



Newsletter – January 2024

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Praying as a family

In preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope', 2024 has been designated a Year of Prayer by Pope Francis. There is a particular focus on the Our Father, and this presents us with a great opportunity to go back to the basics of prayer.

Prayer is the life-breath and heartbeat of a truly Christian home. It's also one of the best ways to help your family thrive. When you pray together, each member of the family learns what it means to be intimate with God. When you see answers to prayer, you experience His love and His presence in your daily lives. For this reason, we'd suggest that there's no time like the present to introduce your family to the mystery, joy, and excitement of prayer.

SEE

For many Catholics, that individual personal prayer is by far the most difficult type of prayer: the God and me; one-on-one; from my heart; from my whole being; in a living relationship kind of prayer.

According to a Catholic News Agency [article](#) in 2021, only 51% of Catholics in a Pew Research Survey reported praying every day, down from 59% in 2014, a steep drop in only seven years.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lays out three primary reasons for difficulties in prayer: *1) distractions; 2) dryness; and 3) lack of faith.*

Our busy and distracting lifestyles makes it difficult to find quiet time to pray, more so with the family. Some are worried about not doing it right. Others don't really believe God will hear or respond. Still others get distracted and have a hard time focusing on their prayers. Gathering the family for prayer can also be difficult today with many of us having separate schedules and time set aside for prayer at home.

Consequences

1. What happens when we fail to pray daily:
 - a. To me as an individual? and
 - b. To my family?

2. How does it affect my role as a witness to the Word of God? How does it affect my journey with God?

JUDGE

Does my prayer really make a difference in the world around me, or is it just changing me or my family members? After all, God knows everything, so I'm not telling him anything he doesn't already know.

If you're feeling this way, you should know that you're not alone and that the Bible points us to good answers to these questions. Jesus promises that "whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith" (Matt. 21:22). And St. James tells us that "the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" (James 5:6).

Praying as a family does not come easy for everyone, speaking on the importance of family prayer, in his document "**On Value and Inviolability of Human Life**" St Pope John Paul II wrote:

The family celebrates the Gospel of life through daily prayer, both individual prayer and family prayer. The family prays to glorify and give thanks to God for the gift of life and implores his light and strength in order to face times of difficulty and suffering without losing hope.

When we face difficult times, God invites us to bring our pain, grief, anger, and anxiety to him in prayer. He tells us to give our burdens to him because of the deep love he has for us (1 Peter 5:7). No matter what we're experiencing, we can be certain that God hears our prayer.

When we pray, we are entering into a conversation with God. We are building up and engaging in a relationship with God and with each other. We are living out our deep desire to grow closer to God and to receive what God longs to give all of us:

God's unconditional love, which is always available, always freely offered, and always life-giving.

Personal Reflection

1. Am I saying my daily prayers? If not, why? Is my faith in God strong?
2. Does my family come together to say daily prayers? If not, why?
3. How does my family feel about the act of praying? How is the faith of my family?

Christian Reflection

1. What do we know from the bible about our need to have an intimate relationship with our Lord? Quote some verses.
2. What are the Vatican documents that emphasize on prayers, whether individual prayers or family prayer? (apart from what is mentioned above).

ACT

Families are a divine part of God's plan. When you pray as a family, you are strengthening the bond between you and your loved ones. In addition to strengthening everyone's connection with God, prayer has the side effect of deepening interpersonal relationships. It encourages family members to become more sensitive to one another's feelings. Prayer is all about intimacy – with the Lord and with one another.

1. How can I build my faith through my prayers every day?
 2. Can I commit to having daily prayer time with my family?
 3. How can I reach out to my family members who have difficulty in praying?
 4. How can I spread the message on the importance of prayers?
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5 Simple Ways to Pray as a Family

Pray at mealtime.

Make the sign of the Cross and have the kids simply say, "Thank you, Jesus." Or, you may say the "Bless us O Lord..." prayer, or whatever other words of thanks to God may be on your heart! These are great reminders for the whole family, about where all good things ultimately come from.

Bless each other:

Parents can offer a blessing by tracing the sign of the cross on their children's foreheads, and children can return the favor. This simple practice welcomes God into your relationships and reminds all that "our" family belongs to God.

Wonder at Creation:

Help your children to recognize and adore the glory of God in all things: in the ocean; the night sky; the forest; etc. The awe experienced through His creation can point the family toward God and help to appreciate His power, goodness, and love.

Say sorry:

When you or your children find yourselves in a situation that requires an apology as remedy, be sure to apologize to God, as well. This will help the family remember its duty to live well in relation to both God and neighbor.

Pray through joys and sorrows:

Families can pray together in thanksgiving for a good day and for God's help in difficult times. Praying through both good and bad reminds the family of God's presence and that he answers all prayers as He sees fit.

Announcements

1. The Annual General Meeting will be held on 2 March 2024 at CANA – Flora Room. More details will follow.