

## Prayers of preparation

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleansing the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*ascribed to St Gregory of Canterbury, c.780*

Lord Jesus Christ, speak to our hearts in the stillness, keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken, lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory; and perfect our faith, now and always.

*Society of Saint Francis*

O God of peace,  
who has taught us that in returning and rest  
we shall be saved,  
and in quietness and in confidence  
shall be our strength:  
by the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray,  
to your presence,  
where we may be still and know that you are God;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*John Wallace Suter Jr. 1890-1977*

### *The Beatitudes*

- 1 Blessed are the poor in spirit \*  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 2 Blessed are those who mourn \*  
for they shall be comforted.
- 3 Blessed are the meek \*  
for they shall inherit the earth.
- 4 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst  
for what is right \*  
for they shall be satisfied.
- 5 Blessed are the merciful \*  
for mercy shall be shown to them.
- 6 Blessed are the pure in heart \*  
for they shall see God.
- 7 Blessed are the peacemakers \*  
for they shall be called the children of God.
- 8 Blessed are those who are persecuted  
for righteousness' sake \*  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Matthew 5.3-10*

## Prayers of confession and forgiveness

Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.

*Common Worship (Church of England)*

O God, who of your great love for humankind did reconcile earth to heaven through your only-begotten Son: grant that we, who by the darkness of our sins are turned aside from brotherly love, may be filled with his Spirit shed abroad within us, and embrace our friends in you and our enemies for your sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Mozarabic Liturgy*

O God, from whom to be turned is to fall,  
to whom to be turned is to rise,  
and in whom to stand is to abide for ever:  
grant us in all our duties your help,  
in all our perplexities your guidance,  
in all our dangers your protection,  
and in all sorrows your peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*St Augustine of Hippo 354–430*

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

*Traditional*

## Prayers of searching

O Lord, calm the waves of this heart;  
calm its tempests.  
Calm yourself, O my soul,  
so that the divine can act in you.  
Calm yourself, O my soul,  
so that God is able to repose in you,  
so that his peace may cover you.  
Yes, Father in heaven,  
often have we found that the world cannot give us  
peace,  
O but make us feel that you are able to give peace;  
let us know the truth of your promise:  
that the whole world may not be able to take away  
your peace. Amen.

*Søren Kierkegaard 1813–55*

Eternal light, shine in our hearts,  
Eternal goodness, deliver us from evil,  
Eternal power, be our support,  
Eternal wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,  
Eternal pity, have mercy on us;  
that with all our heart and mind and soul and strength  
we may seek your face and be brought by your  
infinite mercy  
into your holy presence,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Alcuin of York c.735–804*

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.  
Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you;  
I cannot do this alone.  
In me there is darkness,  
but with you there is light;  
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;  
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;  
I am restless, but with you there is peace.  
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;  
I do not understand your ways, but you know the  
way for me.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906–45*

## Prayers of asking

Most high and glorious God,  
enlighten the darkness of our hearts  
and give us a true faith, a certain hope, and a perfect love.  
Give us a sense of the divine and knowledge of yourself,  
so that we may do everything  
in fulfilment of your holy will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*St Francis of Assisi 1181or2–1226*

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 toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labour and not to seek reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your will. Amen.

*St Ignatius Loyola 1491or5–1556*

Set our hearts on fire with love for you,

O Christ our God,  
that in its flame we may love you with all our heart,  
with all our mind, with all our soul,  
and with all our strength,  
and our neighbours as ourselves,  
so that, keeping your commandments,  
we may glorify you the giver of all good gifts. Amen.

*Kontakion for love (Eastern Orthodox Church)*

Grant us, O Lord, not to mind earthly things,  
but to love heavenly things; and even now, while we  
are placed among things that are passing away,  
to hold to those that shall endure;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leonine Sacramentary, 7th century*

O Lord, hear our prayers,  
not according to the poverty of our asking  
but according to the richness of your grace,  
so that our lives may conform to those desires  
which accord with your will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Reinhold Niebuhr 1892–1971*

May the eternal God bless and keep us, guard our  
bodies, save our souls, direct our thoughts, and bring  
us safe to the heavenly country, our eternal home,  
where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reign,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Sarum Breviary, 11th century*

## Prayers of thanksgiving

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who in his great mercy has given us a new birth into a  
living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from  
the dead and into a heritage that can never be spoilt or  
soiled or fade away.

*1 Peter 1.3-4*

Worthy of praise from every mouth, of confession from  
every tongue, of worship from every creature, is your  
glorious name, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: who created  
the world in your grace and by your compassion saved it.  
To your majesty, O God, ten thousand times ten thousand  
bow down and adore, singing and praising without  
ceasing and saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts;  
heaven and earth are full of your praises; hosanna in the  
highest.'

*Nestorian Liturgy, 5th century*

### The Lord's Prayer (modern version)

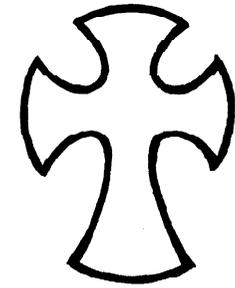
Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

### (Traditional version)

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

# Speaking to God

*a selection of prayers  
for everyday use*



### Preparing to pray ...

Before beginning to pray, it is helpful to make some preparations. Most people find it easier to pray in some places rather than others – this might be your bedroom, a particular chair, or with a certain view out of the window. Some people find it helpful to light a candle, or to place an object like a cross, a Bible, or a vase of flowers as a focus. Before you start to pray it is best to find a comfortable position, whether that is sitting, kneeling, lying down, even walking! It helps if you can make your whole body relaxed, and breathe slowly and calmly. In the stillness, let go of your worries, desires, excitements, and frustrations. Be attentive to God alone, if you can. Although other thoughts will keep intruding – don't get frustrated, but push them gently away and refocus on God. God is ever close; be ready, attentive to notice his closeness, his presence. This attention to God goes beyond thinking, it is more truly yearning, loving. There are some prayers of preparation in this leaflet, and also prayers of confession, searching, asking and thanksgiving.