

# People's Prayer Book



*Dedicated to*  
**Saint Joseph**  
*Patron of the*  
**Universal Church**

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*New Saint Joseph*

# People's Prayer Book

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**A NEW AND COMPLETE PRAYER BOOK  
WITH PRAYERS FROM  
THE BIBLE AND THE LITURGY,  
THE ENCHIRIDION OF INDULGENCES,  
THE SAINTS AND SPIRITUAL WRITERS  
AS WELL AS TRADITIONAL  
AND CONTEMPORARY PRAYERS  
FOR EVERY NEED AND ALL OCCASIONS**

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## PREFACE

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**A**NOTHER book of prayers? Yes, and hopefully something much more. Seen in its totality this book is not just a collection of formulations. It is not merely anthology, not a sampler but rather an exemplar. It demonstrates the almost universal human need for communication with God. A need that expresses itself in many ways. An expression that speaks of inspiration.

You may see in this book examples of prayer from all over the world, even from those who have not received the gift of faith. Who, nonetheless, have been moved to praise and glorify, to acknowledge dependence, to worship and adore. In them we might find words that will inspire us.

Yet, we must guard against regarding these exemplars of prayer as magic formulae. They are examples and may move one or another by the beauty of expression or exalted concepts. They have been gathered in order to help us to build up a manner of being able to speak to God without fear and in love as to the One Who loves us the most.

What then is prayer? Clearly it is not just a feeling, not a mood. It is much more. It involves the whole being of the person. In the classic definition it is a lifting of mind and heart to God. St. John Vianney tells us it is union with God and “in this union, God and soul are like two pieces of wax melted into one.”<sup>1</sup> St. John Chrysostom affirms that prayer is not the result of external attitude but comes from the heart and “prayer, loving conversation with God, is the

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<sup>1</sup>Catechism on Prayer, text compiled by A. Monchanin in *The Spirit of the Curé of Ars* (Tequi 1899), p. 87.

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## INTRODUCTION

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This new prayerbook combines liturgical and non-liturgical prayers with communal and personal prayers of all types and for all occasions. It is the only single book that enables the reader to participate in any liturgical action and also to pray with the best prayers of the Bible, the Saints, the tradition of the Church, and the experience of contemporary life.

We present the outstanding prayers from the Bible, the very Word of God. Thus readers can pray in the words of the great personages of the faith, the universal and timeless sentiments of the psalms, the very prayers of Jesus, and the prayers of the early Church.

The Liturgy is the next source of countless prayers and dialogue with God. The faithful can thus take part in all the major liturgical celebrations of their lives and also utilize those same texts for personal prayer.

Another powerful source is the *Enchiridion of Indulgences*, which contains prayers that are time-tested and especially approved by the Church. These enable the readers to pray with the Church and to form within themselves the sentiments that are most Christ-like.

Closely allied to this source is the prayer-treasury of the Saints and spiritual writers of the Church, our brothers and sisters in Christ who preceded us and composed magnificent prayers in every circumstance of life. These can be of immense help to us as we encounter situations similar to those that faced them.

However, in line with the guidelines of the Church, Catholics are also called upon to pray with their "Separated Brethren" as well as their neighbors who profess the Jewish faith or other faiths. Hence, we have included a section of prayers from other religions.

The Church wants us to pray in accord with the Church Year. Hence, the next section includes prayers for every season as well as for every month and even every day of the week.

Ordinarily, the prayers of the Church are addressed to the Father through Jesus His Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. However, there are times when we want to speak to one of the other Persons. Hence, there is a large selection of prayers to the Trinity.

Catholics also have a tradition of praying to others beside God—to the Mother of Jesus and all the Saints. Accordingly, there is a section of prayers to Saints and to patrons of professions and countries.

Again, prayer is used in all states of mind and circumstances of life. This calls for texts to be used on various occasions and for every need.

Prayers also stem from various relationships—world and country, church and parish, family and neighborhood, self and friends. A section provides many such prayers both traditional and contemporary.

Traditional Catholic devotions are provided in a totally new section with a modern Biblical and liturgical slant as requested by Vatican II.

