

# Prayer through Creation

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*Finding God in Creation*

*Finding God in Creation*

- God is present in His creation.
  - The whole world was made as a gift for humanity.
  - God expresses His goodness through the world around us.
    - All of nature carries the imprint of God's love.
    - Nature contemplated with eyes of faith has great power to console and strengthen us.

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*Finding God in Creation*

- God is present in His creation.
  - However, when we live our life in a world of screens and cement and office buildings, we can often times feel cut off from God--and from ourselves.
    - Living this way can also lead us to believe that we are the master and creator of our world, and we don't need God.
    - Therefore, it is important that we all experience nature, when and as we can.

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*Finding God in Creation*

- God is present in His creation.
  - Simple ideas for experiencing God through nature:
    - Take a walk.
    - Plant a seed and watch it sprout on your windowsill.
    - Read about the wonders of nature and the universe.

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*Finding God in Creation*

## Journaling Questions

Write about a powerful encounter you had with God in nature.

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# Prayer through Scripture

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*Prayer Through Scripture*



- Sacred Scripture as Prayer (Lectio Divina):
  - Without deep knowledge of Sacred Scripture, we run the risk of faith becoming too general, and our relationship with God too vague.
  - Scripture is the Divine Word of God, and He uses it to continue to speak to us today.



- Sacred Scripture as Prayer (Lectio Divina):
  - An encounter with scripture is an encounter with God.
  - The Bible allows God to speak to us directly and it also give us the words to respond to God.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:

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**Lectio Divina**  
PASSING WITH SILENCE

**BE STILL**  
Find a quiet, private place and select a few words of scripture to reflect on.

**READ**  
What does it say?  
Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words and concepts.

**MEDITATE**  
What catches your attention?  
Mentally "chew" on the words and images. What worketh in you?

**PRAY**  
How does your meditation connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up.

**CONTEMPLATE**  
Savor being in God's presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to stretch your heart.

**RESOLVE TO ACT**  
What will you do?  
Make a single action in response to what God has spoken to you through Scripture.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
  - Find the stillness and come into God's presence.
    - Quiet your mind and body.
    - God won't compete with distractions.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
  - Read the passage carefully and slowly, many times over.
    - Mendicant, or "chew" on the word.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:
  - Meditate on a few words or phrases. Search for meaning.
    - Murmur, Repeat and Ruminare. It is a physical activity, not just mental.
    - What does this tell me about God?
    - What does this tell me about myself?
    - What specific invitation for my life can I find here?



- Steps of Lectio Divina:

- Pray.
  - Ask God to reveal the connection between this verse and you.
  - Ask Him to speak to you.
  - Remain quiet, your mind empty, so you can hear Him.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:

- Contemplate the verse further, making room for quiet and listening.
  - Allow yourself to slip into simple wonder.
  - Sit with God.



- Steps of Lectio Divina:

- Act on what was revealed to you through this encounter with God in His word.
  - Write these thoughts down and resolve to act.



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- Lectio Divina:

- The more we interact with scripture, the more it will sink into us and come to our aid when we most need it.



- Lectio Divina:

- It is a beautiful practice to begin your day with meditating on scripture.
  - It helps us put God first.
  - We are better able to listen and sit with God before the stress of the day has begun.
  - It helps us embrace an attitude of listening that day.



- **Lectio Divina:**
  - You can pick whichever verse you want to reflect on.
    - It can be a beautiful thing to meditate on the daily readings. Keeps you in harmony with the seasons of The Church and prepares you for mass if you are able to go.



- **Lectio Divina:**
  - It is also a very beautiful practice to keep a prayer journal where you record all of the things revealed to you in your meditations on scripture and all of the things you have resolved to do.



### Journaling Questions

What role does Scripture play in your prayer life? Do you need to spend more time with Scripture? How do you plan to do this?

