

Going Deeper



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Going Deeper

This section of the staff prayer resource titled "Going Deeper", has been developed to support those staff who would like to enhance the experience of the weekly staff prayers. The contents are all linked to the charism and the prayer style of the weekly staff prayer but also include the added dimension of a linked spiritual tradition.

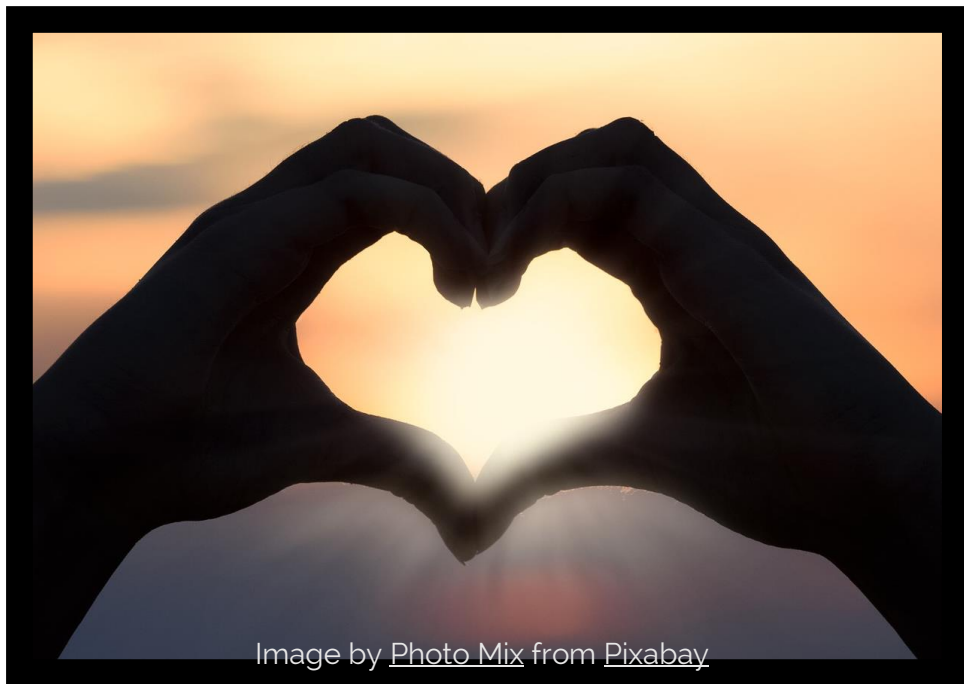
Each section offers two opportunities for deeper reflection during the week following the matching staff prayer (or at anytime which suits you).

Each prayer opportunity includes:

- A brief look at the history and charism of a Catholic religious order and its link to the identified charisms of Jesus from the weekly staff prayers.
- A reading and personal reflection, with space to write.
- A prayer suggestion which also links to the prayer style used in the weekly staff prayers.

At the conclusion of "Going Deeper" are some suggested readings and other resources which you may find a useful starting point to further explore the charisms or the linked religious orders.

Benedictine Spirituality– Walking in Love



Going Deeper

Benedictine Spirituality– Walking in Love

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

St Benedict was the founder of a monastic order and numerous monasteries. His Rule for monastic living was widely adopted throughout the middle ages and is still used by the many Benedictine orders present today.

On the charism of love Benedict wrote in his Rule:

Your way of acting should be different from the world's way: the love of Christ must come before all else. You are not to act in anger or nurse a grudge.

Rid your heart of all deceit.

Never give a hollow greeting of peace

or turn away when someone needs your love.

(Rule of St. Benedict 4:20-26)

This message is as relevant today as when it was first written.

Benedict reminds his communities that love is the basis of all that it means to follow Jesus.

He says "the love of Christ must come before all else."

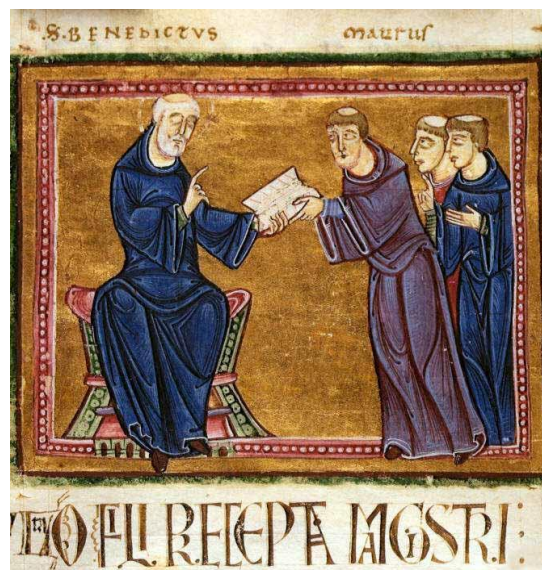
Learning to love is one of the most important tasks of our entire lives.

It's in the daily living out of our lives that this love is shown.

As we deal with difficult people and the challenging situations life presents for us we should be asking ourselves:

Are we loving others?

Are we putting the love of Christ before all else?



Saint Benedict delivering his rule to the monks of his order, Monastery of St. Gilles, Nîmes, France, 1129

We Listen

A reading from John 13:34-35 (NRSV)

Jesus said:

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from John .

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- What things have you done this week which speak of a person with love at their centre?

Lectio Divina.

The prayer practice of Lectio Divina is an ancient approach to prayer.

With this prayer we listen and reflect, as St. Benedict instructed, "*with the ear of the heart*" on a word, a phrase, an emotion or an image that holds for us a message from God.

In its traditional form Lectio Divina is a contemplative praying of the scriptures central to the Christian monastic tradition.

There are four steps:

- Lectio** – We quieten down by reading slowly and attentively, listening for the still, small voice of God that will speak to us personally.
- Meditatio** – Once we have found a word or passage that speaks to us in a personal way, we must take it in and ruminate on it. We repeat it gently and let it interact with our thoughts and feelings. This meditation on the word opens us to a deeper level.
- Oratio** – We then offer this in dialogue with God. Here we can use the healing word or phrase to touch and change our deepest selves.
- Contemplatio** – Finally, we simply rest in the transforming loving presence of God.

This following prayer suggestion is a variation of Lectio Divina and involves the same process but with the use of music instead of scripture.

Remember, Lectio Divina is about taking one small part of scripture (or in this variation music) and relishing it as you listen for God.

Lectio Divina. – Music

Before you start, select a piece of music that you feel would suit this prayer exercise. Instrumental music may be a good starting point, or a mantra, or a favourite song or hymn.

To begin, find a position which is comfortable.
Slow your breathing with deliberately slow breaths....
Take a moment to feel God in your presence.....

Softly play the music you have selected
Listen for how it is making you feel
Or what thoughts it draws to your mind.
Keep your focus on how this feeling connects you to God .
As you listen to the music, sit with it.....
Relish it....

Think about what parts of your life come to mind as you listen.....

Take the opportunity to talk to God about this part of your life....

As the music finishes -listen and feel God's presence about you.
Allow this prayer gift to deepen in you.....

As you finish *simply* whisper *thank-you*.
It is always good to end prayer time with a gesture or word of gratitude.

Benedictine Spirituality– Walking in Love

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

The Good Samaritan Sisters here in Australia live by the Rule of St. Benedict and are sometimes called the Australian Benedictines! <https://www.goodsams.org.au/>
A number of our schools were founded by the 'Good Sams'.

In a world which can be hostile and suspicious the 'Good Sams' remain a strong presence of Benedictine love in many communities.

Benedictine love requires that we welcome the stranger, not only into our homes, but into our hearts. Benedictine love demands the extra effort and sacrifice.

It demands that we put others above ourselves and claims that we open our lives to one another – to friends and to strangers, to colleagues and to neighbours, to our students and to their families.

It is about making others feel welcome and being sure that they know we value them and are pleased they are here with us.

Simply put, it is making sure they know that they are special – that they are loved.

We Listen

A reading from Matthew 7:7-12 (NRSV)

Jesus said: "Ask and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask!

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the meaning of the law and the prophets."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew .

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- We don't always treat others with the sense of loving presence that we would like to receive. Decide to practise that sense of loving presence with the people who are close to you.

This means

- Giving them your full attention when they talk to you.
- Smiling at them with a warm heart.
- Giving and making time for them.
- Praying for them in your prayer time.

- Write a couple of lines here each day to remind yourself of your intention

Lectio Divina.

Try Lectio Divina with different forms.

Select the form that you enjoy the most.

Choose a favourite piece of music or a favourite piece of writing or scripture.

You may like to use this piece.

Soul and Risk

To risk appearing a fool is to laugh.

To risk appearing sentimental is to weep.

To risk involvement is to reach out for another person.

To risk being your true self is to expose your feelings.

To risk their rejection is to place your dreams and ideas before the crowd.

To risk dying is to live.

To risk despair is to hope.

To risk failure is to try.

Risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing.

This person can avoid suffering and sorrow but cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love or really live.

They are chained by their certitude.

They are a slave. They have forfeited freedom.

A person who risks is free.

Lectio Divina. – choice

To begin, find a position which is comfortable.
Slow your breathing with deliberately slow breaths....
Take a moment to feel God in your presence.....

Reflect on the poem provided or the music or scripture you have selected.

Listen for how it is making you feel. Choose words or phrases that stand out for you.

Keep your focus on how this feeling connects you to God.
Sit with it.....
Relish it....

Think about what parts of your life come to mind
Or how this is relevant to your life as you listen.....

Take the opportunity to talk to God about this part of your life....

As your time finishes -listen and feel God's presence about you.
Allow this prayer gift to deepen in you.....

As you finish simply whisper *thank-you*.
It is always good to end prayer time with a gesture or word of gratitude.

St. Benedict's Prayer

Gracious and holy Father,
give us wisdom to perceive you,
intelligence to understand you,
diligence to seek you,
patience to wait for you,
eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate on you,
and a life to proclaim you;
through the power of the
Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Sisters of Mercy– Walking in Service



Image by [Lorri Lang](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Going Deeper

Sisters of Mercy– Walking in Service

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

Catherine McAuley is the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy.

Catherine's faith led her to dedicate herself to serving the poor, sick and uneducated. Throughout her life she was deeply aware of the human suffering caused by social, economic and religious injustice.

To "comfort" and to "animate" are among the most frequently used words in Catherine's writing. These words reflect the outgoing, life-giving and self-sustaining nature of her life and ministry.



www.sistersofmercy.ie

'Animation' was the word Catherine repeatedly used to describe the desired effect of her sisters' lives on those they had contact with. Through acts of comfort, love and mercy she strove to impact and 'animate' lives. To be animated by the spirit of Christ is part of the spirit of the Mercy order.

Catherine used every opportunity to applaud and invigorate her sisters and she deliberately nurtured their God-given gifts. She *animated* them through her words, her example, her presence, her affection, and her own concrete commitment to works of mercy.

Hospitality was a fundamental part of Catherine's sense of service. The story is told that even as she laid on her death bed with sisters travelling from far and near to pay their last respects to her, her first concern was their comfort.

"Be sure to give them a cup of tea" was her instruction which has become a symbol of Mercy hospitality and servant leadership.

We Listen

A reading from Luke 22:24-27 (JB)

An argument began between them about who should be reckoned the greatest; but he said to them, ' Among the gentiles it is the kings who lord over them , and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor.

With you this must not happen.

No, the greatest among you must behave as if they were the youngest,
the leaders as if they were the ones who serve.

For who is the greater - the one at table or the one who serves?

The one at table surely? Yet here I am among you as one who serves!"

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Luke.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
 - What is the message for you in this verse?
- What would this look like in your life – write down some real examples.
 - Mark the ones you would like to make extra effort with this week.

Marian Spirituality

As we focus on the prayers to Mary it is important to reflect on the place Mary has in our spiritual heritage as Catholics.

Marian spirituality is about exploring our lives in the light of Mary's life journey. It is about looking for insights from her life and her response to being an active part of God's love which may guide us in our responses and our lives.

Marian spirituality can be reduced to praying 'to' statues and reciting prayers without thought. It is not about pleading to Mary in heaven to intercede on our behalf. While these are some of the pious practices in Marian spirituality, they are simply an expression of a richer and deeper prayer approach.

Marian spirituality looks at the life of Mary and how she lived it, what her life can teach us and what she believed. It builds on this and makes connections to the realities of today. It becomes a way of living and responding, grounded in the model of living given to us by Jesus' mother herself.

As you explore the life of Mary scripturally, theologically and historically a picture evolves of a woman who knows what it means to be human. We know that Jesus grew in wisdom and grace under her guidance. We know that she supported Jesus in his ministry, travelling with him. We know that Mary was there at his crucifixion, remaining with him to the end.

We knew she was with the disciples in the upper room and that her role in the early Christian church was crucial.

She begins as the mother of Jesus and ends as the mother of the Church.

Declan Marmion SM writes about Mary as a 'spiritual resource' for all of us striving to walk through our lives in the footsteps of Christ.

"...we can see Mary as a woman of the people, in solidarity with those who are oppressed by an occupying force; as a refugee fleeing with her new-born child from the tyranny of a murderous ruler; as a bereaved mother of a victim of an unjust execution. This is the woman of strength, who experienced poverty and suffering, flight and exile. And these are the situations which cannot escape the attention of those who would wish to live the Gospel after the manner of Mary."

*Marimon D. Mary as model [online] 2002 May; Available from URL:
<http://www.catholicireland.net/pages/index.php?nd=273&art=414>*

A Marian spirituality has much to offer those who seek to respond to God in the everydayness of their lives.

Prayer – Marian Prayers

There are many Marian prayers in the Catholic tradition. The Hail Mary and the Angelus were highlighted during the staff prayer. Here is another.

The Magnificat, also called the Canticle of Mary, is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55) where Mary visits Elizabeth and proclaims God's goodness. The author of 1 Samuel 2:1-10 provides the original use of this style and structure where Hannah praises God.

In Latin, magnificat means 'it praises'. As you pray the Magnificat, take a moment to reflect upon the model of leadership and service Mary lived for us and the ways God shows us favour.

Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
My Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour
For He has looked with favour on His lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed.
The Almighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him
In every generation.
He has shown the strength of His arm
He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones
And has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
And the rich He has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel
For He has remembered His promise of mercy,
The promise He made to our fathers,
To Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sisters of Mercy– Walking in Service

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

The Leadership of Catherine McAuley and that of the sisters who followed her is a model of service. Seeking to meet people where they are the Sisters of Mercy visit prisons, hospitals and homes. They have developed and built schools, hostels, clinics and hospitals.

