

Prayer & Worship

“To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name. The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world.” -CCC 2097

This is where the rubber meets the road. All that we do in youth ministry revolves around the fact that we want to bring young people into a relationship with our Lord. We teach, we play, we gather, we build community, we serve...but in the end we need to point young people to Christ. We need to be John the Baptist to these young people...always pointing them to the Lord.

The only way that any of us can grow closer to the Lord is by spending time with Him in prayer and worship. We need to model and teach this to young people in everything that we do. We need to pray “always” and “all ways”.

Unfortunately, the polarization of the Catholic Church is most evident in the way that we pray and worship. It is no secret that the Arlington Diocese is on the more traditional end of the ecclesiology spectrum of the Catholic Church. When I travel outside of the diocese to Catholic youth ministry gatherings or meetings, I often feel lost or like a “fish out of water” when it is time to pray together or to be at Mass. I find myself more frustrated with our differences than comfortable in the fact that we are gathering in prayer. I pray that the Church will become more unified in the way that we worship our Lord.

With that said, I believe it is very important that we do not make our own style of prayer normative to all of the young people in the parish. You may have a deep Marian devotion, or a great love for Praising and Worshiping the Lord through music. However, you should present a balanced spectrum to the young people. Provide young people with an experience of all approved forms of Catholic prayer...Eucharistic Adoration one week, Liturgy of the Hours the next week, prayer partners the following week. This will allow the young people to decide what brings them closer to the Lord, and they will not feel completely lost when they head off to college, or move to a new diocese.

Within this chapter we provide some prayer and teaching resources for your program:

1. **Helping Young People Fall in Love with Jesus in the Eucharist** by Fr. David Sharland
2. **What’s in a Catholic Church?**
3. **Excerpts from *Rosarium Virginis Mariae***
4. **Various Aspects of the Rosary which Demonstrate how it is Rooted in Christ**
5. **Methods to Deepening Recitation of the Rosary**
6. **How to Pray the Rosary with young people**
7. **The Theology and Practice of the Sacrament of Confession with Teens** by Fr. Jaffe
8. **How to Go to Confession and Examination of Conscience**
9. **Group Examination of Conscience**
10. **Introducing Young People to the Liturgy of the Hours** by Meg Dalmut
11. **Lectio Divina** by Rev. David L. Toups, STD
12. **Holy Days of Obligation**



Helping Young People to Fall In Love with Jesus in the Eucharist

by Father David Sharland, Y.A.

I. Why bring young people to fall in love with Jesus in the Eucharist?

- Eucharist as who, not what
- Need for relationships in our lives

II. Ministering to youth / What young people need

(The following seven “Powers of the Eucharist” were given by Father Paul Avalone, SDB during a talk on the Eucharist during a retreat. I have expanded and adapted his original thoughts):

Transformation: *Fulton Sheen speaks of levels of life; the lower being transformed into the higher...minerals absorbed by vegetation, vegetation eaten by animals, the consumed by humans. While we may consume the Eucharist, we are actually consumed by it. We take on what we have eaten, we become Christ for one another. That drop of water that I place in the chalice with the wine as I prepare the gifts? It represents our humanity being submerged into the divine.*

(Help your young people understand that they become what they consume: What they eat, drink, listen to and watch).

Atonement for Sins: *This is really the purpose of the daily celebration of the Eucharist. You know, it is lamentable that so many say, “I don’t get anything out of the Mass.” Fulton Sheen would respond that perhaps we bring nothing to the Mass. I am not referring to something as simple and yet as important as full and active participation in the prayers, responses and songs of the Mass. That is too shallow. Rather, it is something much deeper. We get nothing from Mass because we fail to bring with us and open to the Lord our needs, our heart, our desires -- all that makes up who we are. We come detached from what is taking place.*

(We don’t have to do anything here. But as we participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we share in Jesus’ atonement for our sins. We should come to Mass with the attitude “Here I am, Lord, with all my gifts *and* my brokenness. I give it all to you. Do with it as you wish.)

Healing: *Remember the centurion who felt unworthy for Jesus to enter his home. Remember our own words of prayer during this Mass “say but the word and my servant (my soul) shall be healed.” Recall too the Road to Emmaus. Jesus heals little by little. Their hearts were burning from the Lord’s presence with them. Then He was recognized in the breaking of the bread. All of us are wounded, in need of healing. It is the only way we can become holy.*

(Young people need to see the relationship between their own doctor and the Divine Physician, who gives them healing in the Eucharist like no earthly doctor possibly could).

Unity: *Thus the word communion. In the Eucharist we are made one in Christ. Recall in the Acts of the Apostles, where they celebrated the Eucharist and were all of one heart and one mind, caring for one another.*

(Here we can make great strides to help them discover their own unique gifts, given them by the Lord, and how they are part of the Body of Christ).

Defense Against Evil and Temptation: Remember that Mary, who bore Christ in her womb, was rewarded with her blessed Assumption into heaven. We too can share in her blessings as we fill ourselves with the Bread of Life. If what fills our body and soul is good, we cannot help but become good, become holy. The priest prays silently before communion, “By your holy body and blood, free me from all my sins, and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.”

(This is related to the first power. It refers to the nourishment the Lord gives us, but now it can be viewed in an even more urgent and serious way. This is protection!)



Intimacy: The image of the vine and the branches speak to the great intimacy of love, between us and good. John 15 reminds us that when we, the branches, remain a part of the vine, we are fed in an intimate way, like the child at her mothers breast.

(Who do we love? Who are we close to? Why do we like spending time with them)?

Immortality: We hear it right from our gospel today, in John 6:54, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” This is how we live forever. Not with vitamins and supplements, but with the Eucharist. The Holy Father, when getting home at night, no matter what the hour, spends ½ hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Not doing his breviary, but just being still with Jesus.

(Most young people all have a sense of vibrancy and immortality. But most of the time that sense of immortality is not well founded. But we can take this sense and desire in them and draw them to the Lord).

III. What else do youth need? What should they be doing?

- The need to give thanks
- The need to serve

IV. How we bring them to the Eucharist

- The Celebration of Mass
 - Teaching Mass / Instruction on the Mass
 - Involvement in the ministries of the Mass
 - Intimate settings
- Eucharistic Adoration
 - Quiet and stillness
- Sacrament of Penance

- Breaking Open the Scriptures

John 6

Mt 26:26-28

Mk 14:22-24

Lk 22:17-20

1 Cor 10:14-17

Lk 24:30-35

1 Cor 11:23-29

1 Cor 12:12

- Music:

- Songs from your hymnals
- “We Are One Body” (WYD 1993)
- Steubenville CD
- Old and new, help them stretch – our tradition is too rich to ignore

- Make the Connection for them. Explain how what they celebrate at Mass has meaning in what they do with their daily lives.

