

PRAY EVERY DAY

2024 - A Lent Challenge

Many people find prayer challenging: in itself, it isn't hard, but perhaps the most difficult thing is making it a habit! This Lent, try to pray every single day, using this guide. The first thing you will have to do is **find your space and make your time**: you can pray anywhere, and at any time, but it is good to find (or rather MAKE) a time and a place. Your prayer can take as long as you want: the minimum for these prayers is about five minutes, but of course you can take longer, pausing to reflect more, or even adding your own prayers. One thing that can really help is to **say things out loud**, if you are in a place where this is possible – it slows us down and encourages us to think about what we are saying! The most important thing is to do something every day: also, do not think of prayer as asking for something, simply see it as **a gift of yourself and your time** to our loving God. Good luck, and happy Lent!

You can use this structure every day:

Begin: **“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”**

Then say:

Morning: “All this day may Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me!”

Daytime: “We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all you give us this and every day!”

Evening: “The lights of evening round us shine, we praise you Father, Son and Spirit divine!”

Then:

- **Read the Scripture** 📖 (The short passages are normally taken from the readings at Mass of that day.)
- **Pause** ⌚ This can be for a few seconds or a few minutes! Just let the words you have just read sink in and see what they are saying to you.
- **Read the Reflection** 🗣️
- **Pause** ⌚ Again for as long as you want! What is God saying to you today?
- **Say the Prayer** ✝️ (These are normally taken from Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.)

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

And go about your day, knowing you have given a gift to God!

Wednesday 14th February

(Ash Wednesday)

📖 The Prophet said: **“Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks – come back to me with all your heart.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Lent is a time to look at my life and see where I need to change: by prayer, going without and being kinder, I can grow closer to Jesus. How will I use the next 40 days?* ⌚

✝️ Support us, Lord, as with this Lenten fast we begin our Christian warfare, so that in doing battle against the spirit of evil we may be armed with the weapon of self-denial.

Thursday 15th February

📖 Jesus said: **“The Son of Man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Jesus leads us through suffering and hardship to glory – he never ran away from challenges. Are there problems or difficulties in my life that I want to run away from?* ⌚

✝️ Lord, be the beginning and end of everything we do and say. Prompt our actions with your grace and complete them with your all-powerful help.

Friday 16th February

📖 Jesus said: **“The time will come for the bridegroom to be taken away—and then they will fast.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Fasting has a lot of purposes, but perhaps the most important is simply saying “No” to my own desires. As well as food and drink, what else might I have to say “No” to?* ⌚

✝️ Give us the grace, Lord, to continue the works of penitence we have begun; so that the Lenten observance we have taken upon ourselves may be accomplished in sincerity of heart.

Saturday 17th February

📖 Jesus said **“It is not those who are well who need the doctor, but the sick. I have come to call sinners to repentance.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Perhaps we should substitute “dentist” for “doctor” in the Lord’s words! Repentance can sometimes feel like “pulling teeth”! But repentance ultimately makes us healthy and happy.* ⌚

✝️ Through our annual Lenten observance, Lord, deepen our understanding of the mystery of Christ and make it a reality in the conduct of our lives.

Sunday 18th February

(1st Sunday of Lent)

📖 The Scriptures say: **“The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Temptation is a constant reality. Jesus was tempted. What are my temptations at the moment? Jesus did not ignore his temptations but faced them head on.* ⌚

✝️ Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.

Monday 19th February

📖 Jesus said: **“When you do this for my brothers and sisters, you do it for me.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Failing to do good is as much a sin as doing ill. Have I ever considered (or confessed) my failure to be kind or generous to others, especially the poor?* ⌚

✝️ Turn our hearts back to you, God our Saviour; form us by your heavenly teaching, so that we may truly profit by our Lenten observance.

Tuesday 20th February

📖 Jesus said: **“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy.”** ⌚

🗣️ *Jesus warns us against “babbling” when we pray: it is not the words in our mouths that matter, but the word in our hearts and minds.* ⌚

✝️ Look with favour on your family, Lord, and as at this time we restrain the desires of the body, may our hearts burn with love of you.