## Recited Prayers

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*Recited Prayers*

*Recited Prayers*

- **Recited Prayers**
  - NOT a "lesser" form of prayer!
    - Recited prayers are an ancient practice of the Catholic Church.
    - Since our minds are so prone to wander, repeating prayers helps to break through the distraction and focus on God.
    - We repeat the most perfect words in the hope that they will penetrate our hearts and our entire lives.

*Recited Prayers*

- **Recited Prayers**
  - Most prayers are based on scripture:
    - Our Father
    - Hail Mary
  - Other prayers come from Church tradition:
    - The Glory Be
  - Or were revealed to us from heaven directly:
    - The Fatima Prayer
    - The Rosary



## Recited Prayers

- **Recited Prayers**
  - When we recite prayers often, these beautiful words can become the rhythm of our lives.

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## Recited Prayers

- **The Rosary**
  - Evolved for many centuries, but was officially given to St. Dominic by Mary herself.
  - St. Catherine of Siena (who lived before St. Dominic) encouraged the faithful to use prayer beads and recite these words from scripture.
  - Mary, through St. Dominic, took this practice and gave it more meaning and beauty.

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## Recited Prayers

- **The Rosary**
  - The Rosary combines repetitive prayers, physical movement, and contemplation.
    - We say the holy words of the Angel and Elizabeth, addressing Mary and begging for her aid.
    - We hold the beads of the rosary, so that our body, not just our mind, is engaged in the prayer.

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## Recited Prayers

- **The Rosary**
  - The Rosary combines repetitive prayers, physical movement and contemplation.
    - Our minds contemplate the mysteries of the Rosary as we pray the prayers, and since the prayers repeat, we have space to contemplate.
    - We can also contemplate scripture as we pray the rosary, a virtue attached to each mystery, or special prayer

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## Recited Prayers

- **The Rosary**
  - In Fatima, Mary told the visionaries that we **NEED** to pray the Rosary.
  - A daily rosary can be a beautiful gift to God, and a powerful way to gain the protection of Mary.

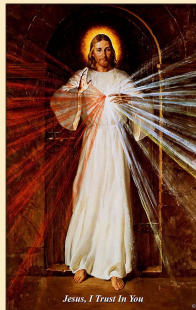


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## Recited Prayers

- The Divine Mercy Chaplet

- St. Faustina, a Polish Nun, received the image of the Divine Mercy and the Chaplet from Jesus Himself in a series of visions.

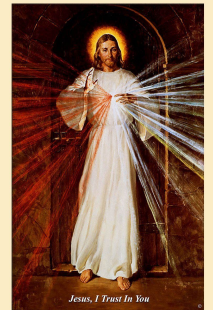


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## Recited Prayers

- The Divine Mercy Chaplet

- The message of Divine Mercy:
  - God loves us – all of us.
  - And, He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him, with trust, to receive His mercy.
  - After receiving His mercy, we must let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

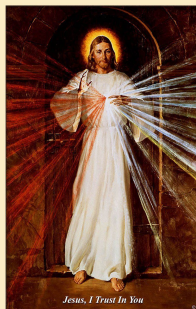


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## Recited Prayers

- The Divine Mercy Chaplet

- The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a prayer recited with a Rosary.
- A handful of short prayers are recited as we beg mercy for ourselves and the whole world.

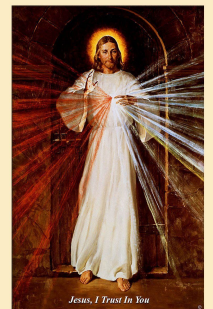


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## Recited Prayers

- Prayers of The Divine Mercy Chaplet:

- Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.
- For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
- Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.



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## Recited Prayers

### Journaling Questions

What role do recited prayers play in your prayer life?

What do you struggle with when it comes to recited prayers? Does it feel prayerful? Do you understand the reason behind recited prayers?



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## Silent Prayer

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Silent Prayer





- **Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):**
  - Offers an opportunity to listen to God and bring ourselves before Him
  - Even two minutes can be powerful.
  - Regularity is more important than length of time.
  - Your only job is to be present. Most of the time you will not meet an immediate surge of grace, or feel anything at all.