The servant leadership they strive for in the communities they enter, works to not only provide physical resources for those in need but perhaps more importantly to be a source of care, of dignity, compassion, solace and inspiration.

As foundress, Catherine McAuley once wrote -
"It is for God we serve the poor, not for thanks."

The Sisters of Mercy's work is about seeing and responding to the needs of all those they are called to serve. The needs can be either of the body or spiritual and are responded to through teaching, counselling, comforting and praying.

The Sisters of Mercy have played a key role in the story of our Archdiocese and in the growth and staffing of many parish schools in particular. In addition, our Catholic Teachers College was named after the founder of the Mercies, Catherine McAuley and our Brisbane Catholic Education Centre is built on the site of their original college.

When we answer the call to serve, may we realise it in the spirit of the Mercy sisters. May we respond not with shallow gestures or hollow words but with actions that recognise the presence of God in us all.



We Listen

A Reading from of Matthew 18:1-4 (JB)

At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said 'Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? So he called a little child to him whom he set amongst them. Then Jesus said 'In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. And so the one who becomes as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven'

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew.

- What is it about being a little child that Jesus is focusing on?
- When have you been tempted to ' lord it over ' as a person with some authority?
- When have you been tempted to ' play the victim' in situations where you have little power.

Create your own 'mindful message' - ' e.g. " today I want to be mindful that".

Marian Prayers

There are many Marian prayers in the Catholic tradition – here is another popular one.

The prayer of the *Memorare* comes from the Latin word for 'remember'. Traditionally it is thought to have been composed by St. Bernard of Clairvaux. It emphasizes Mary's role as intercessor and her history of answering the prayer of those who call to her. Before praying the *Memorare*, spend some time with Mary speaking to her of the challenges in your life.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

*Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my mother.
To you I come; before you I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.*

*O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me.
Amen.*

Memorare (modern)

*Remember, most loving Virgin Mary,
Never was it heard that anyone who turned to you for help was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence, though burdened by my sins I run to your protection.
For you are my mother.*

*Mother of the Word of God,
Do not despise my words of pleading
But be merciful and hear my prayer
Amen*

Catherine McAuley 's Prayer

My God,
I am yours for time and eternity
Teach me to cast myself entirely
Into the arms of
Your loving providence
With the most lively, unlimited
Confidence in your
Compassionate, tender pity.

Grant me
O most merciful redeemer
That whatever you ordain or permit
May be acceptable to me.

Take from my heart
All painful anxiety;
Suffer nothing to sadden me but sin,
Nothing to delight me
But the hope of coming
To the possession of you
My God and my all,
In your everlasting kingdom.

Amen.

Presentation Sisters– Walking in Hope



Image by [Myriam Zilles](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Going Deeper

Presentation Sisters– Walking in Hope

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

In County Cork, Ireland in 1718, Honora Nagle founder of the Presentation Sisters was born.

Her Christian name was soon replaced in the family circle by the affectionate diminutive, "Nano", the name which clung to her all through life.

Sent abroad for education, Nano grew to womanhood largely unaware of the distresses of her people. That understanding came later, when family circumstances brought her back to Ireland. She saw then with painful clarity how thoroughly the penal laws had done their work, particularly in the material and spiritual degradation of the poor. Without legal right to exist, Catholics were forbidden to worship. Forbidden to teach, it was a Church seemingly without hope of a future. In an economy controlled for the benefit of the powerful, the poor sank into sub-human conditions, beyond the touch of hope.



With what must have seemed, to those who knew her, surprising suddenness, Nano Nagle altered her whole way of life. In defiance of the laws which put a price on the head of a Catholic teacher, she began to devote her energies to the education of the poor girls.

At first alone, later with the support of her family, particularly her Uncle Joseph Nagle, she established a whole network of schools in Cork. When the school day was over, she was to be seen walking the lanes of Cork to visit the sick and needy. It was said of her that there was not a poor cottage in Cork that she did not know. Her figure, bearing a lamp through the night, became a symbol of hope and life for many.

Surmounting great difficulties, she introduced the Ursuline Order into Cork to perpetuate her work. When she found the Sisters unable to do all that was needed, she gathered about her the little group of women who were the founding nucleus of the Presentation Congregation.

*Adapted from: Society of Australian Presentation Congregations [online];
Available from URL: <http://pbvm.org.au/nano.html>*

We Listen

A Reading from Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NRSV)

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says Yahweh, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says Yahweh.

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Jeremiah.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.

Let the words of this passage sink deeply into your heart.

What future can you imagine is planned for you?

One that sees your gifts used best...

One that is full of joy and hope.....

- Write about your own hopes here and let these rest in God.

Mandalas

The "circle with a centre" pattern is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to the macro in the world as we know it. It is a pattern found in nature and is seen in biology, geology, chemistry, physics and astronomy. Wherever a centre is found radiating outward and inward, there is wholeness--a mandala.

Mandalas are common to many faith traditions, and in the Celtic tradition, became prominent in the middle ages. Many of the stained glass windows created during the time use the structure of the mandala to tell a story.

Mandalas have 4 quadrants and centre which is the main focus – a message of the story. Each of the quadrants in some way develops the story.

God in my life Mandala

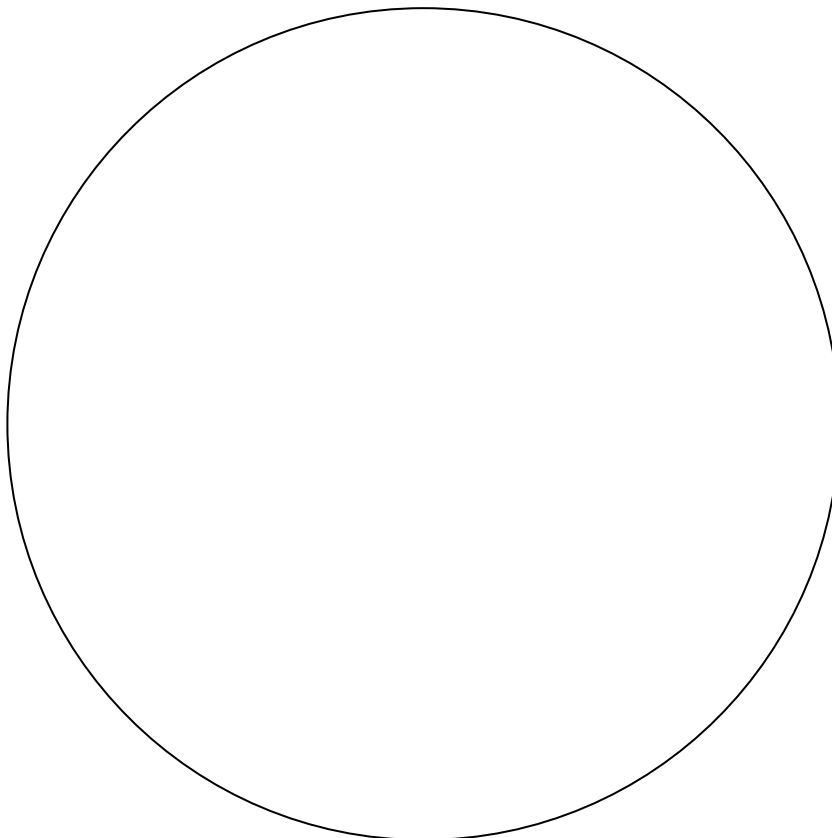
Create a mandala to represent God's influence in your life

Create a centre point to represent God – consider the shape and colours you use.

