

Ascending the Ladder of Faith



*Drawing near to God through the prayers of those
who came before*

Lisa Baptiste

Being on the prayer team, I often hear people tell me they don't know how to pray, or that when they pray, they don't do it well. It got me thinking of all the scriptures that encourage partnership in faith, and the miracles I see week after week as my faith is combined with those desperate for a word or a touch from God. During the preparatory season of Lent, we will partner with the faith of various Catholic saints, whose dedication to Christ and understanding of his love, grace, mercy and power are even now extraordinary. As we meditate on their prayers, we will ascend the Ladder of Faith emboldened and encouraged, and draw near to Him through the faith of those who came before. They will challenge us to boldly make requests, humbly confess our sin, wholly experience His mercy and be transformed by His presence. It is my prayer that as these fragrant offerings before God are re-ignited, the aroma would linger, and the beauty, wisdom and conviction of these venerated believers would inspire us to draw closer to the heart of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Ash Wednesday: A prayer of St. Anselm of Canterbury

O my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You,
where and how to find You.
You are my God and You are my all and I have never seen You.
You have made me and remade me,
You have bestowed on me all the good things I possess,
Still I do not know You.
I have not yet done that for which I was made.
Teach me to seek You.
I cannot seek You unless You teach me
or find You unless You show Yourself to me.
Let me seek You in my desire,
let me desire You in my seeking.
Let me find You by loving You,
let me love You when I find You.

Amen

Reflection: Sometimes, it feels impossible to hear from God and often, it feels as hard if not harder to be inspired to search for God. But like the man who realized the worth of the field with buried treasure, if we know Who it is we are searching for, we can't help but to seek Him out. Ask him to reveal Himself in your day. Journal below where you saw Him show up.

Scripture: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Matthew 13:44-46

Day 2: Prayer of St. Catherine of Siena - My Nature is Fire

In your nature, eternal Godhead,
I shall come to know my nature.
And what is my nature, boundless love?
It is fire,
because you are nothing but a fire of love.
And you have given humankind
a share in this nature,
for by the fire of love you created us.
And so with all other people
and every created thing;
you made them out of love.
O ungrateful people!
What nature has your God given you?
His very own nature!
Are you not ashamed to cut yourself off from such a noble thing
through the guilt of deadly sin?
O eternal Trinity, my sweet love!
You, light, give us light.
You, wisdom, give us wisdom.
You, supreme strength, strengthen us.
Today, eternal God,
let our cloud be dissipated
so that we may perfectly know and follow your Truth in truth,
with a free and simple heart.
God, come to our assistance!
Lord, make haste to help us!

Amen.

Reflection: This prayer focuses on the Imago Dei, and how we can have God's nature as our own. How would you like to reflect more of Jesus through your life, whether it be as an inspiration to others, one who has the wisdom of God, one who operates in the strength of God, or one who reflects the free, simple heart of Jesus. Circle and pray again for Jesus to be revealed in and through you.

Scripture: The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:15-16

Day 3: Prayer of St. Elizabeth Seton, The Anima Christi

Soul of Jesus, Sanctify me.
Blood of Jesus, Wash me,
Passion of Jesus, Comfort me.
Wounds of Jesus, Hide me.
Heart of Jesus, Receive me.
Spirit of Jesus, Enliven me.
Goodness of Jesus, Pardon me.
Beauty of Jesus, Draw me.
Humility of Jesus, Humble me.
Peace of Jesus, Pacify me.
Love of Jesus, Inflame me.
Kingdom of Jesus, Come to me.
Grace of Jesus, Replenish me.
Mercy of Jesus, Pity me.
Sanctity of Jesus, Sanctify me.
Purity of Jesus, Purify me.
Cross of Jesus, Support me.
Nails of Jesus, Hold me.
Mouth of Jesus,
Bless me in life, in death, in time and eternity.
Mouth of Jesus,
Defend me in the hour of death.
Mouth of Jesus,
Call me to come to Thee.
Mouth of Jesus,
Receive me with Thy saints in glory evermore.

Let Us Pray
Unite me to Thyself,
O adorable Victim.
Life-giving heavenly Bread,
feed me,
sanctify me,
reign in me,
transform me to Thyself,
live in me;
let me live in Thee;
let me adore Thee in Thy life-giving Sacrament as
my God,
listen to Thee as to my Master,
obey Thee as my King,
imitate Thee as my Model,
follow Thee as my Shepherd,
love Thee as my Father,
seek Thee as my Physician
who wilt heal all the maladies of my soul.
Be indeed my Way,
Truth and Life;
sustain me,
O heavenly Manna,
through the desert of this world,
till I shall behold Thee unveiled in Thy glory.

Amen

Reflection: There is something about Jesus that we can draw from in every situation and every stage of life. Circle what you need from Jesus today.

Scripture: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11

Day 4: St. Ignatius of Loyola - Dedication of the Day

Father, I dedicate this new day to you;
as I go about my work.

I ask you to bless those with whom I come in contact.

Lord, I pray for all men and women
who work to earn their living;
give them satisfaction in what they do.

Spirit of God,
comfort the unemployed and their families;
they are your children and my brothers and sisters.
I ask you to help them find work soon.

Reflection: God cares about every aspect of our days, and He wants the work we do, vocationally and otherwise, to be a blessing to ourselves and those around us. How can you remember to include him as you conduct yourself today?

Scripture: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-25

Day 5: St. Claude de Colombiere, A despair prayer

Lord, I am in this world to show Your mercy to others.

Other people will glorify You
by making visible the power of Your grace
by their fidelity and constancy to You.

For my part I will glorify You
by making known how good You are to sinners,
that Your mercy is boundless
and that no sinner no matter how great his offences
should have reason to despair of pardon.

If I have grievously offended You, My Redeemer,
let me not offend You even more
by thinking that You are not kind enough to pardon Me.

