer: it should simply provide ideas for the parents to use when they answer the child's question.

- The one who asks the question is usually the youngest child able to ask it intelligently.
A FAMILY BOOKSHELF

This article mentions some books that are helpful to a family that wants to grow in prayer. Other useful titles are mentioned in footnotes throughout this issue, and at the end of individual articles.

Bible

The first book for Christian prayer is the word of God. Various translations and editions of the bible should be available to the family, as well as psalm books and copies of the New Testament.

Many practical suggestions on specific editions are contained in A book for God’s people, in Bulletin 63, pages 85-86.

Other books containing selections from the scriptures:

- **Sunday Mass Book**: Sunday readings and psalms
- **Study editions of Lectionary for Sundays and Solemnities and Weekday Lectionary**.


Books About Prayer


*National Bulletin on Liturgy*:

- No. 44: People of Prayer
- No. 63: Children and Liturgy
- No. 68: Family Prayer
- No. 75: Praying the Psalms.

Many other Bulletin articles are referred to throughout this issue; others are referred to in Bulletin 61, pages 336-340. Reviews of current books, including books on prayer, are carried in most issues.

*Worship Without Words*, a liturgical leaflet (1979, CCCB, Ottawa).

Other Books for Prayer

Christian Prayer: The one-volume edition of the liturgy of the hours. See reviews of various editions in Bulletin 58, pages 117-120.


Other Resources


OTHER NOTES

BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS


This paper is the result of a ten-year study by the commission and a committee of priests engaged in seminary work across Canada. It presents guidelines for adapting Roman norms to the realities of English-speaking areas in our country. While it is intended first of all for seminaries, it is also of value for priests in parishes and for teachers; it could also provide some useful insights for parish councils and various diocesan commissions. Approved by Rome for use in Canada. Recommended.


This is a translation of a Canadian book, La Réconciliation en Église, published by Fides of Montréal in 1977. It provides a careful examination of the scriptural texts concerning sin and its forgiveness in the community, and of the Church's practices in forgiving sin through the centuries. In this way we are able to understand more clearly the purpose of our Lord in giving us reconciliation and forgiveness. Some helpful insights into the current rites of penance are offered by the author. Recommended for clergy, catechists, and students of liturgy.


An article by Dr. Hatchett, a priest of the Episcopal Church, appeared in Bulletin 76, pages 196-202. As a scholar and a member of the committees involved in the development of the American Book of Common Prayer, he is deeply qualified to give us this detailed study and commentary on its rites and texts. Their background and origins are carefully explained, and various stages in their development are followed through the centuries.

The book is written in an easy style, and offers vast amounts of information without overwhelming or drowning the reader. Individual points are reasonably easy to locate with the aid of the index and table of contents.

The commentary contains a wealth of background material for all who want to understand the current renewed Prayer Book, as well as the Roman rite and other reforming liturgies. Recommended as a treasury for students of liturgy, as a resource book for diocesan commissions of liturgy and of ecumenism, and as a daily companion for Anglican clergy.


For each part and rite of the Mass, this practical study guide provides these points: historical survey, documentation, reflection, and suggestions for discussion. For the opening prayer or collect, for example, three paragraphs cover the history; five selections from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (from nos. 32, 88, 10, 12, and 23) give the current requirements and standards; one paragraph reflects on the meaning of the opening prayer in the liturgy; and ten questions are given for further discussion. This FDLC book will be a valuable help for priests, liturgy committees, and seminarians. Recommended as a guide for regular study.

1 Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.

This packet is intended for liturgy planners in parishes, schools, or families, and includes many ideas for each Sunday: an introduction to each season, suggestions for music, banners, mobiles, and activities relating to each reading; a suggested set of acclamations for the penitential rite. These are intended to be catalysts for greater creativity in planning celebrations. In the weekday section, each day gives the scripture references and three or four brief notes.

Those who are actually planning liturgy celebrations will find this and subsequent packets of value as a resource; those who are beginning may find it a good guide. Recommended.


Brief, thoughtful, reflective essays in prose and verse present various men and women from the scriptures in a way that helps us to meet them as real persons of flesh and blood like our own. Recommended reading for clergy, religious, catechists, and all who pray with the scriptures.

For each Sunday in all three cycles, we have the gospel reading (JB), a patristic text, and a responsory; sometimes an alternative reading is provided. The introduction to the volume explains the importance of the Church Fathers, and is followed by brief biographical sketches of the 39 authors represented. The large type and uncluttered layout make it a pleasure to use this book each week.

The editors are Henry Ashworth, OSB (who died just before the volume was completed), Edith Barnecut, OSB, Anne Field, OSB, and John E. Rotelle, OSA. They are to be commended for their fine work in preparing and producing this book. We look forward to the next two volumes, on the Sundays in ordinary time and on the saints.

This series intends to let ordinary readers meet some of the treasures in the Church Fathers. This book will be useful to clergy in meditation and homily preparation, to religious for individual and community reflection, and to lay persons seeking to deepen their appreciation of the gospels. Recommended highly for clergy, religious, catechists, and individuals who wish to meditate on the Sunday gospels.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray, by George A. Maloney, SJ (1981, Gabriel Publishing, 75 Champlain St., Albany, NY 12204): paper, illustrations, 22 pages. $1.00 plus 30¢ postage and handling; bulk prices available.

This booklet seeks to help us “to deal with some of the problems that develop when you try to pray.” Fr. Maloney discusses stages of prayer, problems, and a movement toward the desert. Guidelines are offered concerning psychic phenomena in prayer. Throughout the booklet the author emphasizes the need of a good spiritual director, man or woman, to support us in our growth. Helpful for directors and for those seeking to move into deeper levels of prayer.


This booklet looks at alcoholism as it affects both individuals and their families, and shows how three organizations (Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, and Alateen) can help families to fight the problem of alcoholism. The booklet offers hope to those affected by this problem. (The English version was reviewed in Bulletin 67, page 47.) Recommended.


This publication sets out to be a “handbook of basic beliefs, practices, prayers.” Intended for families as well as classes, this book provides simple descriptions and stories about our Lord and how we follow him. Many references are given to the scriptures, the Second Vatican Council, and to the liturgical texts. Many parents and catechists will find this helpful.

Twelve and One-Half Keys to the Gates of Paradise, written and illuminated by Edward Hays (1981, Forest of Peace Books, Route One, Box 247, Easton, KS 66020): paper, 147 pages. $4.95, plus 75¢ postage.

Fr. Hays offers these parables as keys for people looking for the gates of paradise. His earlier books of prayer were reviewed in Bulletin 71, page 239, and in no. 77, page 45. This book offers insights into our journey through life. Those who teach others and those who meditate may enjoy it.