Think of the rest of the circle as your life.

Use shape and colour to represent the important things and relationships
you have in your life .

Consider how God may be present in them, through you.



Presentation Sisters– Walking in Hope

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect



In the degraded condition of her people Nano Nagle recognised not only the effects of political oppression and economic change, but a call from God.

She knew herself called to make some move against injustice. She felt compelled to help those deprived of hope and meaning, to give them the opportunity to take hold of their unpromising present and to create a future for themselves and others.



The lantern she carried through the darkness in the streets and lanes of Cork became for the poor a symbol of God's love, touching and transforming the harshness of their lives and offering hope. Today, for Presentation Sisters around the world, that lantern has become the defining symbol of their mission.

Since 1866 and the foundation of their first Australian convent and school in Richmond, Tasmania, the Presentation Sisters, founded by Nano Nagle, have continued to be a visible presence of God's love here in Australia. In our Archdiocese, many of our schools were founded by the Presentation Sisters, and they too remain a strong presence.

As times changed, many sisters have moved from school-based ministries to other ministries where increased emphasis is being placed on both direct service to those in need to alleviate their suffering and on working to change the social conditions that cause their impoverishment.

Nano Nagle's work in Ireland established a vision that education, in its myriad forms, is a means of empowering people for life. Her vision continues in the choice of Presentation Sisters to work as lanterns of hope for the many individuals, families and groups on the margins of society, here in Queensland and around the world

*Adapted from Society of Australian Presentation Congregations [online];
Available from URL: <http://pbvm.org.au/nano.html>*

We Listen

A Reading from Genesis 9:12-16 (NRSV)

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

We Respond

Covenants are binding agreements – unbreakable.
Your love for your children or parents or nieces and nephews is a covenant relationship –it is unbreakable, untouchable, eternal.

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Genesis.

- Draw a rainbow and write in the arcs of the rainbow the words or phrases from the reading which stand out for you.
- What words give you hope? Write them down.

Mandalas

Hildegard von Bingen, a Christian nun in the 12th century, created many mandalas to express her visions and beliefs. As you take this quiet time, you can begin to fill your mandala to represent your feelings and beliefs.

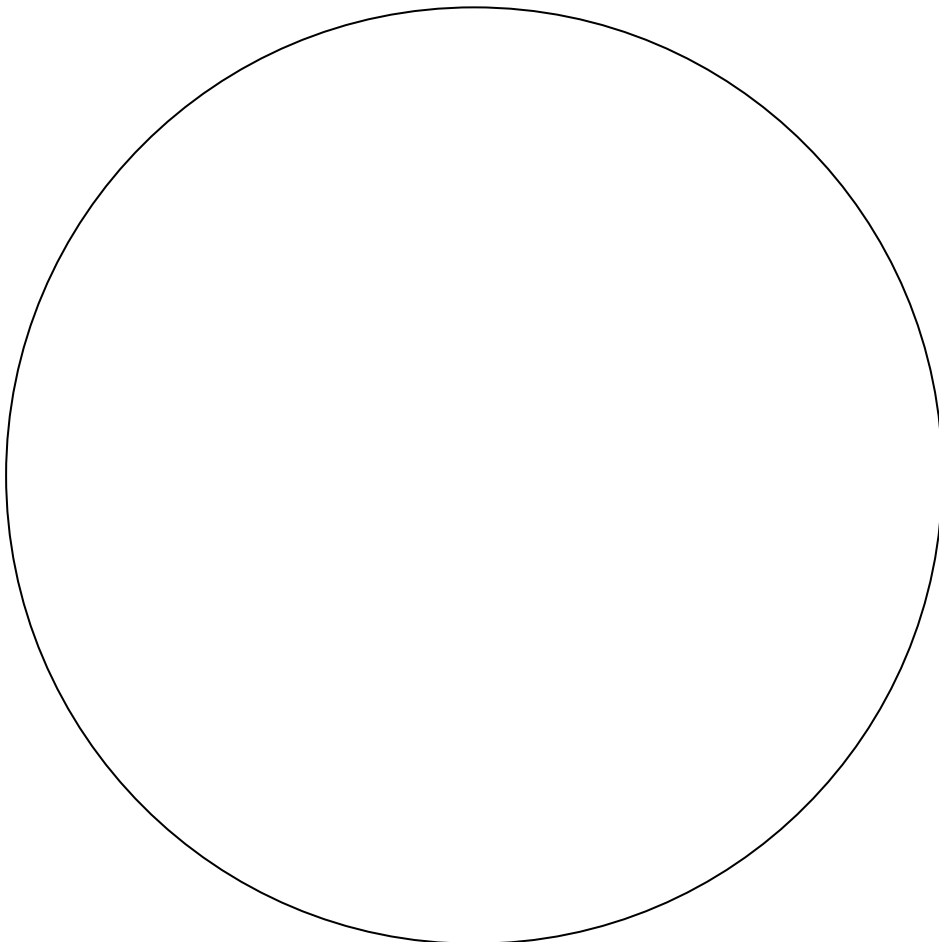
Covenant Mandala

Create a mandala to represent God's covenant of love and Jesus' promise – 'life to the full'.

Create a centre point to represent God – consider the shape and colour you use.

Use shape and colour to fill the rest of the shape
with words, symbols and drawings of the story of your life.
Try to focus on those things / events that have given you life,
helped you grow....

Where is God leading you next?



One Pace Beyond

Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!
You may not rest in firelight certainties.

Secure from drifting fog of doubt and fear.
You may not build yourself confining walls and
say:

"Thus far, and thus, and thus far shall I walk.
And these things shall I do, and nothing more."

Go out!
For need calls loudly in the winding lanes
and you must seek Christ there.
Your pilgrim heart shall urge you still one pace
beyond
and love shall be your lantern flame.

~ by M. Raphael Consedine PBVM

John Baptist de La Salle – Walking in Compassion



Going Deeper

John Baptist de La Salle – Walking in Compassion

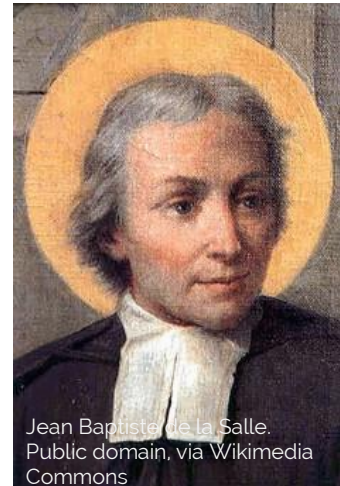
Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

Born at Reims, France on April 30, 1651, John Baptist de La Salle grew up in a devout and influential family.

Almost by accident, the young de La Salle gradually assumed the leadership of a small group of lay teachers. Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed so "far from salvation either in this world or the next", he determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children.

To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.



De La Salle and his brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents.

Perhaps the simplest, yet most profound, element of de La Salle's spirituality was his practice of constantly recalling the presence of God. It was the way he began each task of his day, and he instructed his Brothers to do the same: a brief recollecting of the self, and a recitation of the "Lasallian signal"

- *"Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God."*

In this way, de La Salle believed that he and his Brothers would be more inclined to focus themselves and their work on God.

