

Prayerful Voice

Prayers and Meditations

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Prayers and Meditations

Opening Prayer for VOTF Gatherings

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VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL, together we pray:

For all victims of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests, we pray always for you. We mean to be agents of your healing.

Response: We are the Church; we are the Body of Christ. Hear us, Christ our strength and salvation, Help us all.

For all our brothers and sisters in faith, as we struggle to become the Spirit-filled Church we are called to be, move us to accept the challenges of reform that are demanded by today's injustices.

Response: We are the Church; we are the Body of Christ. Hear us, Christ our truth and salvation, Help us all.

For all bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, that their hearts and minds be opened to the Church's call to genuine holiness and truth, a call to inclusion and collaboration with the Faithful.

Response: We are the Church; we are the Body of Christ. Hear us, Christ our strength and salvation, Help us all.

We are the Church; we are the Body of Christ. Strengthen us, fill us with wisdom, Lead us to holy action in building up your reign. Help us to respect our voice and the voices of all the faithful.

Response: We are your Church; we are the Body of Christ. Hear us, Christ our true life and salvation. Amen.

Meeting or "Event" Meditations

Startle us, O Holy One, into a new mode of being, a letting of fear and indifference, an embrace of brokenness and otherness.

Free us, O Answer to our Restlessness, from lukewarm spirits, false desires and empty pursuits.

Rouse us, O Breath of Life. Stir up new fire in our hearts, truth and love in our words and clarity in our vision.

Restore us, O Spirit of Intimacy, that we might claim our voice as Your disciples and immerse ourselves in the business of unequivocal loving.

Recreate us, O Creator Spirit. Hover over the chaos of our world, our Church, our souls and call forth from us new daring to be Christ for others. Amen.

-Source Unknown

If I am not for myself, Who will be for me? If I am only for myself, What am I? If not now, When?
Rabbi Hillel

Patience is not waiting passively until someone else does something. Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest to be completely present to the moment, to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Be patient and trust that the treasure you are looking for is hidden in the ground on which you stand.

- *Henri Nouwen*

God, give me ears that I may hear the cries of those that need me near.

God, give me lips that I might speak comfort and peace to all who seek.

God, give me a mind that I might know to help the ones who need me so.

God, give me the hands that I might do some large or simple task for you.

God, give me a prayer that I may pray for help and guidance every day.

And this above all else, God, give me a heart that I might love. Amen

-*Mary Pergamo, Renton, WA*

We pray you, Lord, to direct and guide your Church with your unfailing care, that it might be vigilant in times of quiet and daring in times of trouble. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If you are silent, be silent from love. If you accuse, accuse from love.

If you are correct, correct from love.

If you spare, spare from love.

Let love be rooted deep in you,

And only good can grow from it. Amen.

Augustine

-*St.*

Let's take a moment to center ourselves in the presence of our brother, Jesus Christ. As two or more, we gather in His Name. As He promised, so we believe in His Presence among us. We ask our Parent God to send us His Spirit to guide our every word and action here today toward

our Savior's vision for the community He left behind, and continues to embrace, as we embrace His Presence among us. Amen.

-IL
affiliate member

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself and in fact that I think I am following Your Will does not mean I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this You will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. I will not fear, for You are ever with me.
- *Thomas Merton*

May you be steadfast on your journey, powered by the message of love and the command to serve.

May you wear the Gospel on your sleeve so that all you know you may understand the value of justice, the need for kindness, the grace of forgiveness.

As you break bread with all who approach the table, may you be blessed with a song of freedom and a prayer of hope, so that all may come to know deep peace and hear the good news that Jesus is risen and present among us. Amen.
- *Fr. Dennis Cleary & Sr. Margaret Cessna*

We need to smile to ourselves; laugh a little at how well we miss the Gospel point, for the point is often painful. We all want to "follow" Jesus through His teaching, His doctrine, His words, but rarely through His lifestyle, His behavior, His poverty, His values.

Jesus didn't practice what He preached: He preached what He practiced.

The Word came out of His experiences. His relationships (who He was, not what He was).

Jesus didn't practice what He preached; He preached what He practiced.

The Word came out of His experiences, His relationships (who He was, not what He was).

Jesus didn't think about what He was doing. He did what He thought about.

We need to do what Jesus did---not just think what He thought (to become a who, not a what).

If we do what He did, we will come to think as He thought; He ignored this world's wisdom, He sought no power, bought no home, praised compassion over worship, need over wealth. He reflected on the lilies of the field, not political favor.

We are on an orthodoxy kick (right doctrine) instead of orthopraxy (right doing).

We too easily affirm His Divinity. But deny, in practice, His Incarnation. We have firm beliefs, but little application, forgetting that faith is a VERB, not a noun.