Amen.

Reflection: As we're taking time to consider our sin, our shortcomings and how we "miss the mark," it's easy to get trapped in shame and start beating ourselves up. Keep in the forefront of your mind today that it is His kindness that leads us to repentance, and His goodness that transforms us.

Scripture: So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:3-4

Day 6: Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, in praise to God

You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good, Lord God, living and true.
You are love. You are wisdom.
You are humility. You are endurance.
You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,
God Almighty, Merciful Saviour.

Reflection: When we consider all that God does for us, is for us, provides for us, we can't help but fall on our knees in praise. What part of St. Francis' prayer can you make your breath prayer today, giving praise to God for all He is in your life?

Scripture: We proclaim how great you are and tell of the wonderful things you have done. Psalm 75:1

Day 7: Prayer of St. Gregory

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, place your Passion, Cross, and Death between your judgment and my soul, now and in the hour of my death.

Deign to grant grace and mercy to me, pardon to the living, rest to the dead, peace to your Church, and life and eternal glory to all sinners. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen

Reflection: How much space is created between us and judgment when Jesus places His passion, cross and death between them? Could it be that our transgressions are so far removed from us that God Himself doesn't even remember them anymore? Thank Him today for the work of the cross and how because of His death, you have access to abundant, eternal life.

Scripture: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:11-12

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19

Day 8: Prayer of St. Augustine

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know You,
And desire nothing save only You.
Let me hate myself and love You.
Let me do everything for the sake of You.
Let me humble myself and exalt You.
Let me think of nothing except You.
Let me die to myself and live in You.
Let me accept whatever happens as from You.
Let me banish self and follow You,
And ever desire to follow You.
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in You,
That I may deserve to be defended by You.
Let me fear for myself, let me fear You,
And let me be among those who are chosen by You.
Let me distrust myself and put my trust in You.
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of You.
Let me cling to nothing save only to You,
And let me be poor because of You.
Look upon me, that I may love You.
Call me that I may see You,
And forever enjoy You.

Amen.

Reflection: Lent is traditionally observed with fasting from a habit we've allowed to become a vice, dedicating that time instead to focus on drawing closer to Jesus. If you are fasting, honestly evaluate how it's going. Is your self denial drawing you deeper into reliance on Jesus and trust in the Father? If you are not fasting, consider small ways you can elevate Jesus over your daily desires so as to increase your faith.

Scripture: Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Luke 9:23-25

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Day 9: Prayer of St. Therese of Lisieux

O my God ! I offer Thee all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to Its infinite merits ; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of Its Merciful Love.

O my God! I ask thee for myself and for those whom I hold dear, the grace to fulfill perfectly Thy Holy Will, to accept for love of Thee the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in Heaven for all Eternity. Amen.

Reflection: Oftentimes, we start the day off with the best intentions and then life happens. We end up missing the mark and have a lot of wasted time, frustration and little motivation to pursue excellence. Instead, we're thankful that the day or week is over, so we can reset our intentions, and the cycle repeats. Today, dedicate your intentions, and ask God to bind His nature of wholeness to your fractured one, so that even your simplest acts are done for His glory. Where there may be past or present regret, entrust yourself to His love, knowing He makes all things beautiful in its time.

Scripture: Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14

Day 10: Prayer of St. Apollonius

Give us a measure of your Spirit
that we may be enabled to obey your teaching:
to pacify anger,
to take part in pity,
to moderate desire,
to increase love,
to put away sorrow,
to cast away vain glory,
not to be vindictive,
not to fear death;
ever entrusting our spirit to the immortal God.

Reflection: Do you remember the bracelets in the 90's that said, WWJD, which stood for "What would Jesus do?" If we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit, we know the answer to that question because when we unite ourselves to Christ, we get access to the way He thinks and the way He acts. As you go about your day and encounter difficult circumstances, where it is easier to get angry, to be ingracious, to be afraid or to pursue your own self promotion, consider how His nature is bound to yours, and through Him you can instead reflect temperance, grace, service and full confidence in the goodness of God.

Scripture: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:12-13

Day 11: Prayer of St. Benedict

Gracious and Holy Father,
Please give me:
intellect to understand you,
reason to discern you,
diligence to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
a spirit to know you,
a heart to meditate upon you,
ears to hear you,
eyes to see you,
a tongue to proclaim you,
a way of life pleasing to you,
patience to wait for you
and perseverance to look for you.
Grant me a perfect end,
your holy presence,
a blessed resurrection
and life everlasting.

Reflection: Sometimes when we pray, all we can think about is our long list of needs and often end up rattling off a wish list of things we would like God to change or give us. Consider this prayer as a new wish list. What would you like from the Father today? Circle it and journal later about how you saw your request answered.

Scripture: Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

Day 12: Lorica of Saint Patrick part 1

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through a belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
Of the Creator of creation.

I arise today

Through the strength of Christ's birth and His baptism,
Through the strength of His crucifixion and His burial,
Through the strength of His resurrection and His ascension,
Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of
doom.

I arise today

Through the strength of the love of cherubim,
In obedience of angels,
In service of archangels,
In the hope of resurrection to meet with reward,
In the prayers of patriarchs,
In preachings of the apostles,
In faiths of confessors,
In innocence of virgins,
In deeds of righteous men.

I arise today

Through the strength of heaven;
Light of the sun,
Splendor of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of the wind,
Depth of the sea,
Stability of the earth,
Firmness of the rock.

I arise today

Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's hosts to save me
From snares of the devil,
From temptations of vices,
From every one who desires me ill,
Afar and anear,
Alone or in a multitude.

Reflection: Some days are particularly hard and we need to draw from God just to pull ourselves out of bed. What do you need from the Father to get you through today? Take it and make it your breath prayer and journal how you experienced Him empowering you today.