- Educate yourself – There are some great resources on the Eucharist to increase our knowledge. These are diverse in their approach and style:

The Eucharist, Gift of Divine Life, Theological-Historical Commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration, Johannes H. Emminghaus

The Lamb’s Supper, Scott Hahn

The Story of the Mass: From the Last Supper to the Present Day, Pierre Loret

The Spirit of the Liturgy, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Plus, don’t forget these great ecclesial documents:

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Dominicae Cenaee, Pope John Paul II, 1980

Ecclesia De Eucharistia, Pope John Paul II, April 17, 2003

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Pope Paul VI, 1963

- Catechetics (this is not a bad word). Be creative in how you teach:
 - Games, quiz-shows, etc.

Father David is a member of the Youth Apostles Institute, and has been doing youth ministry for over 25 years. He currently serves as the chaplain and director of campus ministry at Marymount University. He serves as an advisor, counselor, and spiritual director to many youth ministers throughout the diocese.

What's in a Catholic Church? **

Part I: The Big Picture

The church is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community (cf. CCC 2691). In order to understand liturgical prayer, a closer examination of the church, vestments, and vessels used at Mass will help to understand what worship is. The Roman Ritual of the Mass explains how Mass is to be celebrated in order to facilitate communal prayer. *The symbolism of the Mass is rich and full of meaning and goes back to Jesus Christ himself.*

Gospels: Lk 22, 19; Mk 14, 22; Mt 26, 26; cf Jn 6, 26ff; Epistles of Paul: 1 Cor 11, 17-37; 1 Cor 10, 14ff



Church means 'a ssembly.' The word signifies in the first place the spiritual reality, the faithful united to Christ. Then the actual meeting, the assembly of the faithful. Finally the place of their meeting. The first churches are found in Rome. The catacombs, the underground cemeteries, were used for worship; there the Christians met for their assemblies. Mass was celebrated on a martyr's tomb, which became thus the altar table. The practice became general; so much so that when the basilicas were built the bodies of the martyrs were fetched to be put under the altar. Or else basilicas (ex. St. Peter's and St. Paul's) were built over a tomb. (H. Chery, "What is the Mass?" London: Blackfriars, 39-40).



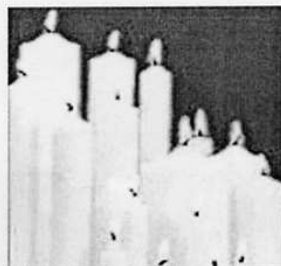
The holy water stoup is found at the entrances into the church. It contains holy water (blessed water) which each person uses to make the sign of the cross when entering or leaving the church. It symbolizes Baptism wherein the Christian is immersed in the waters of Jesus' death and emerges cleansed from sin.

The **sanctuary** is traditionally understood to indicate the altar, the pulpit, and the chair area, usually set apart from the congregation structurally; it is symbolic of the spiritual world and of humanity's spirituality, according to early Church fathers. It is considered a place of holiness and nearness to God. (From Rev. Peter Klein's *The Catholic Sourcebook*, 3rd ed., Orlando: BROWN-ROA, 2000. Imprimatur granted 1999.)



A **crucifix** is a cross bearing the figure of the crucified Christ (*corpus*). The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, "the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary," is emphasized where the crucifix is prominent about the altar. (From Klein's *The Catholic Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. Full cite above.)

There are many types of **candles** in a Church: the Paschal candle which is lit on Easter and extinguished at Pentecost; the Sanctuary candle which is lit near the tabernacle to signal the presence of Christ under the form of the Blessed Sacrament; Altar candles to express devotion or a degree of festivity; and vigil candles (often associated with a donation) which are lit to represent the prayerful vigilance of expectant faith. (From Klein's *The Catholic Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. Full cite above.)



The **ambo** is the place for proclaiming Scripture and preaching; used during the Liturgy of the Word.



**Note: Text material for the 4 pages of "What's in a Catholic Church" are taken mostly from: H. Chery, *What is the Mass?* London: Blackfriars, except where otherwise noted.

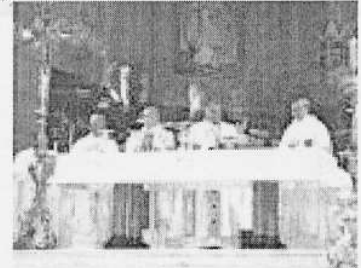
What's in a Catholic Church?

Part I: The Big Picture (continued)

Altar: (*altare*, from the adjective *altus*, ("high") and *ara*)

With the Romans, *ara* was the small household altar; *altare* was the great monumental altar on which public sacrifices were offered. The first Christian altars were small household tables, especially set apart for the purpose and usually made of wood. Then altars were made of ordinary stone to resemble the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs.

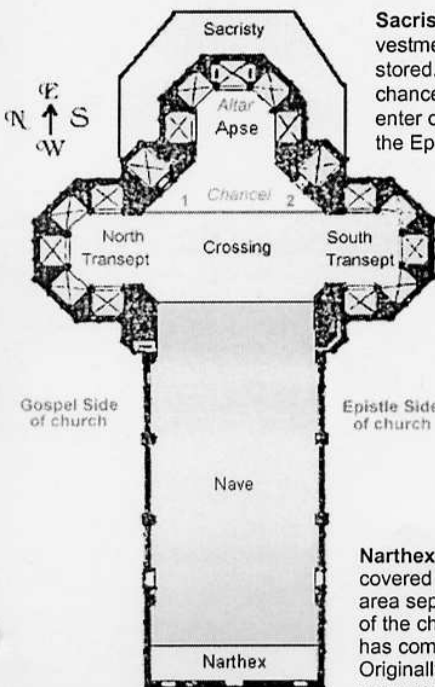
Dining table and tomb of a martyr: this twofold origin of the Christian altar has determined the form that we know today in most cases; a table resting on short columns or on a solid mass of masonry. The altar ought to contain relics of the bodies of the saints in remembrance of the custom of celebrating Mass on the tombs of the martyrs. Therefore, the altar is the place where the sacrifice of Jesus' life is offered for us by the priest (*in persona Christi*, "in the person of Christ" (Chery, 40). "The altar... represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of sacrifice and the table of the Lord." CCC 1383. Christ is present there both as victim offered for our reconciliation with the Father and as food from heaven given to us.



Priests celebrating Mass at an altar (above).



The tabernacle- (*tabernaculum*, Latin for tent) is a gold or sometimes wooden box in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept. The name means tent because it symbolizes God's presence with the Israelite people wandering in the desert during the Exodus. Tabernacles in Catholic Churches hold within it the body and blood of Jesus Christ (to be given in communion or for adoration). A *sacruary lamp* burns before the tabernacle as the sign that the Blessed Sacrament is present there.