Finally, Catholics have a history of blessings to sanctify their world every day of their lives. A section of blessings brings the book to a close.

This volume is intended to be a veritable encyclopedia of prayer. It provides the best prayers possible in the most attractive format. And the text is adorned with inspiring illustrations.

The invaluable analytical Index will help the reader make optimum usage of the treasury of prayer texts.

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### **MOSES — POWERFUL EXEMPLAR OF PRAYER**

The prayer life of the Israelites was typified by leaders such as Moses. By communing with God in the burning bush and on the holy mountain (for forty days and nights), he set an example of how the individual Israelites should pray to God.



## A) PRAYER IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL (OLD TESTAMENT)

**T**HE dialogue of human beings with God is so natural and spontaneous that it existed from the very beginning of the human race. The Old Testament writers acknowledged that God was infinitely superior to humans and could not be compelled to answer human prayers by incantations, exorcisms, or magical formulas; so they forbade the use of such superstitious practices.

Thus, Israel surpassed all the ancient religions in its unique concept of God and its life of prayer. Prayer is directed to God alone in the Old Testament and all Israelites are encouraged to make prayer an essential part of their religious obligations.

The most characteristic element of Old Testament prayer is its relation to the saving plan of God: people pray, beginning with what has happened or with what is happening, so that something may happen and God's salvation may be granted to the earth. All of sacred history is marked by prayer; the high points are punctuated by the prayer of the mediators and the whole people, who depend on the knowledge of the plan of God to obtain His intervention in the present moment.

Public prayer is exercised by leaders and kings, such as Moses, David, and Solomon; prophets, like Elijah, Samuel, and Jeremiah; religious leaders, such as Ezra and Nehemiah; and freedom fighters, like Judas Maccabeus. Personal prayer is practiced by many different individuals, such as Jonah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, and Job.

The Church encourages us to make all these prayers our own, since they are found in her own book, the Bible, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and they can add much knowledge and devotion to our lives.



## **THE PSALMS — PRAYERBOOK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Psalms may be looked upon as the prayerbook of the Holy Spirit. Over the long centuries of Israel's existence, the Spirit of God inspired the psalmists (typified by David) to compose magnificent prayers and hymns for every religious desire and need, mood and feeling. Thus, the psalms have great power to raise minds to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in favorable times, and to bring consolation and strength in times of trial.

## 23

**Prayer for True Happiness***The way of the just*

**H**APPY are those who refuse to follow the advice of the wicked. They do not walk along the path of sinners or associate with the insolent. Rather, they delight in the Law of the Lord and meditate on it in all their waking hours. Such persons are like a tree planted near a running stream that yields its fruit when its season arrives, and whose leaves remain verdant. They succeed in whatever they do.

*The way of the sinner*

This is not true of the wicked, not to the slightest degree; they are like chaff driven away by the wind. Therefore at the judgment the wicked shall not stand, nor shall sinners, in the assembly of the just. For the Lord guards carefully the way of the just, but the way of the wicked disappears.

**Psalm 1****Psalm-prayer**

Lord, You brought us to the fountain of life, like trees planted near running waters. Grant that we may bear perpetual fruit through the Cross of Your Son and be admitted into the assembly of the just.

## 24

**Prayer of Trust in God***A call for God's help*

**W**HEN I call upon You, answer me, O my just God, You Who offer me solace in distress; have pity on me, and listen to my prayer.

so do our eyes focus on the Lord, our God  
in the confident hope that He will show us mercy.

*Prayer of pity*

Have pity on us, O Lord, and grant us Your mercy,  
for we have endured far more than our share of contempt.  
We have been afflicted  
as the insolent mock and taunt us  
and the arrogant treat us with contempt. Psalm 123

*Psalm-prayer*

God, You are present everywhere.  
To You we raise our eyes.  
Crush our pride  
and grant us Your compassion.

42

**Prayer for Home Life**

*Blessings of a good family*

**B**LESSED are you who fear the Lord,  
who follow in His path.  
For you shall enjoy the fruits of your labor;  
you shall be blessed with happiness and prosperity.  
Your wife shall be like a fertile vine  
that blossoms in your home;  
your children shall be like olive plants  
as they gather around your table.  
In the same way will the person be blessed  
who fears the Lord.

*Prosperity and long life*

May the Lord shower you with blessings from Zion  
every day of your life.  
May you share in the prosperity of Jerusalem  
and live to see your children's children.  
May peace be granted to Israel. Psalm 128

**Psalm-prayer**

Lord, inspire us with fear of Your Name,  
but also give us Your love  
that drives out fear.  
Teach us to walk joyfully  
in Your path.

**43 Prayer for Pardon and Peace***Plea to be heard*

**F**ROM the depths of my misery I call out to You, O Lord.  
Lord, listen to my plea.  
Allow Your ears to be attentive  
as I raise my voice in petition to You.

*God's pardon*

If You, O Lord, record our sins,  
who can stand before You unashamed?  
But You grant us forgiveness  
and deserve to be revered.

*Trust in God's mercy*

My trust is in the Lord;  
my soul has faith in His Word.  
My soul awaits the arrival of the Lord  
more than sentries await the coming of dawn.

*Hope in the Redemption*

More than sentries await the dawn,  
let Israel wait for the Lord.  
For with the Lord one can expect kindness  
and hope to experience the fullness of redemption.  
And He will forgive the people of Israel  
for all their wicked deeds.



### **JESUS — MAN OF ASSIDUOUS PRAYER**

As a faithful Jew, Jesus undoubtedly recited those prayers that were commonly said by devout Jews of His day. Among these were the *Shema* (“Hear, O Israel”) recited as a creed each morning and night, and the *Tefillah* (eighteen benedictions) recited at sunrise, midafternoon, and sunset. He was also accustomed to taking part in the Sabbath day synagogue services (Luke 4:16).

57

**Canticle of Mary****The Soul Rejoices in the Lord**

**M**Y SOUL proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
 my spirit finds its joy in God my Savior.  
 For He has looked upon His handmaid in her lowliness;  
 all future generations shall call me blessed.  
 God Who is all-powerful has done wondrous deeds for me,  
 and blessed is His Name.  
 His mercy has been shown throughout every age  
 to those who fear Him.

The Lord has shown great power with His arm;  
 He has bewildered the proud in their inmost thoughts.  
 He has unseated the mighty from their thrones  
 and raised up the lowly.  
 The hungry He has provided with every choice food  
 while the rich He has sent away unfed.  
 He has given unfailing support to Israel His servant,  
 always mindful of His mercy,  
 as He promised our fathers,  
 promised Abraham and His descendants forever.

*[See also pp. 145 and 287.]*

**Luke 1:46-55**

58

**Canticle of Zechariah****The Messiah and His Forerunner**

**B**LESSED be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
 because He has come to dwell among His people  
 and redeem them.  
 He has raised a horn of salvation for us  
 in the house of David His servant,  
 as He had promised through the mouths of His holy  
 Prophets  
 from ancient times:



## THE ORDER OF MASS

### THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Acts of prayer and penitence prepare us to meet Christ as he comes in Word and Sacrament. We gather as a worshipping community to celebrate our unity with Him and with one another in faith.

*STAND*

*Mass begins with an entrance procession of the ministers to the sanctuary, during which the Entrance Chant is sung or the Antiphon of the day is recited.*

#### 78 GREETING (3 forms)

**Priest:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:** Amen.

**A**  
**Priest:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**People:** And with your spirit.

**B**  
**Priest:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.





## The Communion Rite

To prepare for the Paschal meal, to welcome the Lord, we pray for forgiveness and exchange a sign of peace. Before eating Christ's Body and drinking His Blood, we must be one with Him.

*STAND*

### 94 THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Priest asks the people to join him in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Priest and People:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

### 95 DOXOLOGICAL CONCLUSION AND ACCLAMATION

**Priest:** Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, by the help of your mercy,  
we may be always free from sin  
and safe from all distress,  
as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**1168 Prayer on New Year's Day**

**J**ESUS, You are the Lord of history,  
and Your wonderful redemption comes to us  
in a cycle of time—year after year.

Now another year has passed  
and a new one is ready to begin.  
A backward glance tells us that last year  
had its good points as well as its bad.

May the new year hold many more good things  
in store for me

and make me a better person:  
kinder and more willing to help,  
more thoughtful and more loving.

May I fulfill my allotted task in life  
and come closer to You  
while looking forward to an eternity with You.  
Thank You, Lord, for this extended time  
that You so graciously allow me  
on my journey toward Your heavenly Kingdom.

**1169 Prayer on Lincoln's Birthday**

**H**EAVENLY Father,  
today is the birthday of President Lincoln,  
a man who was Your chosen instrument  
in the liberation of the black people.

Like Cyrus of old, Lincoln did not know  
that Your Spirit was working through him,  
yet he cooperated with Your grace  
and achieved the task You set for him.

Teach me to see that same Spirit's hand working  
in any human person, instrument, or experience,  
and to be able to use any event to work with You.  
Let me strive to eliminate prejudice in myself

and in my circle of friends and acquaintances.  
But let me ensure that this will be done—  
in Lincoln’s beautiful phrase—  
with malice toward none  
and with charity for all.

### 1170 Prayer on St. Valentine’s Day

**H**EAVENLY Father,  
You are known as the God of Love,  
and today we are celebrating St. Valentine—  
one of the human patrons of love.  
Teach me how to make use of the gift of love  
that You have given us,  
and how to combine it with the supernatural virtue  
that You infuse into us.  
Let me love You above all  
and others in and for You.

Make me faithful to my loved ones,  
loyal, dedicated, compassionate, and concerned.  
Let me overlook their human failings  
and dwell on their good points.  
Enable me to love them  
not so much for what they can do for me  
but for what I can do for them.

### 1171 Prayer on Washington’s Birthday

**D**EAR Jesus,  
today we celebrate the birthday  
of the “Father of our country.”  
Amid many dangers and with much help,  
this man forged a motley group into a free people  
and left us a legacy of truthfulness.

O Jesus,  
You Who kindly willed to baptize me,  
anoint me, and consecrate me in Your love.  
Indeed, at this very moment,  
Your Name alone opens my heart  
and removes from it whatever was troubling me  
even though I did not know it.

Henri Lacordaire (1802-1861)  
*Priest, Writer, and Orator*

### 533 Prayer to Avoid Evil and Do Good

O MY God,  
I give myself to You,  
with all my liberty,  
all my intellect, heart, and will.  
O holy Spirit of God,  
take me as Your disciple:  
guide me, illuminate me, sanctify me.  
Bind my hands, that I may not do evil,  
cover my eyes that I may see it no more,  
sanctify my heart that evil may not rest within me.

Be my God and my guide.  
Wherever You lead me I will go;  
whatever You forbid I will renounce,  
and whatever You command,  
in Your strength I will do.

Henry Manning (1808-1892)  
*Cardinal and Writer*

### 534 Prayer for Undivided Love of God

YOU have made us for Yourself,  
O God.  
If we want to divide our heart

between God and creatures,  
God will certainly get the smaller part.  
Therefore, O my God,  
take all my heart,  
for it is not really very large.

St. Pierre Julian Eymard (1811-1868)  
*Religious and Founder*

### 535 **Prayer after Mass**

**O** LORD Jesus Christ,  
let Your Passion be my strength  
to sustain, guard, and protect me.  
Let Your Wounds be my food and drink  
to nourish, fill, and invigorate me.  
Let the shedding of Your Blood  
cleanse me of all my sins.  
Let Your Death obtain eternal life for me  
and Your Cross lead me to everlasting glory.  
Let these constitute for me  
refreshment and joy,  
health and uprightness of heart.

St. Pius X (1835-1914)  
*Pope and Reformer*

### 536 **Prayer That God May Not Abandon Us in Affliction**

**O** MY God,  
I beg You,  
by Your loneliness,  
not that You may spare me affliction,  
but that You may not abandon me in it.  
When I encounter affliction,