

A person wearing a green jacket and a red backpack stands on the peak of a large, dark rock formation. The background shows a vast, hazy mountain range under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is one of adventure and contemplation.

Prayer Workshop

Name:

St. Matthew the Apostle Confirmation Retreat 2025 *Prayer Workshop*

During this Confirmation program, we have tried to help you examine your relationship with God and the Catholic Church. We have brought up deep themes and difficult questions, and have connected these to Church teaching. More than that, however, we want to help you have an experience of God and to know how much he loves you.

The best way we thought to aid you in this, is to give you more tools to approach God in prayer. For this reason, a majority of this retreat is focused on ways to pray and resources. God is fully available to us, and he wants us to reach out to him. We can do this in our own way. We can also do this through prayers that have been used for centuries. Different moments of our life will move us to pray differently. We hope this worship gives you a glimpse into the many ways we can cry out to God.

"Prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." St. Therese of Lisieux

"God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer." St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta

I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me. C.S. Lewis

"Prayer is the breath of faith; it is its most proper expression. Like a cry that issues from the heart of those who believe and entrust themselves to God." Pope Francis

Praying with the Saints

The Saints have written many prayers that we can make our own. **Instructions: Read through the prayers on the table and pick two to put below. Highlight which words or phrases stood out to you.**

Praying with Technology

There are many apps that can help lead us to prayer.

Instructions: Look through the apps listed, or do a search, and download one to help you pray.

What app/apps did you choose:

Why did you like this one? or these?

How do you hope this app will help you to pray?

Praying with the Psalms

Many of the Psalms address God directly in prayer. Read through the verses and pick as many as you want to paste below, in whatever order you want, into your own prayer.

Praying with the Psalms

Praying with Scripture: Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina, a phrase that translates to "divine meaning," is a meditative way to pray with scripture, either on your own or with a group. It's all about inviting God into a conversation, listening to the words, and letting them speak to your heart. (from Focus.org)

Instructions: Pick one of the following Scripture passages and then go through the steps on the next page with that Scripture:

Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out. But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. They came up to Jesus and woke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" But they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" **(Luke 8:22-25)**

So when Mary came to the place where Jesus was, she saw Him and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, and He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" But some of them said, "Could this man, who opened the eyes of the man who was blind, not have also kept this man from dying?" So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. But I knew that You always hear Me; nevertheless, because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Out came the man who had died, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." **(John 11:32-44)**

Praying with Images: Lectio Divina

Using the Scripture you chose, follow these steps:

Read (Lectio): Read the passage (again) and write down what words stick out to you.

Reflect (Meditatio): Ask God what he is telling you with these words and this passage. Sit quietly and listen for his answer. Write it below:

Respond (Oratio): Ask God how He wants this passage to impact your life. It can be something simple he is inviting you to, something challenging, or something encouraging he wants you to know or remember. Write it here:

Rest (Contemplatio): Be still. Sit in a few moments of silence with all that you have prayed about.

Praying with Images: Visio Divina

Visio Divina — “sacred seeing” — is an ancient form of Christian prayer in which we allow our hearts and imaginations to enter into a sacred image, in silence, to see what God might have to say to us.

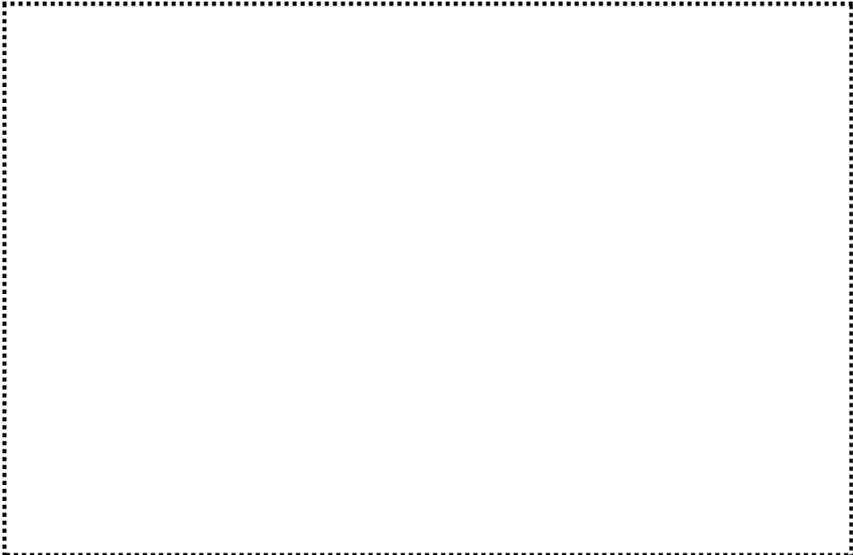
Instructions: Pick an image or two and tape below, then go through the steps on the following page.