Sacristy (or "Vestry")- where sacred vestments, liturgical vessels, etc., are stored. When the sacristy is behind the chancel and has two entrances, the priests enter on the Gospel side and exit through the Epistle side door.

Apse- architectural term denoting where the termination where the tabernacle is located.

Nave- refers to the "barque of Peter" and "Noah's Ark," the word "nave" is derived from the Latin word for ship, *navis*, and has come to mean the area where the parishioners sit or stand (pews are a very modern addition to the nave area).

Narthex (or "Vestibule")- an outside, covered porch-like structure or an inside area separated from the nave (the "body" of the church) by a screen, but this word has come to mean "entry" or "foyer." Originally, penitents and Catechumens were confined to this area until their reconciliation with or initiation into the Church.

Credit to Tracy Lopez's website for the above diagram.

A Sidebar on Gold in Churches:

(taken from K. Johnson's *Expressions of the Catholic Faith*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1994; Imprimatur granted.)

Most liturgical vessels are made of (or at least plated with) gold because of the metal's ancient symbolism of immortality, as gold never tarnishes nor corrodes, it is, for all practical purposes, immortal. Though in the Middle Ages some churches were criticized for storing up massive amounts of gold, prior to the French Revolution and the dawn of transportation networks, gold had mostly symbolic, not economic value. "Today, it still seems entirely natural that incorruptible gold should be used for the chalice that holds the Blood of the ever-living Christ, and for the patens and monstrances that hold his body." And "(i)n fairness, too, we should remember that those same churches and abbeys, not the secular governments, maintained full granaries that were opened in time of public need." (See pages 186-193.)

What's in a Catholic Church?

Part II: Vestments

Prayer of Vesting Priests

When vesting for the liturgy, the cleric first washes his hands, praying:

"Give virtue to my hands, O Lord, that being cleansed from all stain I might serve you with purity of mind and body."

As he puts on the amice, the priest kisses the Cross on the Amice and prays:

"Place upon me, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil."

As he puts on his alb, he prays:

"Purify me, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that, being made white in the Blood of the Lamb, I may come to eternal joy."

As he ties the cincture, he prays:

"Gird me, O Lord, with the girdle of purity, and extinguish in me all evil desires, that the virtue of chastity may abide in me."

As he puts on the maniple, he kisses the Cross on the maniple and prays:

"Grant, O Lord, that I may so bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that I may receive the reward for my labors with rejoicing."

As he puts on the stole, the priest kisses the Cross on the stole and prays:

"Restore unto me, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which was lost through the guilt of our first parents: and, although I am unworthy to approach Your sacred Mysteries, nevertheless grant unto me eternal joy."

As he puts on the chasuble, he prays:

"O Lord, Who said: My yoke is easy and My burden light: grant that I may bear it well and follow after You with thanksgiving. Amen."



amice

The amice— (*amicio* 'c over') It is the white cloth with which the priest wears around his neck (practically to preserve the other clothes from sweat).

Symbolically it is the helmet of salvation against the incursions of the devil.

The alb takes its name from its color, white (*alba*). It is an ample linen tunic. In origin it was an inner garment; symbolically it represents purity. The cincture is used to hold the alb together properly.



cincture

The cincture, a symbol of chastity, ties the alb at the waist.

The maniple, which symbolizes the acceptance of suffering, is a narrow strip of linen, of the same color as the chasuble, suspended from the left forearm so that it falls equally on both sides of the arm. It is to remind the cleric that he must patiently bear the cares and sorrows of this earthly life in the service of God and for Heavenly reward.



maniple



stole

The stole is a long piece of cloth about four inches wide draped around the neck and hangs down in front of the body. It symbolizes immortality. A deacon wears his stole pinned at the hip to distinguish himself from a priest.

The chasuble is the priest's vestment. Originally it was the ancient winter or traveling cloak which in Roman high society gradually took the place of the toga. It was an ample robe falling over the shoulders with an opening for the head (etymological origin: *casula*— 'a little house'). Today's chasuble has sought to leave the arms free for convenience. Symbolically the chasuble represents that "my yoke is sweet and my burden light."

chasuble



What's in a Catholic Church?

Part III: Vessels Pertaining to Mass and the Blessed Sacrament

"At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood" CCC 1333



The **chalice** is the cup which holds the wine that is to be consecrated. From very early times chalices were made of precious materials- crystal or silver, and very often enriched with precious stones. It distributes the precious blood when communion is given under both forms.

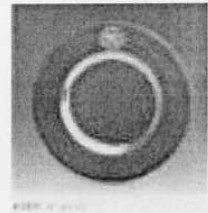


(Stacking ciboria)

The **ciborium** is the vessel in which the hosts are kept in the tabernacle. It is in the form of a cup on a stem with a lid and should be made of gold.



The **Communion paten** is a small plate, slightly concave, intended to hold the Host. Its use is very ancient, dating back to the 2nd century there is mention of the paten for the Eucharistic bread. At first it was made of glass, then of precious metal. The patens, in those days were of considerable size and weight, real plates fit to receive the offerings brought by the faithful. The breaking of the bread as well as distribution of communion takes place on the paten.



The **cruets** are to hold the water and wine for use during the consecration. The priest pours wine into the chalice then adds a little water. This is a reflection of the Greco-Roman tradition of cutting strong wine with water, and it also an apt symbolic representation of the blood and water which flowed from Christ's pierced side on the cross.



The **custodia**, like the ciborium, is also kept in the tabernacle and it holds the large host for exposition and benediction.

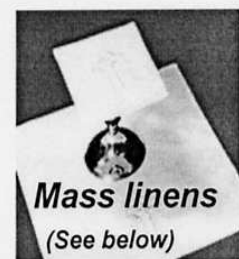
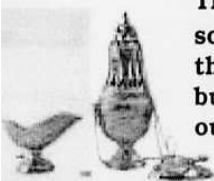
Ewer is a pitcher from which is poured water to wash the hands of the presiding priest before the Eucharistic prayer. The basin catches the water used for the washing.



The **monstrance** is tall vessel that holds a single consecrated host so that it can be seen and adored by the congregation during Benediction and Exposition. The circular glass case at the top is usually surrounded by rays of glory.



The **incense boat** and **thurible** are used during solemn celebrations of the Mass. The boat holds the incense that is put into the thurible or incensor which holds charcoal for burning the incense. The rising smoke of the incense symbolizes our prayers rising to heavens.



The altar cloth- The altar should be covered with a cloth of white material and symbolically remind us of the cloths with which the table of the Last Supper was covered. **The corporal-** (from *corpus* 'the body'- of Christ) This is the oldest of the altar linens. It is a special cloth on which the host and chalice are placed. Formerly it was large enough to cover the chalice; then, for reasons of convenience, the part that covered the chalice was cut off and became, the pall. **The pall-** A small square cloth, which is placed over the chalice. Etymologically *palla* means 'small cloth.' The corporal and pall must be made of linen in memory of the shroud which covered Jesus' body. **The chalice veil and burse-**The chalice veil is the extension of the corporal by covering the chalice. The burse holds the corporal.

Excerpts from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter
ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE
on the Most Holy Rosary

INTRODUCTION

“The Rosary of the Virgin Mary, which gradually took form in the second millennium under the guidance of the Spirit of God, is a prayer loved by countless Saints and encouraged by the Magisterium. Simple yet profound, it still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness” (#1).

... “The Rosary... *has all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety*... It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial Magnificat for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb. With the Rosary, ... (we are) led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love”(#1, emphasis added).

Mary, Model of Contemplation

“The contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary. In a unique way the face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed, receiving from her a human resemblance which points to an even greater spiritual closeness. No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when she conceived him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When at last she gave birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she ‘wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger’ (*Lk 2:7*). Thereafter Mary's gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him” (#10).

Mary's Memories

“Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: ‘She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart’ (*Lk 2:19*; cf. *2:51*). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side. In a way those memories were to be the ‘rosary’ which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life. ... Mary constantly sets before the faithful the ‘mysteries’ of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary” (#11).

The Rosary, a Contemplative Prayer

“The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning, as Pope Paul VI clearly pointed out: ‘Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: ‘In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words’ (*Mt 6:7*)’ (#12).” *In contemplation of the mysteries, the fullness of the Rosary is manifest.*

Various Aspects of the Rosary which Demonstrate how it is Rooted in Christ

Remembering Christ with Mary

“Mary’s contemplation is above all a remembering. We need to understand this word in the biblical sense of remembrance (*zakar*) as a making present of the works brought about by God in the history of salvation. The Bible is an account of saving events culminating in Christ himself” (#13). *The events of salvation history belong as much to ‘today’ as they do to ‘yesterday.’ What God accomplished in the Incarnation and Passion did not only affect the people of that time, but “continues to affect people in every age with its gift of grace” (#13). As we remember the events of Christ’s life with Mary in the Rosary, we participate in the continual ‘making present’ of the salvation bought for us by Christ.*

Learning Christ from Mary

“Christ is the supreme Teacher, the revealer and the one revealed. It is not just a question of learning what he taught but of “learning him”. In this regard could we have any better teacher than Mary? From the divine standpoint, the Spirit is the interior teacher who leads us to the full truth of Christ (cf. *Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:13*). But among creatures no one knows Christ better than Mary; no one can introduce us to a profound knowledge of his mystery better than his Mother” (#14).

Being conformed to Christ with Mary

As quoted by John Paul II, St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort explained in the following words Mary’s role in the process of our configuration to Christ: “ ‘Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ. Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ.’¹ Never as in the Rosary do the life of Jesus and that of Mary appear so deeply joined. Mary lives only in Christ and for Christ!” (#15).

Praying to Christ with Mary

“Mary intervenes with her maternal intercession in support of the prayer In support of the prayer which Christ and the Spirit cause to rise in our hearts... When in the Rosary we plead with Mary, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Lk 1:35*), she intercedes for us before the Father who filled her with grace and before the Son born of her womb, praying with us and for us” (#16).

Proclaiming Christ with Mary

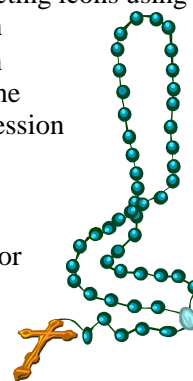
The Rosary is a valuable resource to every good evangelizer as it is “a path of proclamation and increasing knowledge, in which the mystery of Christ is presented again and again at different levels of the Christian experience. Its form is that of a prayerful and contemplative presentation, capable of forming Christians according to the heart of Christ” (#17).

¹ See footnote 22 in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*.

Methods to DEEPENING RECITATION of the ROSARY

(Suggestions based on ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE)

Announce Each Mystery & Use a Suitable Icon to portray it: This practice helps to focus attention, while appealing to the senses and helping to concentrate the mind on a particular mystery. (Actual icons may be used if available; other possibilities include projecting icons using Power Point or an overhead projector.) “This is a methodology, moreover, which corresponds to the inner logic of the Incarnation: in Jesus, God wanted to take on human features. It is through his bodily reality that we are led into contact with the mystery of his divinity” (#29). ... “This need for concreteness finds further expression in the announcement of the various mysteries of the Rosary” (#29).



Listening to the word of God: It is helpful to follow the announcement of each mystery with the proclamation of a related Biblical passage (which may be long or short depending on the circumstances). This practice reminds us of the Biblical foundation of the meditation and adds a certain depth, as “No other words can ever match the efficacy of the inspired word” (#30).

Silence: Allow for a pause of silence after the Biblical passage so that all may focus their attention on the content of a particular mystery (cf. #31). Do not be afraid of this moment of silence, it nourishes the meditation.

The “Our Father”: “In each of his mysteries, Jesus always leads us to the Father, for as he rests in the Father’s bosom (cf. *Jn 1:18*) he is continually turned towards him. He wants us to share in his intimacy with the Father, so that we can say with him: “Abba, Father” (*Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6*.” (#32) The Our Father provides the foundation for the Hail Marys.

The ten “Hail Marys”: The Hail Marys make up the most substantial element of the Rosary. When the Hail Mary is properly understood, we come to see how its Marian character does not detract attention from Christ, but emphasizes His presence.

“The first part of the Hail Mary, drawn from the words spoken to Mary by the Angel Gabriel and by Saint Elizabeth, is a contemplation in adoration of the mystery accomplished in the Virgin of Nazareth... – the Incarnation of the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary.” (#33)

...

The center of gravity in the Hail Mary is *the name of Jesus*, which acts as a hinge for the first and second part of the prayer. Often overlooked, this recitation of the name of Jesus ought to emphasize the mystery of Christ to be contemplated. *It is in Jesus Christ, our center of gravity, that recitation of the Rosary becomes meaningful.* In certain regions of the world, it is custom to highlight the name of Christ by adding a clause afterward relevant to the mystery being contemplated. This is especially powerful in public recitation.²

For example: While meditating on the Transfiguration (4th Luminous Mystery), one might end the first half of the Hail Mary by saying “and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, Light of the World,” before continuing on with the second half “Holy Mary, Mother of God...”

² Pope Paul VI drew attention, in his Apostolic Exhortation *MARIALIS CULTUS*, to the custom in certain regions of highlighting the name of Christ by the addition of a clause referring to the mystery being contemplated. This is noted by John Paul II in Apostolic Letter *ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE*.

Other clause suggestions: *Institution of the Eucharist:* Jesus, The Bread of Life; *The Crucifixion:* Jesus, Lamb of God; *Proclamation of the Kingdom:* Jesus, Word of God; *The Annunciation:* Jesus, Incarnate Son of the Father; *The Resurrection:* Jesus, King of Kings... There are numerous traditional titles to choose from, or the clause may be the spontaneous fruit of meditation, such as in “Jesus, Meek and Humble of Heart.”

In the second half of the “Hail Mary,” we recognize her unique relationship with Christ, as the Mother of God, and appeal to her “as we entrust to her maternal intercession our lives and the hour of our death. “ (#33)

The “Gloria”:

Christ is the way that leads us to the Father in the Spirit. If we travel this way to the end, we repeatedly encounter the mystery of the three divine Persons, to whom all praise, worship and thanksgiving are due. “It is important that the Gloria, the high-point of contemplation, be given due prominence in the Rosary. In public recitation it could be sung, as a way of giving proper emphasis to the essentially Trinitarian structure of all Christian prayer.” (#34) The Gloria raises the mind to the heights of heaven. *Learning the “Gloria” in Latin, and learning how to chant the Latin translation of this short simple prayer, can add a real depth to the rosary.*

Concluding Short Prayers:

The full spiritual significance of each mystery could be drawn out by concluding each decade of the Rosary with a prayer for the fruits specific to that particular mystery. After the decades have been prayed, “(t)he Rosary is then ended with a prayer for the intentions of the Pope, as if to expand the vision of the one praying to embrace all the needs of the Church” (#37).

One may choose to conclude the Rosary with a prayer suggested by local custom. The concluding prayer is a moment during which the connection between the Rosary and the Christian life is made clear. “One fine liturgical prayer suggests as much, inviting us to pray that, by meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, we may come to ‘imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise’ (cf #35).

Many also see it fit, after the closing prayer, to “burst forth in praise of the Blessed Virgin, either in that splendid prayer the *Salve Regina* or in the *Litany of Loreto*.”

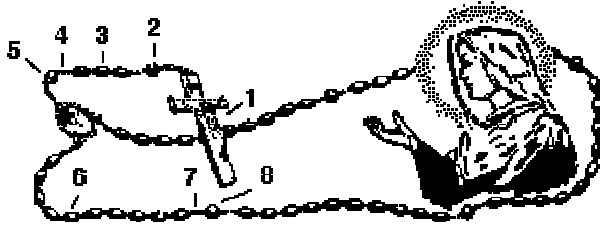
May Mary “be everywhere blessed, today and always, on earth and in heaven” (#37).

From the Vatican, on the 16th day of October in the year 2002, the beginning of the twenty-fifth year of my Pontificate, (signed) JOHN PAUL II

How to Pray the Rosary with Young People

The Rosary is an excellent prayer to be said in community by groups of young people. As long as they are provided with notes and guidance as to how to say each of the prayers, they will feel comfortable in participating in this prayer experience. Allowing each teen to read a line of scripture prior to each bead, or share a personal intention before each bead allows all of the young people present to become more involved in the prayer. A good scriptural rosary can be found at <http://www.ainglkiss.com/ros/sr.htm>

It is also helpful to provide images for young people to meditate upon while reciting each decade of the rosary. Projecting these images onto a large screen in a dim room with abundant candles can assist young people in this prayer. Sample images can be found at <http://www.legionofmarytidewater.com/rose/rose.htm>



1. Make the **Sign of the Cross** and say the **Apostles' Creed**:

I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified; died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

2. Say the **Our Father**:

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. Amen.

3. Say three **Hail Marys**:

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of

God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

4. Say the **Glory be to the Father**:

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.

5. Announce the First Mystery; then say the "Our Father."
6. Say ten "Hail Marys," while meditating on the Mystery.
7. Say the "Glory be to the Father."
8. Announce the Second Mystery; then say the "Our Father." Repeat 6 & 7 and continue with Third, Fourth and Fifth Mysteries in the same manner.

After each decade say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy."

After the Rosary:

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. R.* That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O GOD, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(*Found on Website:* <http://www.newadvent.org/faq/scriptlum.htm>)



The Theology and Practice of the Sacrament of Confession with Teens

by Father J.D. Jaffe

“Sin is what puts distance between the believer and God, and it's the sacrament of confession that brings the two back together.” Pope Benedict XVI

Confession is a real encounter with Jesus Christ, producing a true knowledge of self that inspires one to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with Him who is Love. It ultimately aids in the practice of virtue here on earth so that one may live eternally with the source of all virtue in heaven.

“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you.” And when He had said his, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, whose sins you retain are retained.” John 20:21-23

Jesus bestows on the Apostles the power to forgive sins. He even charges them to go out and to do so. If they are charged with the task of forgiving sins, then, by extension, are not the faithful charged with confessing their sins to the apostles for forgiveness? The direct commandment of Christ to His Apostles to forgive sins is an indirect commandment to the faithful to seek that forgiveness. The question often arises - why one must confess to a priest? The answer lies here in this passage. Jesus asks his faithful to do so by asking his Apostles to be sources of that forgiveness.

“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into his nail marks, and my hand into his side, I will not believe.” John 20:25

If the faithful pray quietly, in their own heads, for the forgiveness of God, and they are sincere in their request, would a good and gracious God deny them His loving mercy? It would seem likely that they are indeed forgiven, but how do they know it to be so? They cannot know it to be true; they must assume or presume upon the mercy of God. Whereas, the faithful who go to the very person to whom Christ gave authority to forgive sins, would hear concretely the words of the priest that they are forgiven and that the sin is not retained. They would hear, “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” Certainty of forgiveness is attained because one’s own flesh and blood has encountered the mercy of the Risen Lord through His lawfully appointed minister. Much like doubting Thomas, the faithful who doubted or even despaired in the forgiveness of God would, after the sacrament of confession, be able to confidently proclaim, “My Lord and My God!” John 20:28.

“My Grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Cor 12:9a

Human certainty is not the primary reason for going to the priest for the sacrament of confession. Penance, like all sacraments, provides much needed grace. Grace is God’s divine life dwelling within us. There are two basic graces that are received during confession. Sanctifying grace is the grace that saves us, drawing us to the kingdom of heaven. In the sacrament of penance, this grace takes the form of the forgiveness of sins. Actual grace is the other grace received during the sacrament of confession. It is the grace that helps us in a given situation. In the sacrament of penance, the faithful receive more than just forgiveness for their sins; they also receive, for every sin that is confessed, the grace to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin.