De La Salle was a man of great faith, prayer and compassion. But he was also a very down to earth practical individual. For him, Christian spirituality is something to be embodied in ordinary actions. Lasallian spirituality is a process of "discovery":- discovering the poor, discovering oneself, discovering communion with others as a way of life.

The Lasallian mission is rooted in discerning and doing God's will in regard to God's children. Lasallian educators and schools everywhere share Lasallian spirituality as the heart of both the Lasallian story and their ministry to instruct the minds and touch the hearts of the young who have been entrusted to their care.

*Adapted from De La Salle Provincialate, Oxford, [online];
Available from URL: <http://www.delasalle.org.uk/fsc/spirituality.htm>*

We Listen

A reading from Luke 6: 36-38 (JB)

"Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and there will be gifts for you; a full measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Luke.

- Write this whole passage out again slowly and intentionally.
 - Sit with the thoughts and feelings that emerge.

Remember, like de la Salle, that you are in the "Holy presence of God".
Simply sit with your thoughts in this presence.

Prayer and Movement

Part of the appeal for many people with praying at 'stations' (as in the weekly staff prayer or stations of the cross) is the movement it involves. The movement period is a time to reflect on how all the elements of the prayer are fitting together, how it relates to your life and a good chance to stretch your legs.

Praying with movement doesn't have to have 'stations'; *nor does it have to involve liturgical dance*. Take any form of prayer and do it while walking and you have 'movement prayer'. It's not new – for centuries people have prayed as they walked with God.

If you love to dance, perform, run, walk, play – they can all be prayer, when they are an expression of God within us.

Stone Prayer - for my work

In the spirit of John Baptist de La Salle's "Lasallian Signal" the stone prayer is a focusing prayer for the start of each class.

It is private and is a simple way to focus yourself on the sacredness of the children we teach and work with.

Take your stone from staff prayer.

Place it on your desk, or somewhere it is easily accessible and visible to you during your day.

Before you begin your class, hold it in your hand and take a moment to pause.

Look around your students....

As you look at them, pray a simple prayer to focus you...

"I am in the presence of God"

Or

"Lord, give me a heart of compassion"

Or

"Be with me as I teach O God"

As each class comes in or each session of the day starts take a moment to move among your students recognising the presence of God.

Saint John Baptist

De La Salle

(1651-1719: the Patron Saint of Teachers)

God, ever-faithful,
we thank you for the gift to your
Church
of Saint John Baptist De La Salle.

We pray that, like him,
we may deepen our friendship with
you
and grow more aware of your
presence
in our lives each day.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Ignatius of Loyola– Walking in Compassion

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect



Ignatius Loyola. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Inigo López de Loyola, a nobleman and soldier from the Basque area of Spain, was a complex, driven man with little formal religious instruction. When a cannonball injury to his leg nearly ended his life, he endured a long and painful period of convalescence, during which time he experienced a major conversion. This was followed by a period of "spiritual pilgrimage", which led many years later to the founding of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits.

Ignatius developed a way of personal spiritual growth based on finding God's action in our own daily lives. Ignatian spirituality fosters an interior freedom, facilitating good life decisions, something particularly relevant to modern men and women. The practice of Ignatian spirituality has been likened to a '*school of prayer*', '*a school for discernment*' and '*a school for loving action in the world*'. The Jesuits are a part of the founding stories of some of our schools and these schools keep alive the Ignatian approach to prayer.

Ignatian spirituality helps us to build a concrete and personal relationship with God and to discover the person of Jesus. We enter an intimate conversation with Christ that fosters personal reflection on how God's presence is evident in our day's events.

Ignatian spirituality prompts us to ask: What does God want of me?

The conversation with Christ brings a wonderful shift in our view of life. Our conversation becomes our prayer and a new foundation for how we relate to Jesus within the context of our daily lives.

Our choices, whether small or life changing, take place within this growing intimacy with Jesus and lead to positive action in our lives.

*From: Campion Ignatian Spirituality Centre. A spirituality for our times, our lives, our feelings.
Campion Centre; Kew (Vic).*

We Respond

Reread the reading on Ignatius of Loyola.

Ignatian spirituality asks the question - "What does God want of me?"

- What is being asked of you now?
In your professional life...
In your home life
- What small choices are you making in response to each of these?

Prayer and Movement

Stone Prayer -for my colleagues

Take your stone from staff prayer.
Hold it in your hand and take a moment to pause.

With your stone in your hand take a slow walk around your school.
As you pass each room, gently rub the stone in your hand as you might do with
rosary beads.

Pray a simple prayer for those who are working or will soon work in that room...

"Be a compassionate presence in this room!"

Or

"Reveal your presence to us"

Or

"O God, give us hearts of compassion"

Or

"Be with us as we teach"

Take your time as you walk around the school spending this time in the presence of
God.

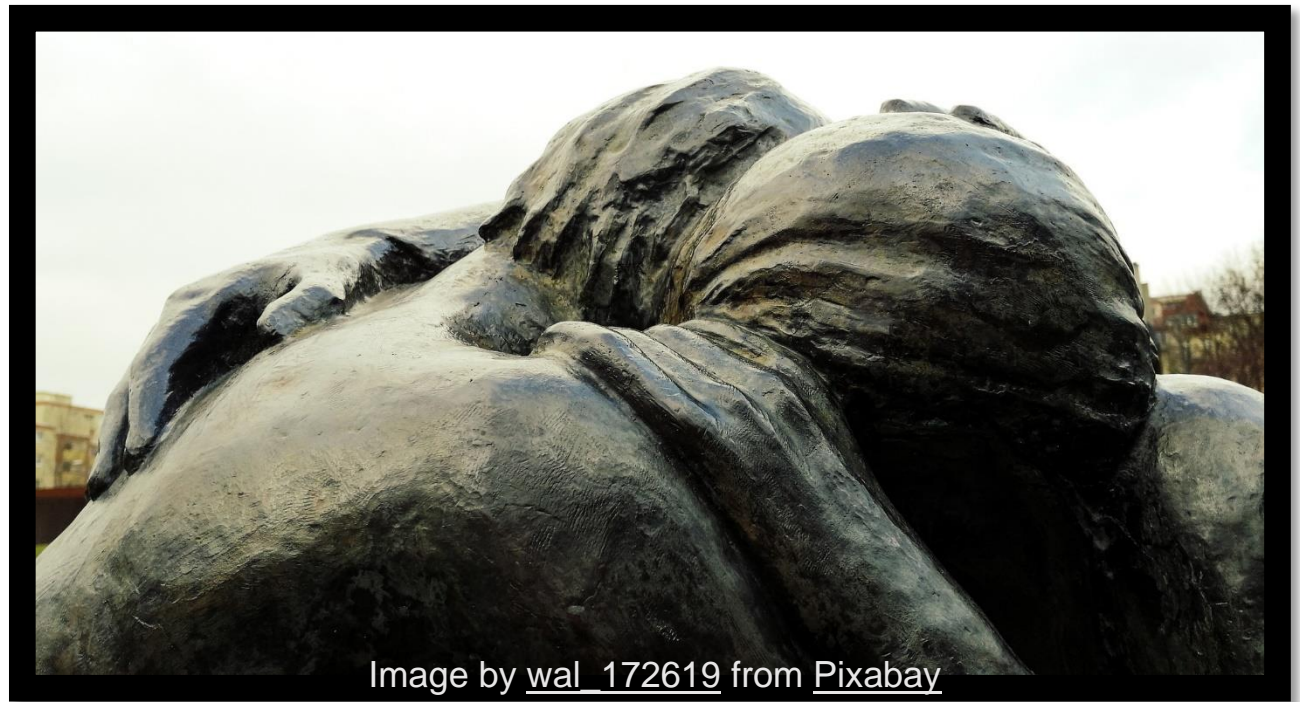
*(Try to choose a time when you can complete this prayer
without rushing and with a minimum of interruption.)*

St. Ignatius of Loyola Prayer

Dearest Lord,
teach me to be generous.
teach me to serve you as you
deserve;
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight, and not to heed the wounds;
to labor, and not to seek to rest;
to give of myself and
not to ask for reward,
except the reward of knowing
that I am doing your will.