Scripture: So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 4:6

Day 13: Lorica of St. Patrick Part 2

I summon today all these powers between me and evil,
Against every cruel merciless power that opposes my body and soul,
Against incantations of false prophets,
Against black laws of pagandom,
Against false laws of heretics,
Against craft of idolatry,
Against spells of women and smiths and wizards,
Against every knowledge that corrupts man's body and soul.
Christ shield me today
Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wounding,
So that reward may come to me in abundance.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me,
Christ in the ear that hears me.

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through a belief in the Threeness,
Through a confession of the Oneness
Of the Creator of creation

Reflection: St. Francis of Assisi is credited with having said, "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." When we are abiding in Jesus, and allowing His nature to permeate our own, those we encounter will meet Him as well. How can you invite Jesus closer to you today, so that it may be Him who is thought of or spoken of when people think of you?

Scripture: To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. Colossians 1:27-28

Day 14: Prayer of St. Alphonsus Liguori

O my God, help me to remember that time is short, eternity long.
What good is all the greatness of this world at the hour of death?
To love You, my God, and save my soul is the one thing necessary.
Without You, there is no peace of mind or soul.
My God, I need fear only sin and nothing else in this life,
for to lose You, my God, is to lose all.
O my God, help me to remember that I came into this world with nothing,
and shall take nothing from it when I die.
To gain You, I must leave all.
But in loving You,
I already have all good things,
the infinite riches of Christ and His Church in life,
Mary's motherly protection and perpetual help,
and the eternal dwelling place Jesus has prepared for me.
Eternal Father, Jesus has promised
that whatever we ask in His Name will be granted us.
In His Name, I pray:
give me a burning faith,
a joyful hope,
a holy love for You.
Grant me perseverance in doing Your will
and never let me be separated from You.
My God and my All,
make me a saint.

Amen.

Reflection: This world has an infinite number of gadgets and potions that will offer you things like peace and rest, joy and even satisfaction. They promise much and leave you with little. Even so, it's hard not to rely on our own ability to acquire and create for ourselves. Consider today relying less on your own and this world's limited ability and lean into His unlimited capacity for satisfying every desire of your heart.

Scripture: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Psalm 90:14

Day 15: A prayer of St. Augustine to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Reflection: Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as Advocate, Helper and Spirit of Truth. One who will testify the heart of the Father to us and also give us groans and utterances to respond with when we don't have any ourselves. Open your heart to Him today, letting him guide you into all truth and set you apart for greater purposes.

Scripture: I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:12-13

Day 16: Prayer of St. Charles Borromeo

Almighty God, you have generously made known to human beings the mysteries of your life through Jesus Christ your Son in the Holy Spirit.

Enlighten my mind to know these mysteries which your Church treasures and teaches.

Move my heart to love them and my will to live in accord with them.

Give me the ability to teach this Faith to others without pride, without ostentation, and without personal gain.

Let me realize that I am simply your instrument for bringing others to the knowledge of the wonderful things you have done for all your creatures.

Help me to be faithful to this task that you have entrusted to me.

Amen.

Reflection: Jesus said that the Kingdom of heaven can be compared to a King who threw a wedding feast for His son. How sad the King was when his invitation was rejected by those who were invited. Can you imagine walking into a banquet hall, extravagantly laid, and no one there? Would you sit down and begin to feast, or would you feel the awkwardness that people belong here... That celebration means community to celebrate with? We are asked as believers to go and invite as many as we can, to bring them in anywhere we find them. Yet there is tension when it comes to sharing our faith; we don't want to offend or be pushy, or look weird so we don't mention it. Take this prayer to heart today, and ask the Lord to show you who to invite to the wedding by sharing your testimony of the wonderful things He's done for you and been to you.

Scripture: And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. Matthew 22:1-10

Day 17: Prayer of St. Hildegard of Bingen

Fire of the Spirit, life of the lives of creatures,
spiral of sanctity, bond of all natures,
glow of charity, lights of clarity, taste
of sweetness to sinners, be with us and hear us.

Composer of all things, light of all the risen,
key of salvation, release from the dark prison,
hope of all unions, scope of chastities, joy
in the glory, strong honour, be with us and hear us.

Amen.

Reflection: When we face the trials of life, we might know that God's presence is with us, but we don't really understand what that means or what we're supposed to do with it. This is because we don't know Who it is we're in the company of. As you consider this prayer today, pick a characteristic of God, and declare He, the release from the dark prisons, He, the hope of all unions, He, the taste of sweetness to sinners, etc. is with you. He will not leave you, nor forsake you.

Scripture: Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

Day 18: Prayer of St. John Vianney of Ars

I love You, O my God and my sole desire is to love You until the last breath of my life.

I love You, O infinitely lovable God and I prefer to die loving You than live one instant without loving You.

I love You, O my God, and I do not desire anything but heaven so as to have the joy of loving You perfectly.

I love You, O my God, and I fear hell, because there will not be the sweet consolation of loving You.

O my God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love You, I want my heart to say it in every beat. Allow me the grace to suffer loving You, to love you suffering and one day to die loving You and feeling that I love You. And as I approach my end, I beg you to increase and perfect my love of You.

Reflection: Have you ever said the words “I love you” to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit? If not, it might feel strange at first, as it is not the same love we would have for our parents, spouses or children. It is a love that overflows with gratitude and says, “I live to worship you.” Open your heart today to expressing your adoration to God.

Scripture: There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:18-19

Day 19: Prayer of St. Catherine of Siena

Holy Spirit, come into my heart;
draw it to Thee by Thy power,
O my God, and grant me charity with filial fear.
Preserve me, O ineffable Love,
from every evil thought;
warm me, inflame me with Thy dear love,
and every pain will seem light to me.
My Father, my sweet Lord,
help me in all my actions.
Jesus, love, Jesus, love.
Amen.