Wednesday 21st February

(Saint Peter Damian)

📖 The Psalmist said: **“A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.”** ⌚

🗣️ *God is full of forgiveness and mercy, when we admit our faults. We should never fear God, whatever we have done or failed to do, if we have humble hearts.* ⌚

✝️ Look with favour on our Lenten observance, Lord, and while we subdue our bodies by self-denial, renew our spirit with the grace that prompts us to good works.

Thursday 22nd February (The Chair of Saint Peter)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“Ask, and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Prayer is not “next-day delivery”! We need to be resilient, patient and persevering in our prayer. Our asking, searching and knocking are fulfilled in our relationship with God, who loves us.* ①
- ✝️ Almighty God, as you built your Church on the rock of Peter’s faith, grant that with such a firm foundation we may hold fast in every storm.

Friday 23rd February (Saint Polycarp)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother or sister will answer for it before the court.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Jesus goes deeper than the “letter of the Law”: he looks to the heart, where all sin commences. Even being cross or angry with another is something to seek forgiveness for.* ①
- ✝️ Bend our wills, Lord, so that by this Lenten observance we may fit ourselves to celebrate the Easter festival; and as we have all undertaken to subdue the body, may we all be renewed in spirit.

Saturday 24th February

- 📖 Jesus said: **“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”** ①
- 🗣️ *The way of Jesus demands more than the way of the world – this is its greatest challenge. The world can love friends and family, but we are called to do more.* ①
- ✝️ Turn our hearts to you, eternal Father, and grant that, seeking always the one thing necessary and carrying out works of charity, we may be dedicated to your worship.

Sunday 25th February (2nd Sunday of Lent)

- 📖 God said: **“This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.”** ①
- 🗣️ *The Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain reveals that he is not “just another person”, but the Son of God. We must listen to his teaching, therefore, and let it into our hearts as the very Word of God.* ①
- ✝️ God our Father, you bid us listen to your Son, the well-beloved. Nourish our hearts on your word, purify the eyes of our mind, and fill us with joy at the vision of your glory.

Monday 26th February

- 📖 Jesus says: **“Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Any judgment we make about another human being will always be incomplete, because we do not see the person as God sees them. All judgmental, racist or prejudiced attitudes are wrong.* ①
- ✝️ You teach us, Lord, to discipline the body for the good of the soul: give us grace to refrain from all sin, and to set our hearts on fulfilling your precepts.

Tuesday 27th February (Saint Gregory of Narek)

- 📖 The Prophet said: **“Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan plead for the widow.”** ①
- 🗣️ *It is not enough to avoid evil. We must seek to do good. How far do I have to look in my life to find someone who needs me help?* ①
- ✝️ Watch over your Church, Lord, with unfailing compassion, and since, left to ourselves, we are prone to evil, by your grace turn us away from all that is harmful and direct us into the way of salvation.

Wednesday 28th February

- 📖 Jesus said: **“The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.”** ①
- 🗣️ *The Christian way is selfless, not selfish. If I have given in to selfish thoughts, let me contemplate the cross of Jesus, sign of total service.* ①
- ✝️ Protect your family, Lord, trained as it is by the constant exercise of good works. Strengthen us with your consoling presence, and lead us to the joys of heaven.

Thursday 29th February

- 📖 Jesus said: **“Good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony.”** ①
- 🗣️ *The rich man’s sin was not being rich, but refusing to use his gifts to help the poor man at his gate. Whether we are rich or poor, we must give what we can to others.* ①
- ✝️ Lord God, you love innocence of heart, and when it is lost you alone can restore it. Turn then our hearts to you, and kindle in them the fire of your Spirit, so that we may be steadfast in faith and unwearied in good works.

Friday 1st March (Saint David)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Jealousy made people reject Jesus and led to his crucifixion. If I have been guilty of jealousy, or have rejected a co-worker or family member for any reason, I need to change.* ①
- ✝️ Grant, we beseech you, almighty God, that the loving intercession of Saint David, your confessor and bishop, may protect us, and that while we celebrate his festival we may also imitate his firmness in defending the Catholic faith.