Confession is too often taken as a moment of shame, rather than a moment of love. The sacrament of penance is not intended to be an opportunity to dwell on weakness. Rather, it is a moment to accept and to embrace weakness and thus realize the need for Christ, our Savior.

“I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses ... for when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Cor 12:9b-10.

Growing up is about overcoming failures and mistakes; it is about dealing constructively with faults. Nobody learns to walk without falling, and nobody learns to read aloud without a mispronunciation. Learning is often achieved through trial and error. Growth occurs by pushing and testing ourselves to be the best that we can be. This is the concept of homework, practice for sports, and rehearsals for plays. The more the task is practiced or exercised the better one becomes at accomplishing it.

The same is true for spiritual growth. Virtue, like most any behavior, is a habit. It is a habit towards the good; whereas, vice is a habit towards evil. Humans grow in virtue by exercising virtue. The better Christians become at handling a given situation by responding properly in grace, the better formed they become in the habit of responding properly. Therefore, it is only in encountering weakness that they are then made stronger. Just as the athlete’s training for competition is continuous, or the soldier’s preparation for battle unceasing; so too must the Christian constantly strive to grow in virtue. The only way to continuously strive to grow in virtue is to identify those areas that need growth, those areas of the spiritual life where there is weakness. Then, and only then, is one able to be strengthened by the grace of God. It is essential that we arrive at this true knowledge of ourselves if we have any hope of being faithful witnesses of Him in whose image and likeness we have been created.

“When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man I put aside childish things. At present I see distinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully as I am fully known.” 1 Cor 13:11-12

Confession, in conclusion, is a real encounter with Jesus Christ, a private and intimate moment directly between the penitent and the Lord of Mercies.

When celebrated properly, it will not only produce a truer knowledge of self that inspires one to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God, who is pure love; but it will also aid in the daily practice of the Faith. Often, confession is seen only as the sacrament needed to keep one out of hell; but the reality is that it is also the sacrament that enables one to live daily for heaven. Confession aids one in the practice of virtue here on earth, so that, ultimately, one may live eternally with the source of all virtue in heaven.

Fr. J.D Jaffe is a Roman Catholic priest of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. He was ordained in 2003 and currently is the Chaplain and Assistant Principal at Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, VA.

How to Go to Confession

Prepare to go to Confession by thinking about your sins and make a firm commitment, asking God's help, not to sin again.

Prayer Before Confession

*Come Holy Spirit into my soul.
Enlighten my mind that I may know the
sins I ought to confess, and grant me
your grace to confess them fully, humbly,
and with a contrite heart. Help me to
firmly resolve not to commit them again.
O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my
Redeemer, intercede for me through the
Passion of Your Son, that I may obtain
the grace to make a good confession. All
you blessed Angels and Saints of God,
pray for me, a sinner, that I may repent
from my sins, and that my heart may be
forever united with yours in eternal love.
Amen*

Rite of Reconciliation

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Penitent: Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been (how long?) since my last confession, and these are my sins: (confess your sins).

Priest: (gives you a penance)

Penitent: (Pray the Act of Contrition):

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all things. I firmly plan, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.
Amen

Priest: (gives you absolution)

Priest: Give thanks to the Lord for He is good.

Penitent: For His mercy endures forever.

Penitent: (recite or do your penance as soon as possible)

Examination of Conscience for a Good Confession

- 1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD; YOU SHALL NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.** Did I fail to love God, to make God first in my life, to thank Him, trust Him, love Him as He deserves? Did I fail to pray? Have I doubted or denied my faith? Was I careless in saying my prayers? Do I give God time each day in prayer? Have I been involved in magic, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, the occult?
- 2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN.** Did I curse or swear? Did I use God's name in vain, lightly, carelessly, by blasphemy? Have I used foul language or jokes?
- 3. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH.** Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Did I leave Mass early without a good reason? Have I been to Communion at least once a year? Did I receive Holy Communion in the state of serious sin? Have I been to confession recently? In any of my previous confessions, did I lie to or deliberately conceal something from a priest? Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday?
- 4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.** Did I honor and obey my parents? Respect my brothers and sisters? Respect others with lawful authority, especially teachers? Have I talked back? Did I fail to help at home or to spend time with my family?
- 5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL.** Did I give into feelings of anger or jealousy? Did I keep hatred in my heart? Did I fight, give a bad example or cause scandal? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Have I had or in any way permitted or encouraged abortion? Have I thought about suicide? Do I avoid gluttony?
- 6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTRY.** Did I consent to impure glances or thoughts? Passionate kisses? Sinful touches? Was I immodest in dress or behavior? Did I look at pornography, impure books, magazines, videos or internet? Am I guilty of masturbation (impurity with self)? Fornication (premarital sex), adultery (sex with a married person) or contraception (by pills, devices, etc)? Do I live chastely according to my state in life (married, single, ordained)? Do I avoid the occasions of impurity?
- 7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.** Have I stolen what is not mine? What or how much? Did I return it or makeup for what I have stolen? Have I cheated on tests or homework? Did I waste time at work? Have I written graffiti (this steals nature's beauty)? Do I avoid laziness, idleness?
- 8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.** Have I lied, gossiped? Talked about another behind their back? Do I always tell the truth? Am I sincere? Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my talk?
- 9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.** Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I encouraged them by stares, curiosity or impure conversations? Did I neglect to control my imagination or desire other people?
- 10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS.** Is my heart greedy? Am I jealous of what another has? Am I envious of others because I don't have what they have? Am I moody or gloomy? Do I work, study and keep busy to counter idle thoughts? Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Is my heart set on earthly possessions or on treasures in Heaven?

GROUP EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Response: FORGIVE US, LORD.

For the times I have forgotten you and turned my back on you, Lord.....

For the times I have failed to praise You and recognize Your greatness in creation.....

For the times I have failed to love You with all my heart....

For the times I have idolized myself instead of worshipping You...

For making things, money, or people more important than You....

For not making time to try to understand Scriptures better....

For not accepting Church tradition and Church authority....

For not loving the Church while I criticize her....

For not growing in hope in the midst of a despairing world....

For presuming so often on Your mercy while ignoring Your justice....

For picking and choosing only the convenient parts of Your message....

For closing my heart to the guidance of Your Spirit....

For the times I have been ashamed to show my religious convictions....

For being ignorant and uninformed in my religion because of laziness or lack of interest....

For believing in superstition and astrology....

For the times I have cursed in anger or frustration....

For using Your name in vain, Lord....

For times I have used Your name lightly, without respect....

For the times I have hurt You and others with foul language....