Reflection: The mystery and wondrous nature of the Trinity is something few of us have a grasp on enough to explain it to anyone else, but when we pray, we experience fluidity between the distinct persons of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Do you find many of your prayers are like this, going back and forth within the Godhead as you pray? Ask each person of the Godhead to touch you in a special way today.

Scripture: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Eph 2:13, 18

Day 20: Prayer of St. Teresa of Calcutta

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me
That every soul I come in contact with
May feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
So to shine as to be a light to others;
The light, O Jesus will be all from You; none of it will be mine;
It will be you, shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by shining on those around me.
Let me preach You without preaching, not by words but by my example,
By the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do,
The evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.

Amen.

Reflection: We often think of dying to self as a painful process of denying the life that we want for some heavenly focused agenda where we don't matter. Instead, dying to self is letting go of the self-important mindset which is only interested in striving to carve out the best possible lives for ourselves and allowing the servant nature of Jesus to permeate our minds, transforming us into those who possess and offer the Bread and Water of Life to a starving to death world. The life sacrifice leads us into is dynamic, full of raising the literally spiritually dead. Lay down your agenda today, and ask Jesus to show you where you can partner with Him through shining light into dark places.

Scripture: Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2

Day 21: Prayer of St. Therese of Lisieux

The good God does not need years to accomplish His work of love in a soul; one ray from His Heart can, in an instant, make His flower bloom for eternity.....

O My God! Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to Love You and make You Loved, to work for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and liberating those suffering in purgatory. I desire to accomplish Your will perfectly and to reach the degree of glory You have prepared for me in Your Kingdom. I desire, in a word, to be a saint but I feel my helplessness and I beg You, O my God! To be Yourself my Sanctity!

Reflection: Often, in our pursuit to follow more closely to Jesus and live the abundant life He has for us, we have things from our past holding us back. St. Therese's first line, that God does not need years to accomplish His work of love in a soul, is a profound truth. What can you expose today to the light of His healing grace so that you might be set free in an instant from something you might have held onto for years?

Scripture: Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. Luke 13:10-13

Day 22: Prayer of St. Anselm

O supreme and inaccessible Light,
O complete and blessed Truth,
how far You are from me,
even though I am so near to You!
How remote You are from my sight,
even though I am present to Yours!
You are everywhere in your entirety,
and yet I do not see You;
in You I move and have my being,
and yet I cannot approach You.
O God, let me know You
and love You so that I may find my joy in You;
and if I cannot do so fully in this life,
let me at least make some progress every day,
until at last that knowledge, love,
and joy come to me in all their plentitude.

Amen.

Reflection: Most of us can remember a time we felt far from God, where he was entirely outside of our perception. It's important to look over our history and see where we began doing life with him, and reflect on how He's moved us from one degree of knowledge and glory to another. Think about where you were even a year ago. What do you know or understand about the Father, the Son, or the Spirit today that you didn't then? Thank Him for revelation and ask for more.

Scripture: Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Day 23: Prayer of St. Bridget of Sweden, #12

O Jesus! Mirror of Truth, symbol of unity, bond of charity, remember the multitude of wounds with which Thou wast afflicted from head to foot, torn and reddened by the spilling of Thy adorable Blood. O great and universal pain, which Thou didst suffer in Thy virginal flesh for love of us! Sweetest Jesus! What is there that Thou couldst have done for us which Thou has not done! May the fruit of Thy suffering be renewed in my soul by the faithful remembrance of Thy Passion, and may Thy love increase in my heart each day, until I see Thee in eternity: Thou Who art the treasure of every real good and every joy, which I beg Thee to grant me, O Sweetest Jesus, in heaven. Amen.

Reflection: Scripture says for the joy set before him, Christ endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2.) That joy is you, and the relationship Jesus wanted with you. He had no desire to be a faraway thought, or a King who rules on high away from his people and out of touch with their lives. What He wanted was friendship; those he could share the secrets of the Kingdom of God with. Have you ever thought of Jesus as your friend? Is He a good friend, who shares your sorrow and joy and invites you to participate in all kinds of adventure? Thank Jesus for His friendship today and ask Him to reveal in your heart His love and desire for you.

Scripture: Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:13-15

Day 24: Prayer of St. Pio

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord, because I am weak and I need Your strength, that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me, Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me, Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I wish it to be a place of consolation for You, a dwelling of Your Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late; the days are coming to a close and life is passing. Death, judgement, eternity are drawing near. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile!

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, because in the darkness of this life, with all its dangers, I need You.

Help me to recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the power which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to be one with you, and if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me, Jesus. I do not ask for divine consolation, because I do not deserve them, but I only ask for the gift of Your Presence. Oh yes, I ask this of You!

Stay with me, Lord, for it is You alone, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask for no other reward but to love You more and more, with a strong and active love.

Grant that I may love You with all my heart while on earth, so that I can continue to love You perfectly, throughout all eternity, dear Jesus. Amen!

Reflection: Usually a prayer said after communion, this is less of a request for Jesus to stay with us, a more a reminder to our spirit that we need Him every minute of the day. Take communion today, and as you consume the elements, receive His offer of oneness with you, joining His life, strength, hope and consolation to you.

Scripture: Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. John 6:47-51; 56-59

Day 25: Prayer of St. Claude de Colombiere

My Jesus, you are my true friend,
my only friend,
you take part in all my misfortunes;
you know how to change them into blessings.

You listen to me
With the greatest kindness
When I tell you all my troubles
And you always have something
With which to heal my wounds.
I find you at any time of the day or night
For I find you wherever I happen to be
You never leave me;
If I change my dwelling place
I find you wherever I go

You never weary of listening to me;
You are never tired of doing me good.
I am certain of being loved by you,
If I but love you.
My worldly goods are of no value to you
But by bestowing yours on me
You never grow poorer.

However miserable I may be,
No one more noble or cleverer or even holier
Can come between you and me
And deprive me of your friendship;
And death,
Which tears us away from all other friends,
Will unite me forever to you.

All the humiliations attached to old age
Or the loss of honour
Will never detach you from me;
On the contrary
I shall never enjoy you more fully
And you will never be closer to me,
Than when everything seems to conspire
Against me to overwhelm me,
And cast me down.
You bear with all my faults
With extreme patience,
And even my want of fidelity
And my ingratitude
Do not wound you to such a degree
As to make you unwilling to receive me back
When I return to you.
O Jesus, grant that I may die loving you,
That I may die for the love of you.

Reflection: This prayer is very much written in the style of the Psalms of David. Have you ever tried to write your own Psalm? Take some time and pour your heart out to God, allowing whatever it is to come up. It doesn't need to be linear, but try to keep sections that relate to each other together. You can even echo some sentiments expressed in this prayer.

Scripture: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah. Psalm 46:1-7

Day 26: Prayer of St. Francis de Sales

Divine Saviour,
we come to Your sacred table
to nourish ourselves,
not with bread but with Yourself,
true Bread of eternal life.
Help us daily to make a good and perfect meal
of this divine food.
Let us be continually refreshed
by the perfume of Your kindness and goodness.
May the Holy Spirit fill us with His Love.
Meanwhile, let us prepare a place
for this holy food by emptying our hearts.

Amen.

Reflection: We all know though that we need to go to the table and eat multiple times a day in order for our bodies to be healthy, and St. Francis suggests we need the same daily maintenance for our soul, so as to be “continually refreshed.” Set a symbolic table in your mind where you can go and commune with Jesus. If you have the physical space available, set a cup on a table somewhere you can sit and read your bible. Let it be a physical reminder of sitting down to feed your soul every day.

Scripture: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6

Day 27: Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Against Depression

O Christ Jesus
When all is darkness
And we feel our weakness and helplessness,
Give us the sense of Your Presence,
Your Love and Your Strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
In Your protecting love
And strengthening power,
So that nothing may frighten or worry us,
For, living close to You,
We shall see Your Hand,
Your Purpose, Your Will through all things.

Reflection: As we walk through this broken world, it's impossible not to be affected and sometimes brought low because of the prevailing darkness we see. Cry out to God, confess your pain and receive the help of His presence, strength, perfect love and trust. Submit yourself to the Good Shepherd, who comforts you while you travel through the dark valleys of this life.

Scripture: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

Day 28: A prayer of St. Jerome, for Christ's mercy

O Lord, show Your mercy to me and gladden my heart. I am like the man on the way to Jericho who was overtaken by robbers, wounded and left for dead. O Good Samaritan, come to my aid. I am like the sheep that went astray. O Good Shepherd, seek me out and bring me home in accord with Your will. Let me dwell in Your house all the days of my life and praise You for ever and ever with those who are there. Amen.

Reflection: No one enjoys confessing having strayed off the path and being reflective of their sin. This is likely because we feel guilt and shame over what we've done. Instead of letting shame be what's expressed during confession, let your prayer today be one which falls on the mercy of God, who is always happy to rescue you and bring you back home.

Scripture: Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. Luke 15:22-24

Day 29: Prayer of St Patrick for the Faithful

May the Strength of God pilot us.
May the Power of God preserve us.
May the Wisdom of God instruct us.
May the Hand of God protect us.
May the Way of God direct us.
May the Shield of God defend us.
May the Host of God guard us.
Against the snares of the evil ones.
Against temptations of the world

May Christ be with us!
May Christ be before us!
May Christ be in us,
Christ be over all!
May Thy Salvation, Lord,
Always be ours,
This day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.

Reflection: There is great power in camaraderie, knowing you do not navigate this walk of faith alone. St. Patrick, like Jesus himself, prayed for present as well as future believers. Think of a handful of people you can pray this prayer with today, and speak blessing over each other, pairing your faith together so that it may be greater than the sum of its parts.

Scripture: For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:4-8

Day 30: Prayer of St. Peter Julian Eymund, Our Father

Our Father Who are in Heaven
in the heaven of the Eucharist,
to You Who are seated on the throne of grace and
love,
be benediction, and honor, and power and glory
for ever and ever!

Hallowed be Your Name
first in ourselves, through the spirit of
Your humility, obedience, and charity.
May we in all humility and zeal
make You known, loved, and adored by all men
in the Holy Eucharist,

Thy Kingdom Come
Thy Eucharistic kingdom.
Rule Thou alone forever over us
for Your greater glory
through the power of Your love,
the triumph of Your virtues,
and the grace of a Eucharistic vocation
in my state as a layman.

Grant us the grace and mission of Your holy love
so that we may be able to effectively extend
Your Eucharistic kingdom everywhere
and realize the desire you expressed:

‘I have come to cast fire on the earth;
and what would I, but that it be kindled?’

Oh! that we might be the incendiaries of this
heavenly fire!

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven
Grant us the grace to find all our joy
in wanting You alone,
in desiring You alone,
and in thinking of You alone.

I will what You will.
I will it because You will it.
I will it as You will it.
I will it as long as You will it.
Perish our thoughts and desires
if they are not purely from You, for You and in You.

Give us this day our daily bread
You are our Eucharistic Lord
and You alone will be our food and clothing,
our riches and glory,
our remedy in illness,
and our protection against all evil.
You will be all things to us.

And forgive us our trespasses
Forgive me Jesus, for I am sorry for all my sins
just as they stand in your eyes.

As we forgive those who trespass against us
For anyone who has offended us in any way,
with our whole heart we forgive them
and desire for them the gifts of Your love.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil

Deliver us Jesus, from the demon of pride,
impurity, discord and complacency.