Amen

Sisters of St. Joseph – Walking in Reconciliation



Going Deeper

Sisters of St. Joseph – Walking in Reconciliation

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

In 1866, moved by the misery of the "bush children" and the poor of colonial Australia, Mary MacKillop co-founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, with Fr Julian Tenison Woods.

As Australia opened up to white settlement, the sisters of St. Joseph moved into places where the needs were great, conditions very challenging, and life a daily struggle. Mary MacKillop is the Patron Saint of Catholic Education and the 'Joeys' have been part of the fabric of our Catholic education story in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

Today, the work of the sisters strives to serve people who are without real choices, who are excluded or in some way poor. They strive to respond in the spirit of Mary MacKillop to needs of the poor in our time.



Mary MacKillop
N.N. / Public domain

*Wherever we are,
whoever we are,
whatever we do
we are called
to relieve suffering
and bring hope."
(24th General Chapter, 2001)*

The Sisters of St. Joseph are called, as we are, to be people of faith, trust and hope. Reconciliation is foundational to this.

When we choose to share, when we choose to forgive, and choose to receive others regardless of who and where they are, we too are living the gospel. We are living a life of reconciliation. We are bringing about the reign of God.

*Adapted from Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart [online];
Available via URL: <http://www.sosj.org.au/about/index.html>"*

We Listen

A reading from Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Luke.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- How is this story a model for reconciliation?

Journalling Prayer

For those who enjoy writing and who find it easier to put words onto paper (or their computer), written prayer journals are a helpful way to deepen your relationship with God. Regular journal writers suggest using an exercise book or folder to keep everything together.

There are no rules for what should be written in this style of prayer. Finding flowery language or having correct spelling are certainly not necessary because the process is about letting out what is in our hearts. As God knows what is there already, writing really just reminds us of what that is.

Journal Writing

Over the next few days allocate a time each day to begin the creation of a prayer journal.

Perhaps at the end of the school day or first thing in the morning.
Find somewhere without distractions to write
and something suitable to write on or with.

You may wish to take one of these lines as a starter to begin writing with each day.

God, you have blessed my life....
My teaching is....
God, working in a Catholic school....
Sometimes I worry that....
I wish

Finish each writing session with a short prayer and give thanks
For this time you have spent with God.

Sisters of St. Joseph – Walking in Reconciliation

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

On the 10th anniversary of the beatification of Mary MacKillop, Sr. Judith Sipple wrote the following on the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

*"Let us thank God for the gift of this woman who provides for us an Australian window on the gospel;
whose life and words and example keep us attentive to the reality of the Kingdom among us;
whose story teaches us that whenever we choose:*
· *to give away rather than to accumulate possessions*
· *to serve rather than to dominate*
· *to share our resources rather than to compete*
· *to free each other rather than to hold each other in fear*
· *to love, freely and warmly, rather than to judge and condemn*
then truly we are seeking the kingdom where God will provide for all his daughters and sons.

When we put ourselves on the line:
· *to help the needy or to go out in generosity and compassion to those on the margins;*
· *to denounce injustice and question oppressive systems;*
· *to stand with those who are powerless and without choices;*
then truly we are 'acting justly'....

Now, more than ever, perhaps more than at the time of the beatification, Australia needs the witness of our lives. We can make a radical difference in this land of ours by translating our goodness, our faith and trust in our God, our commitment to the gospel into living flesh by the lives we live, lives made compelling and attractive by the sorts of people we are....

May we, like Mary MacKillop, learn to live by the power of the Cross that in our lives we may embrace what she pioneered – new ways of living the gospel, of seeking the Kingdom, that respect and defend the dignity of all in our land.

Amen."



*Sipple J. Homily. 2005 August [online]; Available from URL:
[http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/documents/Judysipplehomily_000.p
df](http://www.sosj.org.au/mary/documents/Judysipplehomily_000.pdf)*

We Listen

A reading from Matthew 8:1-4 (NRSV)

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew.

- Do any words or phrases speak to you in particular?

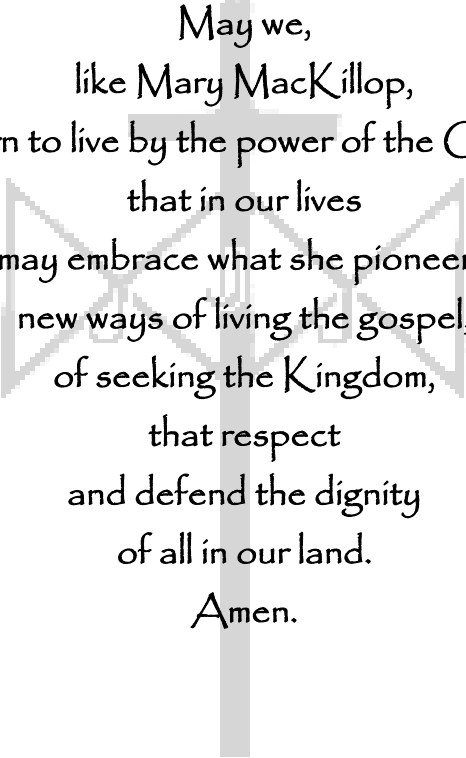
Jesus' healing of the leper restored his relationship with the rest of society

- Who are the outcasts of our society?
- How can you work towards reconciling the attitudes of society with the dignity and rights of those it has outcast?

Journalling Prayer

["Praying in color"](https://prayingincolor.com/blog) is prayerful doodling. It can be used as an addition to a prayer journal. See <https://prayingincolor.com/blog> for a blog about "Praying in color".

Keep a prayer journal incorporating "Praying in color" when you feel moved to do so.



May we,
like Mary MacKillop,
learn to live by the power of the Cross
that in our lives
we may embrace what she pioneered –
new ways of living the gospel,
of seeking the Kingdom,
that respect
and defend the dignity
of all in our land.
Amen.

Franciscans – Walking in Courage



Image by [Alfonso Cerezo](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Going Deeper

Franciscans – Walking in Courage

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

Emotions are a normal and important part of what it is to be human.

Of all the range of emotions perhaps it is passion which is the most powerful.