For my unwillingness to dedicate time to pray....

For praying mechanically and without conviction....

For all the times I was not mentally present at Mass....

For the times I have not taken part in the Eucharist because of laziness....

For making excuses to myself claiming that other things are more important than going to Mass....

For lack of respect for the Sacraments, especially Penance and Eucharist....

For not trying to understand my parents....

For disobeying my parents....

For disrespecting them....

For not showing love toward my parents and for taking them for granted....

For being negligent and sluggish in fulfilling my duties as a student and family member....

For my moments of impatience at home....

For being uncharitable toward my brothers and sisters....

For the times that I have not been grateful toward those who have helped me grow....

For all the times I have wished evil upon someone....

For putting people on my “black list”, giving them the cold shoulder, and not forgiving them....

For the moments that I have hurt others’ feelings with my words or actions....

For the times I have refused to help those in need....

For feeling sorry for myself....

For refusing to forgive myself and others....

For not challenging myself and being lazy at home or work....

For the gifts and talents I have failed to cultivate....

For looking at pornography and engaging in immoral conversations....

For flirting too much at school or work....

For being unfaithful to those who love me....

For failing to avoid situations that lead to sexual involvement....

For having neglected my human dignity and that of others....

For the times I have misused the gift of my sexuality by myself or with others....

For the times I have cheated....

For the times I have stolen....

For being careless about others and abusing their property....

For wasting Your gifts of food and natural resources....

For the times I have been jealous of others' looks, friends or possessions....

For forgetting the poor....

For not trying to become more competent with my gifts and talents....

For the greed that makes me want so many useless things....

For the times I have spread rumors and gossiped....

For ridiculing others in front to them or behind their back....

For lying....

For playing games with the truth in order to be accepted....

For not standing up for my beliefs in order to be accepted....

For hypocrisy in my words and actions....

For the times I have been too proud to admit I was wrong....

For the times I have been prejudiced....

For the times I have judged people....

For taking advantage of others, using them for my own good....

For not keeping my promises....

For the times I have been sarcastic at the expense of others....

For the times I was unjust toward my neighbors....

For having revealed secret things about others....

For the times I have been the cause of ill-feelings between others....

For the times I have hurt others' feelings on purpose or through neglect....

For the lack of trust and confidence in myself...

For failing to see You in myself and in others, especially those I do not like.....

Introducing Young People to the Liturgy of the Hours

by Meg Dalmut

“God, Come to my assistance...” is the way most hours in the Liturgy of the Hours begin. This plea is the perfect way to begin prayer and is the way we should begin all prayers, by asking the Lord to intercede for us as we do not know how to pray as we ought. The Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the people of God and a way to sanctify all the hours of each day. As we read in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, “Christian prayer is above all the prayer of the whole human community, which Christ joins to Himself.”

The Liturgy of the Hours gets a bad rap as a confusing, complicated, dry way to pray. In this prayer, the same thing is prayed in four week cycles and words are simply read from a page. This is where youth ministers have an opportunity to bring an element of our Catholic Christian faith tradition alive. Break it down. If you look closely this prayer looks a whole lot like the Mass. It begins by reciting psalms; then we move to a reading usually from the New Testament and it has a Responsory (like a Responsorial Psalm); next is a Gospel Cantic in which God’s praises and His faithfulness are remembered; the Intercessions come next or the prayers of the people of God and they are concluded with the Our Father; finally there is a closing prayer and a blessing in which we ask for God’s protection and the inheritance of eternal life. This rhythm contains peace because it is so familiar. Oh the wisdom of the Church!

Young people should enjoy praying the psalms. They contain every human emotion that one can experience. At the beginning of the psalms, there is usually a short line in bold that will explain the emotion that is being talked about in the psalm. For example, prayer for help against enemies, prayer to praise the Lord, prayer of a sick person, prayer of thanksgiving, prayer of faithfulness, prayer asking God to come to my aid, prayer of joyful hope, prayer when in distress etc. David was the first singer- songwriter and our young people can surely identify with that!



A favorite element of the Liturgy of the Hours is the close tie to the Holy Family. When Jesus was born, families would pray the psalms together reciting them aloud. So as the Church prays together the psalms at the beginning of each hour in the Liturgy of the Hours, imagine Jesus, Mary, and Joseph doing the exact same thing in their home. Our Lord told us, “ask and it will be given to you...” Lk 11:9. Consequently, the intercessions are a beautiful moment in this prayer. Many communities pause at the end of these prayers for individuals to voice their own petitions aloud before the recitation of the Our Father. It is just another way to personalize this prayer. Lastly, the perfect prayer is prayed in the Our Father, the exact words that our Savior taught us.

An added benefit of praying this prayer is the ties it has to the liturgical calendar. Saints’ memorials, feasts, and solemnities are celebrated and they all have a biography so one can come to know more people who reside in the heavenly kingdom. Based on the

level of the saints' feast, the Liturgy is prayed a different way. This helps all to understand the importance of particular days in the Church calendar.

Lastly, like the Mass, at any moment during the day, one can be praying the exact same thing with thousands of others around the world. This prayer aids in understanding the universality of the Church. Our young people can begin to understand in a small way the part they play in prayer for the Church. They have the opportunity to say the same words as the Pope, as cloistered nuns, as their parish priest, as their youth ministers, as their teachers and mentors.



The best way to get our young people hooked on this kind of prayer is by introducing them to the final hour of the day, Night Prayer. It is the simplest of the five hours to pray. Every Monday the same prayer is said, every Tuesday the same prayer is said, etc. Whether or not it's a feast day, Night Prayer does not change. It's also the shortest hour of the day with an examination of conscience, one psalm, a reading, a gospel canticle, and a closing prayer. In all, it takes approximately five minutes. Begin praying this with young people on retreats, at the end of Sunday night gatherings, at small group meetings. It is a beautiful close to a day, examining all that has happened, praising God for His blessings, and commending our souls to the Lord for a safe sleep.

Begin by praying this prayer yourself, get into a rhythm and try to pray it in community. It is designed as a communal prayer and so when two or more are gathered, the prayer takes on a new life. Before you even open your book, get a "Guide to Liturgy of the Hours" from any Catholic book store. It will tell you exactly what pages you should be on each day. It comes in handy and only costs \$3.95!

Many saints have exclaimed that the way to holiness is by mastering the little things, doing the small tasks well, being in a routine. Liturgy of the Hours is a way to pray without ceasing and to call to mind the Lord's presence in all moments of the day. One is able to unite their heart to the Lord's and to intercede for the Church in Her daily apostolic life. "Lord, make haste to help me."