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- **Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):**
  - Material objects are moved from without (like a billiard ball), but we are spiritual beings.
  - We are moved from within.
  - Retreat inside yourself, to the quiet place you share with God, to your internal tabernacle, to find direction, meaning, and rest.

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- **Prayer in Silence (Contemplation):**
  - Find silence, read a bit of scripture, take a word or phrase and repeat it quietly to center yourself, and then relax with the Lord.
  - When your mind wanders, simply redirect yourself.
  - Prayer is utterly "useless" or wasted time.
  - Persist in prayer and the fruit will slowly reveal itself.
    - Mother in nursing-home example

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- **Types of simple, silent prayer:**
  - In order get the awareness of God's presence, we must first WANT it, and seek it, and be willing to sacrifice for it.
  - Often, it is parts of ourselves that get in the way of meeting God.
  - We should be willing to part with those things holding us back from God.

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- **Stop, Look, Listen**
  - **Stop**, and give God the moment. Time is the test of love. We give what we love time.
  - **Look** at God with the eye of your soul.
    - Best description of adoration: "I look at him, and he looks at me." St. John Vianney
    - Prayer can happen anywhere and at any time. To enter prayer we simply need to live in the presence of God.
  - **Listen**- can be through reading scripture, especially what Christ directly says in the Gospels
    - Allow silence so you can hear.


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*Silent Prayer*

- “Jesus” Prayer
  - If you have faith in Christ, hope in Christ, and love for Christ, you can pray the most powerful prayer in the world, because you have real contact with the great power in the universe: Christ Himself.
  - Simply repeat the name of Jesus.
  - This can be prayed at anytime.


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*Silent Prayer*

- “Jesus” Prayer
  - When you pray this prayer, do not concentrate on the name, the word, the sound, or the letters. Do not think of the name of Jesus. And do not try to meditate on scenes from the Gospels, or truths from theology, or to imagine what Jesus looks like, as you do in some other forms of prayer.
  - Just reach out to Jesus in blind faith. Invoke Him as your Savior, Lover, Lord, and God.


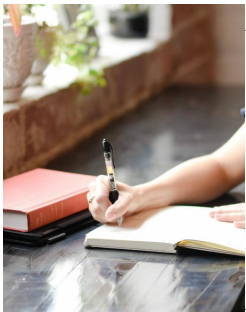
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*Silent Prayer*

- “Jesus” Prayer
  - The name of Jesus is what sprung the world into existence. He is THE WORD.
  - The name of Jesus is what has freed us from sin.
  - To invoke the name of Jesus is to place yourself in His real presence, to open yourself up to His power and His energy.

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*Silent Prayer*

### Journaling Questions

How good am I at focusing on God, in the silence?

Why is the name of Jesus so powerful?

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# Prayer and Work

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*Prayer and Work*

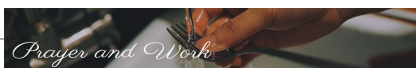




- **Prayer in our Work**

- Mary and Martha
  - There are times when we are called to sit at the feet of Jesus in useless inaction.
  - There are other times we are called to work, and care for the Lord through the way we care for and serve those in our lives.

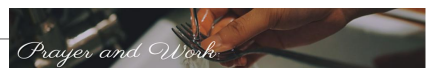
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- **Prayer in our Work**

- The key is changing our motives:
  - Instead of cooking dinner because we are hungry, we cook dinner because we love God, the God who wants us to cook dinner right now.
  - Instead of just changing a baby's diaper, we change the diaper rejoicing in the life God has given us to care for, and the wonder of the human body.

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- **Prayer in our Work**

- We must seek unity with God by doing all of our work and activities in His presence and seeking to please Him and doing His will with everything we do.
  - Create a constant dialogue with God.
  - We will be better able to see Jesus in our brothers and sisters if we grow closer to Jesus each day in prayer.
  - We find God when we are taking care of our neighbor.

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### **Journaling Questions**

Are you able to pray while you work? Does that seem possible?

Think about specific jobs you are called to do each day. How can you turn this job into a prayer?

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