Praying with Images: Visio Divina

Using the Sacred image you chose, follow these steps:

Look at the image and let your eyes stay with the first thing you see. Focus your attention on the part of the image that first catches your eye. Try to keep your eyes from wandering to other parts of the picture. Breathe deeply and let yourself gaze at that part of the image for a minute or so. Now, gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the photograph. See it all. Reflect on the image for a minute or so and then complete the following questions:

- What stood out to you in this image?
- What does this image bring up in your heart?
- What is God telling you about Himself in this image?
- What does this move you to say to God?

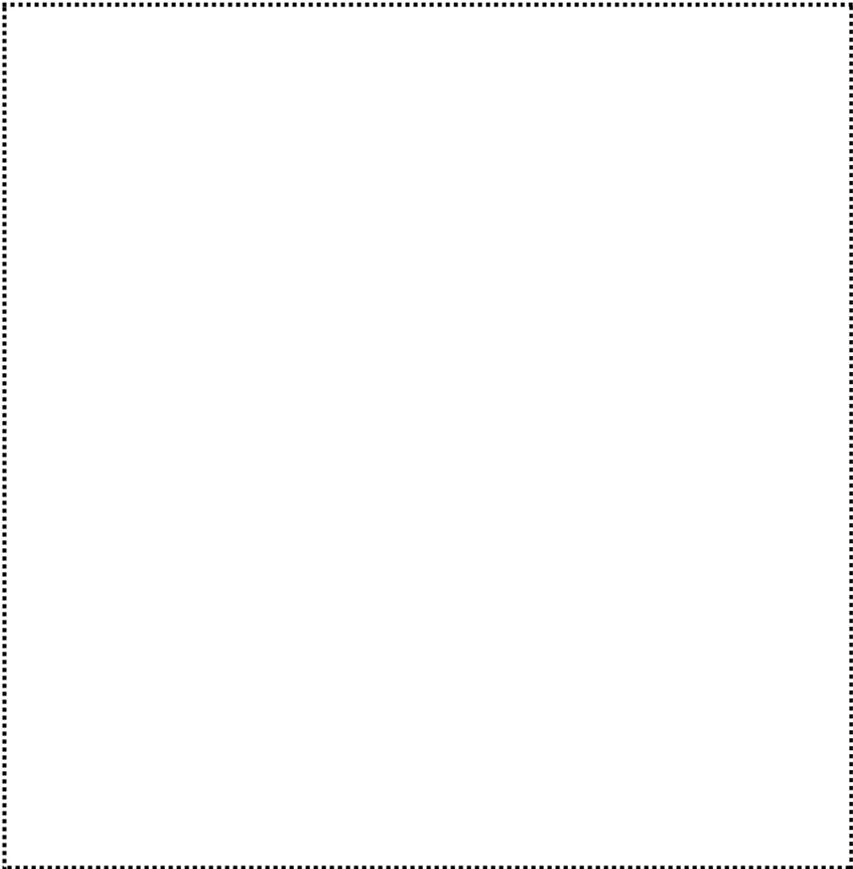


Spent some time in silence with God.

Praying with your Imagination: Contemplation

Close your eyes and listen to the meditation. Afterwards, reflect on the following questions:

- Did the words and sounds help to bring the Gospel alive in your heart and mind?
- What does this contemplation bring up in you?
- What is God telling you about Himself in this contemplation?
- What does this move you to say to God?



Eucharistic Adoration

God makes coming him to prayer so simple - He physically comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament and waits for us to sit with him. We do not need to say anything. He is pleased with us just for being there.

So, feel free to sit in silence. You can also go through the following pages with guided prompts on prayers of petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.

“From the Eucharist comes the strength to live the Christian life with zeal and to share that life with others.” St. John Paul II

**“Each time you approach the Blessed Sacrament remember that Jesus has been waiting for you for twenty centuries for this personal visit from you.”
St. Josemaria Escriva**

**“The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host.”
Venerable Archbishop
Fulton J. Sheen**



Prayers of Petition

In prayers of petition, we bring to God our own needs and situations. In adoration, reflect on the following prompts:

I come to you in need today. We all have things we struggle with, and I want to bring before you this particular need:



I can only do so much on my own, I need your help with this situation. I know you are powerful and merciful and that you know everything that weighs on my heart. So I give you this and the other things in my life that need healing or resolution. Some of these things are:



Thank you for never leaving me, and for bringing me your peace and comfort. Help me to put these things in your hands again and again.