Saturday 2nd March

- 📖 The Psalmist said: **“The Lord is compassion and love, it is he who forgives all your guilt.”** ①
- 🗣️ *It is easy to forget just how full of love God is – even for the sinner! Whatever I have done or failed to do, God loves me, and desires nothing more than my turning to God’s compassion and forgiveness.* ①
- ✝️ God our Father, in your infinite love and goodness you have shown us that prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are remedies for sin. Accept the humble admission of our guilt, and when our conscience weighs us down let your unfailing mercy raise us up.

Sunday 3rd March (3rd Sunday of Lent)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Jesus is the new Temple, the dwelling place of God. By baptism I have become God’s Temple, and the Spirit lives in me. I must always strive to be a worthy dwelling-place!* ①
- ✝️ O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Monday 4th March (Saint Casimir)

- 📖 The Psalmist said: **“My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life.”** ①
- 🗣️ *What do I want in life? What do I really want this year? Am I willing to put all my wants and desires into second place after a longing for God?* ①
- ✝️ By your unfailing mercy, Lord, purify and guard your Church, and since without you she cannot stand fast, support and guide her always by your grace.

Tuesday 5th March

- 📖 Jesus said: **“Forgive your brother and sister from your heart.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Forgiveness is always hard, but especially within the family. Have I allowed myself to be caught in feuds and rows that have cut me off from family members?* ①
- ✝️ Do not withdraw your grace from us, Lord: by it alone we can give ourselves wholly to your service and obtain your help in our every need.

Wednesday 6th March

- 📖 Jesus said: **“The one who keeps my commandments is great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”** ①

☞ *The world judges success in terms of fame and fortune, God in terms of closeness to God's ways. How much of a priority in my life are the commandments?* ①

✠ Schooled by our Lenten observance, Lord, and nourished on your word, may we give you whole-hearted service through our self-denial, and through our prayer become one in heart and mind.

Thursday 7th March (Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity)

📖 Jesus said: **"He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters."** ①

☞ *Our world is so often divided – by war, by hatred, by injustice. The job of a Christian is to gather all together in peace and love. Start locally!* ①

✠ We approach your throne of grace, Lord, humbly asking that as the Easter festival draws nearer, we may prepare with ever greater devotion to celebrate the paschal mystery.

Friday 8th March (Saint John of God)

📖 Jesus said: **"This is the first commandment—you must love the Lord your God with all your heart. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself."** ①

☞ *Lent is a good time to "get back to basics"! What could be simpler than the commandment to love? Before worrying about anything else, ask "Have I loved God and neighbour today?"* ①

✠ Lord, open our hearts to your grace. Restrain us from all human waywardness and keep us faithful to your commandments.

Saturday 9th March (Saint Frances of Rome)

📖 Jesus said: **"The tax collector stood some distance away, beat his breast and said 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This man went home again at rights with God."** ①

☞ *The tax collector pleased God, not by his sin, but by his humility and contrition. Pride prevents humility and true sorrow: do I need to discard pride from my life?* ①

✠ Lord God, in your surpassing wisdom you reconcile man to yourself through your Word. Grant that your Christian people may come with eager faith and ready will to celebrate the Easter festival.

Sunday 10th March (4th Sunday of Lent - Laetare)

📖 Jesus said: **"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life."** ①

☞ *God's love is something so huge, so magnificent, that it can be hard to realise: God loves me, saint or sinner, God loves me. As I prepare to kiss the cross on Good Friday, I contemplate God's immense love.* ①

✠ O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come.

Monday 11th March

📖 Jesus said: **"You will not believe unless you see signs and portents!"** ①

☞ *Faith is trust in the unknown, not knowledge and certainty. Jesus condemns those who demand evidence, who seek proof. Let us trust more.* ①

✠ Lord God, you give the world new life by mysteries which are beyond our grasp. May your Church not be deprived of earthly help while she makes progress by the strength of these eternal gifts.

Tuesday 12th March

📖 The Psalmist said: **"The waters of a river give joy to God's city, the holy place where the Most High dwells."** ①

☞ *The goal of Lent is not the cross, but the font – our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Where has my life gone since my baptism?* ①

✠ By our Lenten prayer and observance, Lord, prepare our hearts to welcome the mystery of Easter and to proclaim the good news of salvation.