“A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Being Church” from “To Dance with a Cross on our Back” by Fr. Bill Skeehan

Here I am Lord, a survivor; a victim no longer, in my pain and brokenness you have created strength and new life; you have sent me.

Here I am Lord, I have found my voice, passive no longer. I hear your true call. It is your work I am to do. You lead me to build up your church. I must respond. I struggle to respond.

Here I am Lord, united to you in baptism as priest, prophet and king, your life-giving love and compassion are my strength; knowledge of you carries me forward. I go forth in you.

Here I am Lord, I can listen to the precious other, I can hear your voice crying out for justice and mercy, In all that I do, in all that I am, I can answer.

Here I am Lord, in communion with my brothers and sisters in faith, in our common baptism, we go forth in your name, naming you always at the center. We are your body.

Here I am Lord, at your table, there is nourishment, there is peace, there is life. We eat of you. We drink of you. You are our food for the journey.

Here I am Lord, your Spirit is our guide, our authority. You called us in the Spirit. We felt your presence as we gathered, as we continue to gather. Humbly we listen to you. To you we are faithful. Our faith is in you.

Here I am Lord, send me!
Unknown

-Source

Blessing/Sending Forth

(*could be used to send forth a group committed to an action)

We raise our hands in blessing, and we call forth the blessing of all those who have chosen you, and we ask God to fill you with the grace, courage, wisdom and integrity needed to fulfill your call to represent all our voices with fidelity.

With our Mission Statement and Goals as the foundation of all we say, all we do, all we are, may God keep you attentive to the Spirit, grounded in God's truth and sustained in God's love.

We ask this, as all things, in the name of our loving and generous Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Unknown
END COPY

-Source

SUB-LINK - Standing in Courage with the Saints

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Standing in Courage with the Saints

Our deep love for our Church has led us to desire healing and justice. We are not the first to be called to do this Holy work. Two of our predecessors are St. Catherine of Siena and John Henry Cardinal Newman. They will be our exemplars, our guides in this campaign for accountability.

St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380): was a woman who responded to the needs of the Church and the world around her. To express her oneness with God, Catherine chose the image of fire, a continuous flame burning in God and in herself. Her letters to the Pope called him to a sense of responsibility and implored him to preserve the peace.

Catherine speaks of growing to a holy fear, centered on her own well being safety and security to a fear that is rooted only in the goodness and mercy of God. She was a prophet who loved God and her neighbor with equal intensity. Catherine lived at a time of the Gregorian reform. We live in the shadow of Vatican II which decreed that “conscience is the glory of the human person”, calling us to be in touch with our inner voice, to be guided by our own inner light, while still respecting the need for law. Catherine is a model of individual prophetic holiness and dedicated love of the Church, even in troubled times.

Wherever injustice was tolerated, Catherine was there to oppose it. Whenever there was a need for renewal and reform within or outside the Church, Catherine cried out for it. She is lauded for discerning where God is and is not in the present world, making this is the model for her way of life.

April 29th – St. Catherine of Siena Feast Day

Prayer to Saint Catherine of Siena

God of wisdom, You made our sister Catherine burn with divine love in contemplating the Lord's passion and in serving your Church.

With the help of her prayers, may your people, united in the mystery of Christ, rejoice forever in the revelation of His glory, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

-Source Unknown, presented by Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Albert the Great, Chicago

John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890):

Cardinal Newman represents the best in Catholic scholarship, which is the reason Catholic centers on college campuses in the U.S. are named for him. He began his career as an Anglican priest and professor at Oxford. He ended his life as a Catholic cardinal. His conversion cost him his position at Oxford, one of the greatest personal sacrifices he could have made.

Newman has been called the patron saint of critics who love the church. He deplored the Church's lack of theological liberty. He firmly believed that theological issues should be worked through by theologians, rather than settled peremptorily by Vatican bureaucracy. “It is intolerable,”

he wrote, "that we should be placed at the mercy of a secret tribunal, which dares to speak in the name of the pope, and which would institute, if it could, a regime of espionage, denunciation, and terrorism."

The laity, according to Newman, were always the truest measure of Catholicism. "The Church would look foolish without them." Even when the hierarchy does not listen to the laity or the theologians, their voice will emerge with the passing of time, he believed. The Spirit will ensure this.

Newman loved people. He believed that "the best preparation for loving the world at large, and loving it duly and wisely, is to cultivate an intimate friendship and affection towards those who are immediately around us." Believing in community as the path to holiness, he frequently spoke about relationships as sacred. At the end of his life he was buried at his own request in the same grave as one of his dearest friends, so that even death might not sever their companionship.

"I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth . . . to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism."

-John Henry Cardinal Newman

May 15th – day John Henry Newman became Cardinal

Prayers Written by John Henry Cardinal Newman

May He support us all the day long, till the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in His mercy, may He give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at least.

– John Henry Cardinal Newman

Most sacred, most loving Heart of Jesus, you are concealed in the Holy Eucharist. I worship you with all my best love and awe, with deep affection, and with my most resolved will. For a while you take up your home within me. O make my heart beat with your Heart. Purify it of all that is earthly, all that is proud, of all perversity, and of all disorder. So fill it with you, that neither the events of the day, nor the circumstances of the time, may have the power to ruffle it; but that in your love and your fear, it may have peace. Amen

-John Henry Cardinal Newman

[Prayer Service Honoring St. Catherine of Siena](#)

Gathering Song: *We are Called* [David Haas © 1988, GIA Publications, Inc.]

Opening Prayer

Presider: Let us pray. God of Truth and Holiness, you give us all life and love. Grant us the wisdom to listen to Your truth and the courage to act upon what we hear. Give us all that we need to be the disciples you call us to be. We ask this In the name of your son and our brother, Jesus, the Christ.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word: Reading 1 Peter 1:13-24 (break up into three sections, with three different voices: 1. Obedience v.13-16; 2. Reverence for the Precious Blood, v. 17-21; 3. Mutual Love v. 22-24).

Psalm Response: Psalm 63: My Soul is Thirsting [Michael Joncas © 1987, GIA Publications, Inc.] or Psalm 19: Lord, You Have the Words [David Haas © 1983, GIA Productions, Inc.]

Reflection/Preaching: (A 10-15 minute reflection on the reading. See *The Doctors of the Church* by Bernard McGinn© 1999, Crossroad Publishing Co. For more insight into the image of Christ as the Bridge and the importance of the Precious Blood in Catherine's work.)

Prayer of the Faithful: Sung response: "Oh, God hear us, hear our prayer."

Reader:

- That we may be open to God's truth and obedient to its message, we pray...
- That we may fill the world with the healing power of humble, constant, holy prayer, we pray...
- That we may trust in the everlasting love of God for all humanity, we pray...
- That we, like Catherine, may be peacemakers in a broken church, we pray...
- (Invite those assembled to add their prayers aloud. End with "we pray...")

Closing Prayer:

Presider: Let us pray. We bless you, O God and praise your Holy Name. Just as you gave strength to Catherine, give us all that we need to speak your truth, even in the face of those who would deny you. Make us voices of unity and love. We ask this and all things in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

All: Amen

Presider: Now let us go from here to be signs of God's abiding love for us, and bearers of the Truth of that love.

All: Thanks be to God.

Closing song: Now We Remain [David Haas © 1983, GIA Publications, Inc.]

SAMPLE Lectio Divina

by *Prayerful Voice Working Group* (prayerfulvoice1@aol.com)

Lectio Divina translates directly as “Holy reading.” It is a process of listening deeply to the wisdom of scripture so that we may hear that which God desires us to hear. A scriptural passage is read repeatedly, often by different readers, meditated upon in silence, and then discussed as a group to discern the guidance of the Spirit. Following is a sample guide for this kind of spiritual practice.

1A) Introduction

We are about to read a passage from Scripture. We believe that God is continually revealed to us in the passages of scripture. Our brothers and sisters in faith, transmitted and finally recorded their experiences of God in their midst, preserving it for us, the faithful of generations to follow. Each time we read a passage, we allow their experience to come forward, that wisdom to resonate in our lives in our modern world. Take a moment to prepare yourselves for this encounter. Empty your hands, clear your mind. Settle into silence and create a space to welcome revelation.

1B) Reading 1 - Acts of the Apostles 2:1 (read slowly!)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadoicia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in their own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?: But others said, scoffing, “They have had too much new wine.”

1C) Silence

2A) Introduction

We are about to read this passage a second time. As the passage is read, be mindful of your reactions, especially your emotions, to this passage. What words jump out at you? What thoughts or ideas strike you? Don't worry about “what it means” or which is the “right” interpretation. Those issues do not matter. Pay close attention to anything that enters this contemplative space. Sit quietly with your thoughts after reading.

2B) Reading

2C) Silence

3A) Introduction

We are going to listen to this passage one last time. Pay attention to new messages that you are getting. Is the meaning of the passage changing for you with each reading? Please get ready for our final encounter.

3B) Reading

3C) Silence

4) Discussion (this could be a time for small group sharing or whole group sharing if people can keep it brief)

Opening Question: Though you may have heard this passage many times before, what did you “hear” for the first time today?

Does this passage hold new insight for you?

How does this passage speak to our experience as members of VOTF?