Deliver us from the cares and worries of life
so that with a pure heart and a free mind
we may joyfully spend our life
and devote all that we are and all that we have
in the service of our Eucharistic Lord.

Amen.

In You, O Lord Jesus, have I hoped;
let me not be confounded forever.
You alone are good.
You alone are powerful.

Grant that by denying of ourselves always
and in all things,
we may find light and life
in obeying Your good, acceptable and perfect Will.

You alone are eternal.
To You alone be honor and glory,
love and thanksgiving forever and ever.

Amen

Reflection: Have you ever looked at Jesus prayer, commonly referred to as “Our Father,” and fleshed it out in your own words? What do you think of this rendition? What parts helped you understand more about what Jesus showed his disciples to pray?

Scripture: Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:9-13

Day 31: Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection: Here is a veritable list of breath prayers that in an instant of need can be whispered in a single utterance. Go through it today, and apply as many as you can, invoking the name and power of Jesus in every situation you may encounter.

Scripture: And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15

Day 32: A prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas, After Mass

I give thanks to Thee, O Lord, most holy, Father almighty, eternal God, that Thou hast vouchsafed, for no merit of mine own, but out of Thy pure mercy, to appease the hunger of my soul with the precious body and blood of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Humbly I implore Thee, let not this holy communion be to me an increase of guilt unto my punishment, but an availing plea unto pardon and salvation.

Let it be to me the armour of faith and the shield of good will. May it root out from my heart all vice; may it utterly subdue my evil passions and all my unruly desires. May it perfect me in charity and patience; in humility and obedience; and in all other virtues. May it be my sure defence against the snares laid for me by my enemies, visible and invisible. May it restrain and quiet all my evil impulses, and make me ever cleave to Thee Who art the one true God.

May I owe to it a happy ending of my life. And do Thou, O heavenly Father, vouchsafe one day to call me, a sinner, to that ineffable banquet, where Thou, together with Thy Son and the Holy Ghost, art to Thy saints true and unfailing light, fullness of content, joy for evermore, gladness without alloy, consummate and everlasting happiness. Through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reflection: We all know someone who has said they couldn't go to church because lightning would strike them. You might have even been that person before you came to know Jesus. Pray for those people in your life today, that they would be drawn to Him, and that the goodness of His plea of pardon and salvation would surprise them.

Consider also the work of the Spirit in your life, and what ways you would like to experience greater freedom and transformation. Ask for those things, knowing that it is the Father's joy to create the likeness of His Son in our flesh.

Scripture: Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. 1 John 3:2-3

Day 33: A prayer of St. Augustine, from The Confessions, Chapter 1

Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is thy power, and infinite is thy wisdom. And man desires to praise thee, for he is a part of thy creation; he bears his mortality about with him and carries the evidence of his sin and the proof that thou dost resist the proud.

Still he desires to praise thee, this man who is only a small part of thy creation. Thou hast prompted him, that he should delight to praise thee, for thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee.

Grant me, O Lord, to know and understand whether first to invoke thee or to praise thee; whether first to know thee or call upon thee. But who can invoke thee, knowing thee not? For he who knows thee not may invoke thee as another than thou art.

It may be that we should invoke thee in order that we may come to know thee. But "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe without a preacher?" Now, "they shall praise the Lord who seek him," for "those who seek shall find him," and, finding him, shall praise him. I will seek thee, O Lord, and call upon thee. I call upon thee, O Lord, in my faith which thou hast given me, which thou hast inspired in me through the humanity of thy Son, and through the ministry of thy preacher.

Reflection: Often when we call on God, it is because we need something, believing through that blessing our hearts will be satisfied. Call on Him today with no goal but knowing Him and understanding Him on a greater level. It is not in blessings that we find rest or joy, but in the knowledge that we were made for His love and to experience His pleasure.

Scripture: You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11

Day 34: Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, in dedication to Jesus

Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish you have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by your will. Your grace and your love are wealth enough for me. Give me these, Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more.

Reflection: When you've been walking with Jesus for awhile, it's easy to forget the words you confessed when you first received Him in your life. Your relationship can grow stale and you might even find yourself forgetting all the blessings in your life are an expression of His love. Re-dedicate yourself today, as well as all the good things He's given you. Ask for His wealth of love and grace to be poured out over you.

Scripture: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

Day 35: Prayer of St. Benedict of Nursia

O Lord, I place myself in your hands and dedicate myself to you. I pledge myself to do your will in all things:

To love the Lord God with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength.

Not to kill. Not to steal. Not to covet. Not to bear false witness.

To honor all persons. Not to do to another what I would not wish done to myself.

To chastise the body. Not to seek after pleasures. To love fasting.

To relieve the poor. To clothe the naked. To visit the sick. To bury the dead. To help in trouble.

To console the sorrowing. To hold myself aloof from worldly ways. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

Not to give way to anger. Not to foster a desire for revenge. Not to entertain deceit in the heart.

Not to make a false peace. Not to forsake charity. Not to swear, lest I swear falsely.

To speak the truth with heart and tongue. Not to return evil for evil. To do no injury: yea, even to bear patiently any injury done to me. To love my enemies. Not to curse those who curse me, but rather to bless them.

To bear persecution for justice' sake. Not to be proud.

Not to be given to intoxicating drink. Not to be an over-eater. Not to be lazy. Not to be slothful.

Not to be a murmured. Not to be a detractor.

To put my trust in God. To refer the good I see in myself to God. To refer any evil in myself to myself.

To fear the Day of Judgment. To be in dread of hell. To desire eternal life with spiritual longing.

To keep death before my eyes daily. To keep constant watch over my actions.

To remember that God sees me everywhere.

To call upon Christ for defense against evil thoughts that arises in my heart. To guard my tongue against wicked speech. To avoid much speaking. To avoid idle talk. To read only what is good to read. To look at only what is good to see. To pray often. To ask forgiveness daily for my sins, and to seek ways to amend my life.