Prayers of Intercession

In our prayers of intercession, we can bring to God the needs and situations of others; friends, family, the world... anyone and anything! In adoration, reflect on the following prompts:

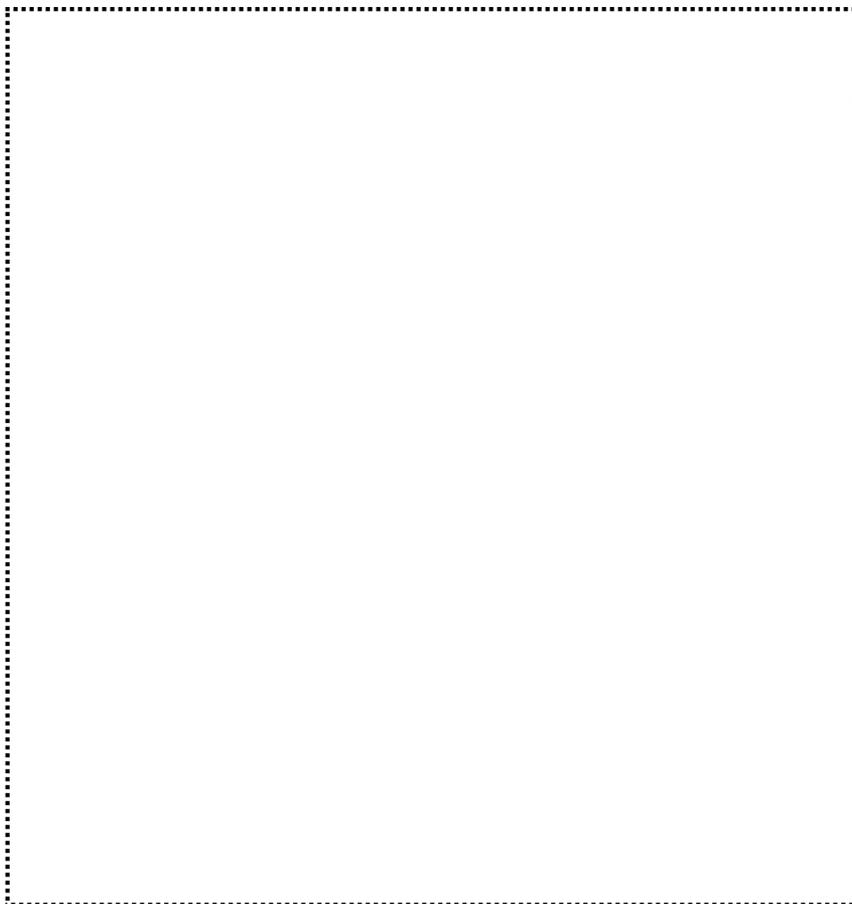
I come to you today with friends/relatives/situations that need your help. They are sick, hurting, struggling, sad, etc. I see their pain and I want to help. Please hear my prayer and bring your light into their lives. Come, Lord Jesus.

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted line, intended for writing a prayer.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

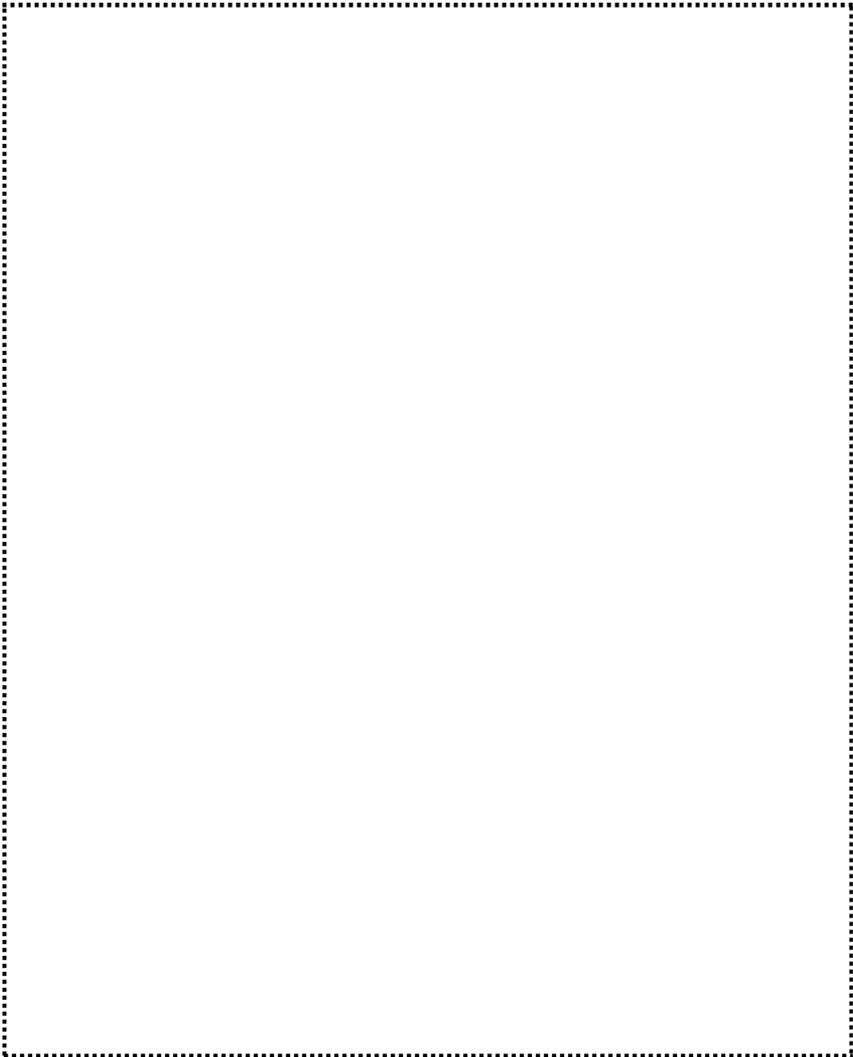
Thanksgiving opens our heart to God in gratitude and helps us to see the many blessings in our lives. In adoration, reflect on the following prompts:

Lord, help me to see the blessings in my life. Sometimes, the difficulties prevent me from seeing the good. But it is there, and when I acknowledge it, I am encouraged and strengthened to go on. In this moment of adoration, help me to list the graces and blessings in my life, at this present moment.



Prayers of Praise

We can praise God through word and song. We recognize his presence in our lives and his greatness. In adoration, listen to the words of the songs and write down the words that move your heart. Write down the words you want to say to God.

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted line, intended for writing down words of praise.

Examination of Conscience

According to the Ten Commandments

Confession is a Sacrament full of great grace, healing and peace that God wants to give us. While it is hard to examine ourselves, especially the darkest parts of our lives, it is also freeing to give these over to God. He takes them, without a shred of judgement, and pours out his mercy on us.

1. I am the Lord your God; have no strange gods before me.

Do I believe that God loves me and trust him? Have I been involved with occult or superstitious practices, i.e., fortune telling? Do I give thanks to God for all that I have received? Do I pray?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Do I misuse God's name to express anger or frustration? Have I ever lied after "swearing to God" that I am telling the truth? Have I ever used God's name out of anger, that is, as a curse?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Do I take time each week to pray and to worship God? Do I take part in Mass on a regular basis, at least every Sunday? Do I take time to relax and appreciate all that God has given me? Have I missed any Holy Days of Obligation?

4. Honor your father and your mother

Am I loving, respectful, and obedient to my parents, and for all who take care of me? Am I critical of my parents? Do I offer to help around the house? Have I yelled, swore, lied, stole or been ashamed of them? Have I held anger towards them in my heart?

5. You shall not kill.

Do I show respect to all people? Do I experiment with alcohol or drugs? Do I take good care of myself? Have I had an abortion or encouraged someone else to have one? Have I murdered anyone's reputation by deliberately spreading rumors or keeping rumors alive by passing them on? Have I refused to forgive another?

Examination of Conscience

According to the Ten Commandments

6. You shall not commit adultery

Do I value and respect my sexuality? Do I try to develop healthy relationships and avoid relationships where people are treated like things? Do I dishonor my body through impure actions? Do I respect the relationship God has set up between sexual intimacy and marriage? Have I ever freely and deliberately entertained impure thoughts? Have I watched pornography?

7. You shall not steal

Do I take things that don't belong to me? Do I respect public property and the property of other people? Do I take more than I need? Do I share generously? Do I cheat on tests or homework?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

Am I a truthful person? Have I damaged the reputation of another person by exaggerating or making up stories about them? Do I say things just to hurt other people? Do I gossip? Do I lie to stay out of trouble or to avoid a difficult situation, even if someone will be hurt?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's partner

Do I remember that all people are created in the image of God? Am I envious of others? Do I resent their popularity or success? Do I feel I have to put others down in order to feel better about myself?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's things.

Do I let greed or envy take over my thoughts? Do I try to prove I am better than others by bragging or buying more things? Do I think my own wants are more important than other people's? Do I remember that it is who I am, not what I own, that is really important?

Act of Contrition O my God, I am sorry for my sins because I have offended you. I know I should love you above all things. Help me to do penance, to do better, and to avoid anything that might lead me to sin. Amen.

Jubilee Year

You are receiving your Confirmation during the Church's Jubilee Year! This is a special year of grace that the Church celebrates every 25 years. The following is the official Jubilee prayer that is being said by Catholics across the world.

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.



May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen