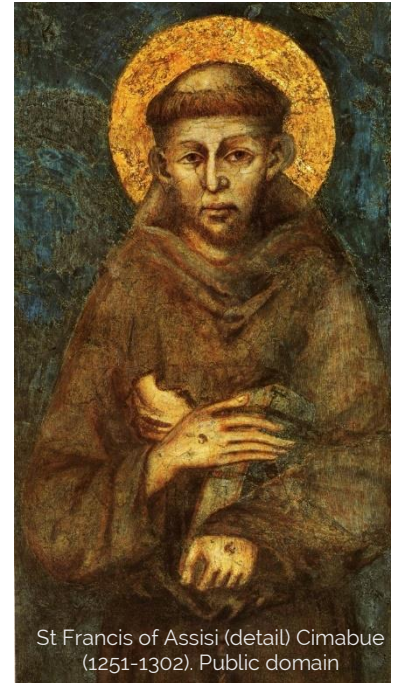
In reflecting upon the life of St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan orders, it can be seen that he was indeed one of the world's passionate Christians.

Born in Umbria in 1182 to a prosperous merchant family, it was intended he follow his father into trade. The worldly Francis dreamed of being a troubadour or knight.

In 1201 he took part in an attack on Perugia where he was captured and kept hostage for a year. During his captivity he became extremely ill and it was then that his mind began to turn to God.

One step at a time Francis gave up his comfortable, upwardly mobile, middle class life. He consciously and deliberately chose actions to open his heart and mind to what he prayed would be God's will.

Francis's life reminds us of the need for courage, as the path God often calls us to is rarely the path we would choose for ourselves.



St Francis of Assisi (detail) Cimabue (1251-1302). Public domain

We Listen

A Reading from the book of Psalm 138:1-3 (JB)

*I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, for you have listened to the cry I uttered.
In the presence of the angels I sing to you, I bow down before your Holy Temple.
I praise your name for your faithful love and your constancy;
your promises surpass even your fame.
You heard me on the day I called and gave new strength to my heart.*

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the Psalm.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- What meaning does this have for you at this time?

Tactile Prayer

Working with clay (or any artistic medium) encourages us to develop and explore our spiritual sides through a creative experience.
Although participating in this style of prayer in silence is a good idea, some reflective music may add to the experience.

Gifts and Talents

Work your clay with your hands until it is pliable.
Take the clay in your hands and begin to knead it.
Push it, pull it and stretch it.
Roll it into a ball, make it flat like a pancake.

As you work the clay think about who you are,
what are your gifts and
what are your strengths.

Mould something that symbolises a gift you have,
a strength you have.

When finished, spend some time reflecting on your sculpting
and the gift it symbolises.

How do you use this gift?

Conclude with your own prayer of thanks and gratitude.

Franciscans – Walking in Courage

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect:

St. Francis sought out the poor, sought out the sick, to tend to them - even spending time in a leper colony to overcome his fear of the diseased. He repaired ruined churches, by begging for rocks and other materials.

To lead the life of humility that Jesus instructed, Francis deliberately gave up ownership of everything and begged from door to door for his own food.

Now, we would have to admit that if one of our friends gave away her house in the city, left a role as aspiring CEO of her family's textile business and moved to the Lonely Street Inn, we would be very worried. If she then roamed the streets begging for food or money in order to become humble, we would think she was crazy. But, would we have the courage to do the same?

A good job and high standing in the community is of upmost importance. Right?

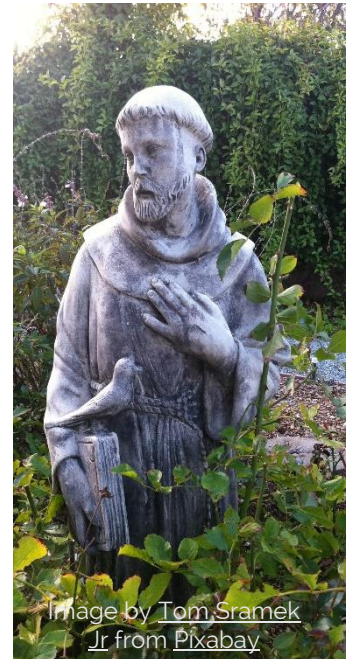
Francis and those who followed him heard a different calling.

Franciscan spirituality embraces living with the poorest of the poor, the sick and the ostracized. Through opening our hearts to the lives of others we are open to discovering that these people are not the "*other*"; and that we are all connected in the mystery of creation.

It is in recognising the beauty within the homeless woman, within the AIDS sufferer within the man begging for your change, that we are able to reach out our hand and our hearts.

Franciscan eyes see God in the homeless, the sick, the ostracized and the lost. A Franciscan way of life seeks to courageously strengthen your heart.

It calls you to do as Francis did, to step out of your comfort zones and develop your well of compassion and a love for all of God's creation. That takes courage.



We Listen

A reading from Ephesians 1:15-18 (NRSV)

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints.

We Respond

What do you need courage for, right now in your life?

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Ephesians.

- Does any particular part speak to you?

As we saw in the staff prayer, courage often comes from having a vision greater than the difficulty or challenge before us. For Jesus, and for Francis, their vision and life deeply centred in God, gave courage, peace and vitality.

What do you understand of God?

- Let your thoughts wander around this question.

Tactile Prayer

This prayer is a mixture of a guided meditation and tactile prayer.
Read the instructions and remember them as best you can.
Spend as long as you wish in your prayer.

Gifts and Talents

Pick up your clay
Push it, pull it and stretch it.
Break it into small bits and connect it back together

As you do this, think about 2 or 3 times of great significance in your life.

Select one of these times and work the clay into a shape that symbolise this part of your journey through life.

With eyes closed, feel the clay symbol you have created.
Imagine you can see your journey through life as a road and see yourself walking along the road.
Imagine you can see Jesus walking with you.
Together you walk to the time symbolised in your clay.

Talk to Jesus – tell him about your symbol and why it is so significant to you.

Before you leave Jesus says –
“Wait! I want to tell you something important”.
He speaks to you.

When you are ready, you turn and leave the road, saying goodbye to Jesus and promising to meet with him again.
Settle back to the room you are in, to where you are sitting.

Conclude with your own prayer of thanks

From : Prayer Strategies – A Teacher’s Manual. B Nolen

"Prayer of St Francis"

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace!

Where there is hatred let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban – Walking in Justice



Image by [Rob1n](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Going Deeper

The Missionary Society of St. Columban – Walking in Justice

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

The Columbans Fathers are a missionary society of Priests. They describe themselves as:

*"A missionary society, sent to proclaim and
witness to the good news in
Jesus Christ of the full Christian liberation
and reconciliation of all peoples."*

St Columban's Mission Society. 2006 [online];
Available from URL: <http://www.columban.org.au/?MID=200510271730>

Working in cooperation with the Columban sisters and the Columban lay missionaries, Columban priests approach their work from a standpoint of solidarity with the poor and all who are unjustly marginalised.

Their solidarity with the poor means that Columbans recognise the value of genuinely walking the journey of justice, harmony and poverty within the communities where they find themselves engaged. This acknowledgement of the impact of injustice and poverty on people means that the work undertaken by Columbans is evaluated in terms of what positive effect it can have on the disadvantaged.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban provides us with an example of how supporting those who struggle for authentic participation in society and those who struggle against injustices can make a real difference.

Many schools each year get the "Columban Calendar" and teachers use this to give focus and mindfulness for the needs of others around the world. The Columbans also produce a number of magazines including 'The Far East' which many schools receive. As you come across these take some time to read further of the missionary work of the Columbans.

