

Prayers for Holy Week



An Act of Spiritual Communion

This can be prayed each time you watch the Mass, and at other times. Make an act of faith, such as:

I firmly believe, my divine Jesus, that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I believe that it really and substantially contains your body and blood, soul and divinity. Acknowledging these truths, I adore your power – that same power which said “let there be light”, and light was made. Truly, you are a hidden God; the God of Israel; the Saviour.

Then, at the time you would normally receive Holy Communion, say:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

The Seven Sorrows of Our Lady

A good daily practice – particularly during Passiontide – is to say a Hail Mary in honour of each of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady. These are:

1. The prophecy of Simeon
2. The flight into Egypt
3. The loss of the Child Jesus in the temple
4. The meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion
6. The taking down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross
7. The burial of Jesus

To those who make this practice daily, Our Lady makes seven promises:

1. I will grant peace to their families;
2. They will be enlightened about the divine mysteries;
3. I will console them in their pains and I will accompany them in their work;
4. I will give them as much as they ask for as long as it does not oppose the adorable will of my divine Son or the sanctification of their souls;
5. I will defend them in their spiritual battles with the infernal enemy and I will protect them at every instant of their lives;
6. I will visibly help them at the moment of their death; they will see the face of their Mother;
7. I have obtained from my divine Son, that those who practice this devotion will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness, since all their sins will be forgiven, and my Son and I will be their eternal consolation and joy.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Prayer for Priests

On this day when Our Lord gave us the priesthood and the Eucharist, priests throughout the world renew the promises they made at their ordination. Please pray for them. This beautiful prayer is written by St Thérèse of Lisieux:

Almighty and Eternal God, look upon the face of Your Christ, and for love of Him who is the eternal High-Priest, have pity on Your priests. Remember, O most compassionate God, that they are but weak and frail human beings; stir up in them the grace of their vocation which is in them by the imposition of the Bishop's hands. Keep them close to You, lest the enemy prevail against them, so that they may never do anything in the slightest degree unworthy of their sublime vocation.

O Jesus, I pray for Your faithful and fervent priests; for Your unfaithful and tepid priests; for Your priests labouring at home or abroad; for Your tempted priests; for Your lonely priests; for Your young priests; for Your dying priests; for the souls of Your priests in purgatory.

But above all, I pray for those priests who are dearest to me: the priest who baptised me; the priests who have absolved me from my sins; the priests who have given me Thy Body and Blood in Holy Communion, and all those priests who have helped and encouraged me. O Jesus, keep them close to Your heart, and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

An Act of Perfect Contrition

Many people usually go to confession on or around Good Friday. Since we cannot receive absolution this year, we can pray an act of Perfect Contrition. In this prayer we receive pardon for our sins outside of confession, even mortal sins, on condition that we determine to amend our lives and make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as this becomes possible.

Perfect Contrition is a grace from God, so sincerely ask for this gift throughout the day prior to making your act of contrition: "My God, grant me perfect contrition for all my sins". Then:

- 1. In reality or imagination kneel at the foot of a crucifix and say to yourself: "Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in the midst of your agony, you remembered me, you suffered for me, you wished to wipe away my sins".*
- 2. Contrition is 'perfect' if you repent of your sins because you love God and are sorry for offending Him and causing the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Before the Crucified Christ remember your sins, repent of them because they have brought our Lord to His sufferings on the Cross. Promise Him, that with His help, you will not sin again.*
- 3. Recite, slowly and sincerely, an act of contrition focused on the goodness of God and your love of Jesus: "O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen".*
- 4. Make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as practically possible.*

Psalm 50(51): a prayer of repentance and plea for forgiveness

Have mercy on me, God, in Your kindness. In Your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.

My offences truly I know them; my sin is always before me.
Against You, You alone, have I sinned; what is evil in Your sight I have done.

That You may be justified when You give sentence and be without reproach when You judge,
O see, in guilt I was born, a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed You love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.
O purify me, then I shall be clean; O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness, that the bones You have crushed may revive.
From my sins turn away Your face and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence, nor deprive me of Your Holy Spirit.

Give me again the joy of Your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors Your ways and sinners may return to You.

O rescue me, God, my helper, and my tongue shall ring out Your goodness.
O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For in sacrifice You take no delight, burnt offering from me You would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit. A humbled, contrite heart You will not spurn.