Wednesday 13th March

📖 Jesus said: **"The dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice: those who did good will rise again to life; and those who did evil, to condemnation."** ①

☞ *While God is full of mercy and compassion, God is also just: forgiveness is freely offered to all who seek it, but we trust that God's justice will be there too.* ①

✠ Lord God, you crown the merits of the saints and pardon sinners when they repent. Forgive us our sins, now that we come before you, humbly confessing our guilt.

Thursday 14th March

📖 Jesus said: **"The works my Father has given me to carry out, these same works of mine testify that the Father has sent me."** ①

☞ *Jesus reminds his listeners that it is his works, not just his words, that reveal he has come from the Father. This Lent, what do my works reveal?* ①

✠ Compassionate Lord, you have chastened us by penance and schooled us in good works. Grant us now a single-hearted perseverance in keeping your commandments, and bring us untouched by sin to the joys of Easter.

Friday 15th March

📖 Jesus said: **"I have not come of myself: no, there is one who sent me, and I really come from him."** ①

☞ *Jesus is the suffering servant, who gives himself completely in obedience to the Father's will. How do I seek the will of God in my daily life, and how well do I let God's "will be done"?* ①

✠ Lord God, you have prepared fitting remedies for our weakness: grant that we may reach out gladly for your healing grace, and thereby live in accordance with your will.

Saturday 16th March

📖 The Psalmist said: **"God is the shield that protects me, who saves the upright of heart."** ①

☞ *For those who believe in God, there is more than this moment, this day, this life. Living a good life may not always gain rewards in this world, but uprightness will be rewarded eternally.* ①

✠ Lord our God, your Son so loved the world that he gave himself up to death for our sake. Strengthen us by your grace, and give us a heart willing to live by that same love.

Sunday 17th March (5th Sunday of Lent) (Saint Patrick)

📖 Jesus said: **"Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest."** ①

☞ *Jesus willingly goes to the cross not because he wants to, but because it is his Father's plan to transform our human condition, to open the gates of heaven.* ①

✠ We give you thanks, almighty God, for sending Saint Patrick to preach your glory to the people of Ireland. Grant that we who are proud to call ourselves Christians may never cease to proclaim to the world the good news of salvation.

Monday 18th March (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

📖 Jesus said: **"I am the light of the world."** ①

☞ *The world is full of dark and scary places, where war, hunger, injustice and other evils thrive. We must be children of light, bringing the light of Jesus to others.* ①

✠ O God, by whose wondrous grace we are enriched with every blessing, grant us so to pass from former ways to newness of life, that we may be made ready for the glory of the heavenly Kingdom.

Tuesday 19th March

(Saint Joseph)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; what the Father has taught me is what I preach.”** ①
- 🗣️ *As we approach Good Friday we must realise that the cross is not just a sign of suffering, but of victory: in the moment of total emptiness, Jesus wins eternal life for us, who could not win it for ourselves.* ①
- ✝️ Almighty God, at the beginnings of our salvation, when Mary conceived your Son and brought him forth into the world, you placed them under Joseph’s watchful care. May his prayer still help your Church to be an equally faithful guardian of your mysteries and a sign of Christ to mankind.

Wednesday 20th March

- 📖 Jesus said: **“I tell you solemnly, everyone who commits sin is a slave.”** ①
- 🗣️ *We can think that “doing whatever I want” is true freedom – but how often does sin lead to problems: addiction, dependency, alienation? True freedom is rejecting sin and living in God’s way.* ①
- ✝️ God of mercy, shed your light on hearts that have been purified by penance, and in your goodness give us a favourable hearing when you move us to pray.

Thursday 21st March

- 📖 The Gospel says: **“They picked up stones to throw at Jesus, but he hid himself and left the Temple.”** ①
- 🗣️ *So often in our history the prophet – one who speaks of justice and true freedom – is rejected and persecuted. Can I face rejection for living a virtuous life?* ①
- ✝️ Stand by your people, Lord, who place all their trust in your mercy. Wash away the stain of our sins, make us live in your presence our whole life long, and bring us to the inheritance you have promised.

Friday 22nd March

- 📖 Jesus said: **“I have done many good works for you to see, works from my Father: for which of these are you stoning me?”** ①
- 🗣️ *People are ignoring what they see in Jesus – his word and his works of healing – because they are slaves to a selfish agenda. Do I ever overlook goodness because it doesn’t suit my desires?* ①
- ✝️ Lord, break the bonds of sin which our weaknesses have forged to enchain us, and in your loving mercy forgive your people’s guilt.

Saturday 23rd March

(Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo)

- 📖 The Psalmist said: **“The Lord will guard us as a shepherd guards his flock.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Jesus is the Good Shepherd who fulfils this prophecy by giving his life to save his sheep: as we prepare for Holy Week let us proudly proclaim we are the sheep of his flock.* ①
- ✝️ O God, who have made all those reborn in Christ a chosen race and a royal priesthood, grant us, we pray, the grace to will and to do what you command, that the people called to eternal life may be one in the faith of their hearts and the homage of their deeds.

Sunday 24th March

(Palm Sunday)

- 📖 The Scriptures say: **“Those who followed cried out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’”** ①
- 🗣️ *The acclamation of the crowds can seem hollow, when we consider that on Friday they will be shouting “Crucify him!” But they were right: he is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Let us welcome him!* ①
- ✝️ Almighty, ever-living God, you gave our Saviour the command to become man and undergo the cross as an example of humility for all men to follow. We have the lessons of his sufferings: give us also the fellowship of his resurrection.

Monday 25th March

(Holy Week)

- 📖 The Prophet said: **“I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right.”** ①
- 🗣️ *Serving justice can be costly. Standing up for what is right can cost us. It cost Jesus his life. Pray to be strong in serving the cause of right.* ①
- ✝️ Almighty God, grant that we who are constantly betrayed by our own weakness may draw the breath of new life from the passion and death of your Only-Begotten Son.

Tuesday 26th March

(Holy Week)

- 📖 The Prophet said: **“I will make you light to the nations.”** ①
- 🗣️ *In artistic representations of the crucifixion there is paradox: at the moment of Jesus’s death the skies darkened, yet the cross is bathed in light. His death illumines the whole world.* ①
- ✝️ All-powerful, ever-living God, may our sacramental celebration of the Lord’s passion bring us your forgiveness.

Wednesday 27th March

(Spy Wednesday)

- 📖 The Psalmist said: **“The Lord is coming to my help, who dares condemn me?”** ①
- 🗣️ *Today we think of Judas’s betrayal: I pray today for anyone who has let me down or betrayed me.* ①
- ✝️ By your will, Lord God, your Son underwent the agony of the cross to break the power of Satan over man. Give your people grace to rise again with Christ.

Thursday 28th March

(Maundy Thursday)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.”** ①
- 🗣️ *This evening we celebrate the gift of the Eucharist, Jesus giving himself to me, not in the past, in memory, but in reality today.* ①
- ✝️ Lord God, since for your glory and our salvation you willed Christ your Son to be the eternal High Priest, grant that the people he gained for you by his blood may be strengthened by his cross and resurrection when they take part in his memorial sacrifice.

Friday 29th March

(Good Friday)

- 📖 Jesus said: **“It is accomplished.” and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.** ①
- 🗣️ *Only in the complete abandonment of self on the cross is Jesus’s work done: by emptying himself he has become the means of our salvation.* ①
- ✝️ Be mindful, Lord, of this your family, for whose sake our Lord Jesus Christ, when betrayed, did not hesitate to yield himself into his enemies’ hands and undergo the agony of the cross.

Saturday 30th March

(Holy Saturday)

- 📖 **“Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light!”** ①
- 🗣️ *Jesus does not rise for himself: he does so for us, taking us by the hand and lifting us to eternity! Today is a good day to visit a cemetery.* ①
- ✝️ Almighty, ever-living God, whose Only-Begotten Son descended to the realm of the dead, and rose from there to glory, grant that your faithful people, who were buried with him in baptism, may, by his resurrection, obtain eternal life.

Sunday 1st April

(Easter Sunday)

- 📖 The Angel said: **“You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here!”** ①
- 🗣️ *The stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb shows that a doorway has opened for us – the door to Paradise and eternal life! Let us rejoice, Alleluia!* ①
- ✝️ On this day, Lord God, you opened for us the way to eternal life through your only Son’s victory over death. Grant that as we celebrate the feast of his resurrection we may be renewed by your Holy Spirit and rise again in the light of life.