To obey my superiors in all things rightful.

Not to desire to be thought holy, but to seek holiness. To fulfill the commandments of God by good works. To love chastity. To hate no one. Not to be jealous or envious of anyone. Not to love strife. Not to love pride. To honor the aged. To pray for my enemies. To make peace after a quarrel, before the setting of the sun. Never to despair of your mercy, O God of Mercy. Amen.

Reflection: It's easy to get hung up on the laundry list of things that we need to accomplish as believers. Instead of seeing this has a "have to" list, re-frame as a list of promises from God, that as you walk with Him today, you won't covet so you'll have no reason to steal, you will be filled with such love, that you will not conceive of hate which leads to murder, That as you put your trust in Him, you by nature will not put your trust in the things of this world. Thank Him for his promise today to lead you into righteousness, and not demanding you do it yourself.

Scripture: And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

Day 36: Prayer of St. Pio

O Lord, we ask for a boundless confidence and trust in Your divine mercy, and the courage to accept the crosses and sufferings which bring immense goodness to our souls and that of Your Church.

Help us to love You with a pure and contrite heart, and to humble ourselves beneath Your cross, as we climb the mountain of holiness, carrying our cross that leads to heavenly glory.

May we receive You with great faith and love in Holy Communion, and allow You to act in us, as You desire, for Your greater glory.

O Jesus, most adorable heart and eternal fountain of Divine Love, may our prayer find favor before the Divine Majesty of Your Heavenly Father. Amen.

Reflection: Taking up one's daily cross is difficult, especially when that cross involves real suffering, sacrifice, and loss. It's normal to experience doubt in God's goodness when we're hurting so deeply. Yet Hope is this little light buried in each of us, shining with boundless confidence that God's story for our lives is good. If you are hurting today, ask for Hope to come alive, to burn bright, to anchor you in the bedrock that says He is faithful. If you know someone hurting, pray this for them as well.

Scripture: Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Romans 5:3-5

Day 37: Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.

Reflection: Prayer does not need to be fancy, or have big theological terms so as to impress God. It is just as well to give thanks for who He is and His love for you. Consider the simplicity of His desire, that you would know His love in a greater measure today. Journal about where you saw it appear in your day.

Scripture: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

Day 38: Prayer of St. Augustine

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give Your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.

Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ.

Rest Your weary ones.

Bless Your dying ones.

Soothe Your suffering ones.

Pity Your afflicted ones.

Shield Your joyous ones, and all for Your love's sake. Amen.

Reflection: Jesus told us that it's not the extravagant prayers God hears, but the authentic ones, spoken out with a pure heart that believes He knows what we need. As you consider each line of the prayer, picture a friend or family member in need and lift them toward Jesus, believing for the sake of His love, He will meet them. Include yourself if you relate to one as well.

Scripture: And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Matthew 6:5-8

Day 39: Prayer of St. Ambrose

Lord Jesus Christ,
I approach your banquet table in fear and trembling,
for I am a sinner,
and dare not rely on my own worth,
but only on your goodness and mercy.
I am defiled by many sins in body and soul,
and by my unguarded thoughts and words.
Gracious God of majesty and awe,
I seek your protection,
I look for your healing.
Poor troubled sinner that I am,
I appeal to you, the fountain of all mercy.
I cannot bear your judgment,
but I trust in your salvation.
Lord, I show my wounds to you and uncover my
shame before you.
I know my sins are many and great,
and they fill me with fear,
but I hope in your mercies,
for they cannot be numbered.
Lord Jesus Christ, eternal king, God and man,
crucified for mankind,
look upon me with mercy and hear my prayer,
for I trust in you.

Have mercy on me,
full of sorrow and sin,
for the depth of your compassion never ends.
Praise to you, saving sacrifice,
offered on the wood of the cross for me and for all
mankind.
Praise to the noble and precious blood,
flowing from the wounds of the my crucified Lord
Jesus Christ and washing away the sins of the whole
world.
Remember, Lord your creature,
whom you have redeemed with your blood;

I repent my sins,
and I long to put right what I have done. Merciful
Father, take away all my offenses and sins;
purify me in body and soul,
and make me worthy to taste the holy of holies.
May your body and blood,
which I intend to receive, although I am unworthy,
be for me the remission of my sins,
the washing away of my guilt,
the end of my evil thoughts,
and the rebirth of my better instincts.
May it incite me to do the works pleasing to you and
profitable to my health in body and soul,
and be a firm defense against the wiles of my
enemies. Amen.

Reflection: There is nothing worse than realizing our best efforts don't get us what we want and even our good intentions are corrupted by the desire for self-promotion. As you confess your shortcomings today, reflect on them and then imagine putting them into a fountain of mercy. Jesus can be trusted with even our deepest darkness, and His cleansing goes deeper and accomplishes more than any amount of trying to change your behavior yourself.

Scripture: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Day 40: Prayer of St. Gregory of Nazianzen

O All-Transcendent God
(and what other name could describe you?),
what words can hymn Your praises?
No word does You justice.
What mind can probe Your secret?
No mind can encompass You.
You are alone beyond the power of speech,
yet all that we speak stems from You.
You are alone beyond the power of thought,
yet all that we can conceive springs from You.
All things proclaim You,
those endowed with reason and those bereft of it.
All the expectation and pain of the world coalesces in You.
All things utter a prayer to You,
a silent hymn composed by You.
You sustain everything that exists,
and all things move together to Your orders.
You are the goal of all that exists.
You are one and You are all,
yet You are none of the things that exist,
neither a part nor the whole.
You can avail Yourself of any name;
how shall I call You,
the only unnameable?
All-transcendent God!

Reflection: As you consider the majesty and mystery of God, it is difficult to get the right word to adequately describe all He is and all He does. Ask Holy Spirit today for a song in your soul which you can use to communicate your adoration to Him, the all transcendent God, today. If you can, record yourself singing the tune and refer back to it in times of prayer when there are no words.

Scripture: Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

Day 41: Prayer of St. John Chrysostom, before reading scripture

O Lord Jesus Christ, open Thou the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Thy word and understand and do Thy will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Thy commandments from me, but open mine eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Thy law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom. On Thee do I set my hope, O my God, that Thou shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of Thy knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For Thou art the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from Thee cometh every good deed and every gift. Amen

Reflection: Opening the bible can be a daunting task if you don't relate to the characters, don't understand the culture, don't have the background story and it leads to many people giving up before they even start. Make it a practice to ask God to enlighten your mind to what His word says about Him, His people and for your each time you read it.

Scripture: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:5-6

Day 42: A prayer of St. Augustine, for indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, powerful Consoler, sacred Bond of the Father and the Son, Hope of the afflicted, descend into my heart and establish in it your loving dominion. Enkindle in my tepid soul the fire of your Love so that I may be wholly subject to you. We believe that when you dwell in us, you also prepare a dwelling for the Father and the Son. Deign, therefore, to come to me, Consoler of abandoned souls, and Protector of the needy. Help the afflicted, strengthen the weak, and support the wavering. Come and purify me. Let no evil desire take possession of me. You love the humble and resist the proud. Come to me, glory of the living, and hope of the dying. Lead me by your grace that I may always be pleasing to you. Amen.

Reflection: Have you ever been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Do you sense His guiding presence with you daily? If not, open your heart as you reflect on the prayer and allow the Spirit to come and fill your heart. If you have been baptized in the Spirit ask for a fresh touch today.

Scripture: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

Day 43: Prayer of St. (Venerable) Bede

O Christ, our Morning Star,
Splendour of Light Eternal,
shining with the glory of the rainbow,
come and waken us
from the greyness of our apathy,
and renew in us your gift of hope.

Amen.

Reflection: Our routines rituals can quickly become void of excitement and before you know it, we're just mouthing words and going through motions. The poppy like effect apathy has, lulling us into a false sense of "everything is fine" is something even the most seasoned Saint needs to guard against. Keep in mind today that the hope which you profess is glorious light in the midst of world shrouded in darkness. Ask Holy Spirit to awaken your soul today and renew the joy of His blessed Hope.

Scripture: But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:13-14

Day 44: Prayer of St. Clement of Rome

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we pray, that we might be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of your Holy Spirit into our hearts. What we do not know, reveal to us; what is lacking within us, make complete; that which we do know, confirm in us; and keep us blameless in your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reflection: There is temptation to finish the works the Holy Spirit begins in us, as we are largely impatient in our pursuit of both success and virtue. We force behavior modification that doesn't come from being transformed at the core of our being, but from a place we want people to think a certain way about us, and we believe God will love us more if we show him how strong we can be. Lay down striving to make your thoughts, your actions or your attitudes righteous and holy, and allow the Spirit of God to transform you into the likeness of Jesus as you live in communion with Him.

Scripture: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

Day 45: Prayer of St. Melito of Sardis

Born as a Son,
led forth as a Lamb,
sacrificed as a Sheep,
buried as a Man,
He rose from the dead as a God,
for He was by nature God and man.

He is all things:
He judges, and so He is Law;
He teaches, and so He is Wisdom;
He saves, and so He is Grace;
He begets, and so He is Father;
He is begotten, and so He is Son;
He suffers, and so He is Sacrifice;
He is buried, and so He is man;
He rises again, and so He is God.
This is Jesus Christ,
to whom belongs glory for all ages.

Reflection: Consider all that encompassed Jesus and was sacrificed as you commemorate his crucifixion today. Let the weight of His glory rest on you, and take in the magnitude of the work accomplished on the cross. Worship Him from that space of deep gratitude.

Scripture: One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

Day 46: Prayer of St. John of Damascus

Hold dominion over my heart, O Lord: keep it as your inheritance. Make your dwelling in me, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Widen in me the cords of your tabernacle, even the operations of your Most Holy Spirit. For you are my God and I will praise you, together with the Eternal Father and your quickening Spirit, now, henceforth and forever. Amen.

Reflection: The place we hold that which is most dear to us is our hearts. The heart resides at the center of our being, and by saying we hold something in it, it is to say our life revolves around it, and we can't live without it. Jesus wants to sit on the throne of your heart. Imagine your heart as a large tent with 4 separate chambers and a throne in the middle. What is in each chamber? Is there junk taking up precious space that Jesus can clear out? Who is currently sitting on the throne? Journal what you see and what the Father, the Son or the Spirit is asking of you as you offer up this prayer.

Scripture: Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Day 47: Prayer of St. Peter of Alcantara

Grant me grace, O Lord, to love you, my one hope, according to your command, with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my strength. You are all my glory, my refuge, and my consolation, my best of friends, my soul's betrothed, all radiant and alluring, sweeter than honey. Delight of my heart, my soul's life and joy; you are my everlasting happiness and my soul's paradise, my loving creator, and all that I can desire.

Reflection: Isaiah, in prophetically writing about the Messiah, said that there was nothing about Jesus that we would be drawn to. He wasn't particularly handsome, He wasn't prodigious in skill or strength, and some of his ideas sound absolutely ludicrous. I always wondered what it was like when those following Jesus had their eyes opened to who he really was. The shock and awe that must have overwhelmed them that inspired questions like, "Who is this Man, that even the wind and waves obey Him?" and Peter's response when asked who he said Jesus was, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." To Peter, Jesus said this was revealed to him by the Father; a grace which had been poured out over him. Ask the Father for that same grace to be poured out on you, that you would understand in new ways who Jesus is, and that you would fall deeper in love with Him.

Scripture: Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:15-19