" A life unlike your own can be your teacher" – St Columban

Adapted from St Columban's Mission Society. 2006 [online]; Available from URL:
<http://www.columban.org.au/?MID=200510271730>

We Listen

A Reading from Luke 4:16-20 (NRSV)

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.
The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Luke.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.

Many things bind people in our society, holding them captive –
anger, jealousy, illness, stress, addiction!

- How are you supporting those you know who are struggling ?

Digital Prayer

Wherever his people are present so too is God.
When we build, design or form things they are an expression of God within us.

Film especially is often a window to the Spirit of God alive in the story it is telling.

Video Prayer

Visit the following web page and watch the video clip by Juan Mann

As you watch it consider -

How is God present in this?

What message does it have for me?



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr3x_RRJdd4

The Missionary Society of St. Columban – Walking in Justice

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

The challenge of the Columban Missionaries to rebalance injustice, violence and inequity, is central to what the gospel demands of us.

It is the belief of Columbans that we as Church must challenge the scandals of violence and poverty caused by the way governments and institutions function.

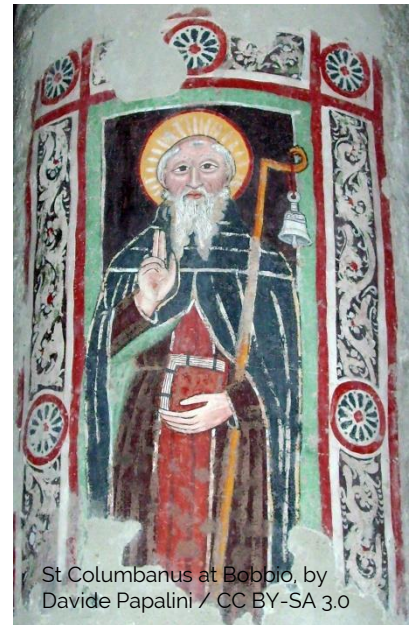
It's a concern for justice, peace and creation which they see as central to their work. It is a call to be deeply involved in the lives of others and in the service and growth of God's reign. Ultimately it is to strive to be poor in spirit, and thirsting for a just world.

The work of the Missionary Society of St. Columban resonates with the words of Jesus;

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
(Luke 4:18-19).*

As we reflect on justice, we too should consider ways to make relevant and real God's love in each and every context we walk and for those we walk alongside.

As it is for Columbans, our lives should reflect the importance and value of peace and justice.



We Listen

A Reading from Matthew 25:35-40 (NRSV)

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you strongly.

Many things make us blind to the hungry, the thirsty and the sick.

- What are the issues that you find difficult to respond to?
 - Why do you think this is?

Electronic Prayer

[Visit the Prayer Candle site.](http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/lightaprayercandle)

Light a candle and spend some time praying for your intention.
View the candles of others and as you visit another person's candle, pray their prayer also.



<http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/lightaprayercandle>

Prayer of St. Columban

**O Lord take away from my soul
whatever the enemy has planted in
it.**

**Take away from my heart, and from
my lips all evil.**

**Enlighten my mind and strengthen
my will that I may serve you alone
in deed and truth.**

**Give me, O Lord, charity, chastity and
faith, give me whatever is profitable
to my soul.**

Amen

An Aboriginal Spirituality - Walking in Peace



Going Deeper

An Aboriginal Spirituality - Walking in Peace

Prayer Opportunity One

We Reflect

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr (AO) is an Aboriginal elder from Nauiyu (Daly River), where she served for many years as the principal of the local Catholic primary school. She is a renowned artist, activist, writer and public speaker.

Divide her reflection into two parts – firstly for Prayer Opportunity One, and secondly for Prayer Opportunity Two.

https://www.miriamrosefoundation.org.au/images/Dadirri_Handout.pdf

We Listen

A reading from Matthew 11:28-30 (NRSV)

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew .

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you.
- What is Jesus' message for you in this verse?

Contemplative Prayer

The word contemplative brings to mind thoughts of a reflective attitude, quiet, silence, and solitude. Contemplative prayer does not require words, rather it is about getting in touch with the presence of God.

It can be as natural as sitting in your favourite place, a moment of reflection on a good friend or watching your children play.
It reminds us of God's greatness and love.

It is not about talking to God but about becoming aware of God's presence around us.

Contemplative prayer takes practice.

(Sometimes a lot of practice.)

Try this simple prayer activity as a starting point .

Prayer Through Silence

Find somewhere quiet where you won't be interrupted.

Decide how long you will spend in contemplation.

Get comfortable and remain as still as possible.

Imagine that with each breath, you are breathing in the peace of God.

Each breath out blows out any negative feelings which have built up for you.

Control your breathing – be mindful and deliberate with it.

As you breathe, draw each breath into the centre of your body.

As you breathe out feel Gods' spirit and peace relaxing and soothing your body.

As you relax, allow your thoughts to be guided towards the things you can see around you.

Allow them to remind you of God's presence about you.

Do this until you have reached your time limit.

End your contemplation with a prayer of thanks.

An Aboriginal Spirituality - Walking in Peace

Prayer Opportunity Two

We Reflect

Dadirri. - Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann ...

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr (AO) is an Aboriginal elder from Nauiyu (Daly River), where she served for many years as the principal of the local Catholic primary school. She is a renowned artist, activist, writer and public speaker.

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https://www.miriamrosefoundation.org.au/images/Dadirri_Handout.pdf

*Miriam - Rose Ungunmerr- Baumann -
Ungunmerr Baumann M. [online]; Available from URL:
<http://liturgyplanningcom.ozhosting.com/liturgies/72.pdf>*



Image: Sunrise – by skeeze from Pixabay

We Listen

A reading from Matthew 6:25-26 (NRSV)

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

We Respond

Take a moment to slowly reread the verse from Matthew.

- Highlight the words or phrases which speak to you, or raise questions in your mind.
- Jesus says "Don't worry about your life". What are the things you have found yourself worrying about lately?
- What would Jesus say if you asked him to help you find more peace and less worry.

Contemplative Prayer

When we are trying to seek God's presence, contemplative prayer techniques suggest it is often useful to watch an object and to think of it as a window on the other side of which is God.

Simply looking at the object without thinking or trying to put a meaning on it often allows for contemplative awareness of God to surface.

Contemplative Prayer through Art

Choose an item of art on which to focus.
It may be a painting, a picture, a religious icon , a cross/crucifix.
It doesn't matter what image you use.

Find a comfortable place to sit and look into your chosen item.
Decide how long you will spend in contemplation.

Allow your breathing to slow as your body calms and settles.

As you look into your item explore it with your eyes, look into every corner and detail.

Think of your item as a window. On the other side is God looking out at you as you look in.

Allow God to communicate with you by way of your item.
Don't worry about how or when - simply continue to allow your heart to be open.

Continue this until you have reached your time limit.

End your contemplation with a prayer of thanks.

From: Blyth TA. 50 Ways to pray, practices from many traditions and times. Nashville (TN): Abingdon Press; 2006.

The Dreaming Prayer

Creator of all, you gave us the Dreaming.
You have always spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus.

We thank you for your care.
You own us, you are our hope.
Make us strong as we face the problems of change.
We ask you to help all the people of Australia
To listen to us and respect our culture.

Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people,
so that you can find a home in us,
and we can make a home for every one in our land.
this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Prepared by a national committee of Indigenous people
for the Visit of Pope John Paul II to Australia in 1986*