In Your goodness, show favour to Sion: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then You will be pleased with lawful sacrifice, holocausts offered on Your altar.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

St Clare's Litany of the Sacred Wounds of Our Lord

Praise and honour be given You, Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the of Sacred Wound in Your Right Hand. By this holy and adorable wound, I beseech You to pardon all of the sins that I have committed by thought, word, and deed; by neglecting my service to You, and by self-indulgence, both while awake and asleep. Grant me the grace, that by devout and frequent remembrance of Your Holy Passion, I may honour Your sacred wounds and the death which You endured for my sake; and that by chastising my body, I may testify my gratitude for Your sufferings and Your death. Our Father. Hail Mary. Amen.

Praise and honour be given You, Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Sacred Wound in Your Left Hand. By this holy and adorable wound, I beseech You to have pity on me and to change within me whatever is displeasing to You. Grant me victory over Your enemies, so that by the power of Your grace, I may overcome them. And by Your holy death, deliver me from all dangers, present and future, and make me worthy to share in the glory of Your blessed kingdom. Our Father. Hail Mary. Amen.

Praise and honour be given You, Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Sacred Wound in Your Right Foot. By this holy and adorable wound, I beseech You to enable me to bring forth worthy fruits of penance for my sins. I humbly entreat you, for the sake of Your holy death, to keep me safe, day and night, according to Your holy will and to preserve me from all adversity, in body and soul, so that on the judgment day, I may obtain eternal joy. Our Father. Hail Mary. Amen.

Praise and honour be given You, Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Sacred Wound in Your Left Foot. By this holy and adorable wound, I beseech You to forgive my sins and to grant full remission for my sins, so that with Your help, I may escape the rigors of Your justice. I entreat You, Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of Your holy death, to grant that at the hour of my death, I may have the grace to confess my sins with perfect contrition; to receive the Blessed Sacrament of Your Body and Blood; and to receive the Sacrament of Holy Anointing for the sake of my eternal salvation. Our Father. Hail Mary. Amen.

Praise and honour be given You, Lord Jesus Christ, by reason of the Sacred Wound in Your Side. By this holy and adorable wound and by the Baptism with which You purified me from original sin, I beseech You to deliver me from all evils — past, present, and future. I entreat You, by Your bitter death, to give me a lively faith, a firm hope, and perfect charity, so that I may love You with my whole heart, with my whole soul, and with all my strength. Uphold me by your grace through the practice of good works, so that I may serve You always in this life and praise You forever in heaven. Our Father. Hail Mary. Amen.

Let us pray:

Almighty God and Father,
who ransomed the human race
by the five wounds of Your Only Son,
our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,
help us to venerate these holy wounds
and to praise and serve You forever and ever.
We make this prayer through Christ Jesus, Our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer of St Francis before the Crucifix

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart.
Give me right faith, sure hope and perfect charity.
Fill me with understanding and knowledge, that I may fulfil Your command.

HOLY SATUDAY

Psalm 29(30): a prayer of trust in the saving power of God

As we await the Lord's resurrection, we can pray this psalm, which expresses hope that God will save us out of death, just as He raised the Lord Jesus to new life.

I will praise you, Lord, You have rescued me and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O Lord, I cried to You for help and You, my God, have healed me.

O Lord, You have raised my soul from the dead, restored me to life from those who sink into the grave.

Sing psalms to the Lord, you who love Him, give thanks to His holy Name.

His anger lasts a moment; His favour all through life. At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn.

I said to myself in my good fortune: 'Nothing will ever disturb me.'

Your favour had set me on a mountain fastness, then You hid your face and I was put to confusion.

To You, Lord, I cried, to my God I made appeal: 'What profit would my death be, my going to the grave?

Can dust give You praise or proclaim Your truth?'

The Lord listened and had pity. The Lord came to my help.

For me you have changed my mourning into dancing, You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

So my soul sings psalms to You unceasingly. O Lord my God, I will thank You for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

A prayer to Mary before going to bed

Hail, O Queen of heaven, enthroned!

Hail, by Angels Mistress owned!

Root of Jesse, Gate of morn,

Whence the world's true Light was born:

Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,

Loveliest whom in heaven they see:

Fairest thou, where all are fair,

Plead with Christ our sins to spare.

V/. Grant that I may praise thee, holy Virgin.

R/. Give me strength against thine enemies.

Let us pray:

Grant, O merciful God, to our weak natures Thy protection, that we who commemorate the holy Mother of God may, by the help of her intercession, arise from our iniquities. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

V/. May the divine assistance remain always with us.

R/. Amen.