Meg Dalmat has been serving as the Associate Director of Campus Ministry at Marymount University since 2005. She is also the Interim Director of the Women Youth Apostles, a community of women dedicated to serving young people in the Diocese of Arlington. Her daily joy is seeing young people experience God's abundant love and loving Him in return!

Lectio Divina
Listening to God in the Prayerful Reading of the Sacred Scriptures
by Rev. David L. Toups, STD

Pope Benedict XVI regularly mentions the practice of *Lectio Divina* in his catechesis as one of the sources for the renewal of Christianity in the world today. During the Pauline Year, there was a gathering of Bishops in Rome for a special Synod on the Word. The word *Lectio Divina* was mentioned 28 times in the *Instrumentum Laboris* (the preparatory document) of the Synod and was brought up regularly in the interventions of the synodal participants. The *Instrumentum Laboris* states: “An authentic spirituality of the Word demands that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may walk together; for we speak to him when we pray; we hear him when we read the divine sayings” (n. 41).

Listening to God in the prayerful reading of the Sacred Scriptures occurs in two basic forms: *Lectio Divina* and Ignatian Contemplation (according to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola). *Lectio* is the practice of pondering a line from a particular scriptural passage and “chewing on it,” while the Ignatian method invites one to enter personally into a biblical scene through the gift of the intellect and imagination. Both of these forms of scriptural prayer are interrelated and are very effective in connecting with Jesus in a personal way through listening to the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. All prayer is a gift and is thus the result of grace – when something profound comes to us in prayer, we accept it as a gift, and when nothing happens we are still with the Lord Jesus in a prayerful posture and we again receive the simplicity of the prayer as a gift.

There are a few things we can do to more properly dispose ourselves to the Word:

- Choose the Scripture over which you are about to pray ahead of time.
- Decide how much time you are able to spend with this particular scripture (20-30 minutes), and don’t quit early once you have decided upon a time – leave room for God to work right up to the last minute. It is a genuine temptation to leave early.
- Find a comfortable chair and posture. It is always a blessing to be able to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Access to a chapel would be optimal, but if that is not possible, set aside a prayer corner with an icon or a crucifix to keep you from distraction.
- Begin the time of prayer with a simple dialogue with each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, thus acknowledging with Whom you are engaging in prayer. Invite Mary and your patron saint also to journey with you and intercede for you to grow closer to Christ. This is what St. Ignatius calls the colloquy.
- Read over the scripture that you have chosen a few times and then simply sit with the Word.
- Relax and breathe – getting uptight can be a major obstacle. Again, prayer is a gift, allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit; it is not you “doing it” but God allowing it to unfold within you. Allow the Scripture to manifest itself; you do not have to try too hard or contrive anything.

- As you entered into the reflection of the scriptural passage “Did it seem as if the Holy Spirit was giving you an insight, or giving you consolation or encouragement? Did a new awareness of the meaning of the gospel teaching dawn on you? Was the time just quiet or was it stormy? [...] Because the goal of [each time of prayer] is a stronger personal relationship with God, a two-way communication is implied. Be open to receiving insight and guidance through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within you.”³
- Be surprised by the Lord, it is He Who is the author of the intellect and imagination, allow Him to use yours. Do not be afraid of this type of prayer, you will be amazed at what God will reveal to you. Make a conscious move to operate out of the heart and not the head. This does not mean that you are suspending reason; you are simply getting out of the way to allow the Holy Spirit to be the driver and not yourself. You may want to pray the prayer of St. Ignatius below to help you allow God to be in control.
- ARRR: Acknowledge, Relate, Receive, and Respond. *Acknowledge* what stirs in your heart as you read the Scripture and *relate*/talk to Christ about it. Once you have shared with the Lord, *receive* what He wants to give you – receive a word, phrase, image, feeling of comfort or peace, etc. Finally *respond* to what is happening within you: more conversation with God, a resolution, the strength to move forward, etc.⁴
- “As we prayerfully and submissively bring ourselves into the Lord’s presence through a Scripture passage, the Spirit will bring thoughts, ideas, images, symbols, insights and impressions to our mind which will convey the application of God’s Word in Scripture to our own personal reality. We learn to recognize this form of communication by practice and experience with prayer.”⁵
- Close with a similar colloquy as at the beginning of prayer and ask: “Lord Jesus, what is the word that you want to give me?” Listen quietly as you close your prayer and an echo of the scripture you just prayed over may come to you, or another word of peace and comfort.
- Write down the words you feel the Lord has given you in prayer, as well as the thoughts, feelings, and desires you may be experiencing. What is Jesus trying to say to you today with the reflection that you just had?
- It is beneficial to share your prayer experiences with someone well versed in the spiritual life. This may be done in a small group setting or with a spiritual director.

¹ Carol Marquardt, *Foundations of Personal Prayer: Listening and Loving in God’s Embrace* (Mantle Publishing: Clearwater, Florida, 2008), 11 (www.ourfiat.org).

² As articulated by the *Institute for Priestly Formation* at Creighton University (<http://www2.creighton.edu/ipf/>).

³ Marquardt, 14.

- Scriptural prayer is very enriching and allows the Word of God to become ever more something that vivifies your life. The time and effort that you put into spiritual exercise will result in a deeper, more intimate union with the Savior of the world. God's gift of prayer is exponentially more rewarding than anything we put into it.

Take, O Lord, and receive
my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will.
All that I am and all that I possess You have given me:
I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will.
Give me only Your love and Your grace;
with these I will be rich enough,
and will desire nothing more. Amen.

Rev. David L. Toups, STD works at the USCCB in Washington DC as the Director for the Office of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

Holy Days of Obligation

In the Roman Catholic Church, the **Holy Days of Obligation** are the days, other than Sundays, on which the faithful are required to attend Mass. The 1983 Code of Canon Law standardized ten days to be observed as Holy Days of Obligation throughout the Church. These days are:

- The Immaculate Conception (December 8)
- Christmas (December 25)
- Mary, the Mother of God (January 1)
- Epiphany (January 6)
- St. Joseph (March 19)
- St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29)
- The Assumption of Mary (August 15)
- All Saints (November 1)
- The Ascension (40 days after Easter)
- Corpus Christi (60 days after Easter)

The conference of bishops in a particular country or region may suppress the observance of these days, or transfer it to another day, with the permission of the Vatican. For example, in the United States, the feasts of St. Joseph and of St. Peter and St. Paul are not Holy Days of Obligation, and Corpus Christi and the Epiphany are observed on the nearest Sunday.

The Immaculate Conception (December 8th)

The *Immaculate Conception* is the celebration of Mary's preservation by God from the transmission of original sin at the time of her own conception, which allowed her to live a life completely free from sin. *It is not, as is popularly believed, another name for the doctrine of the virgin birth.* The Immaculate Conception was defined as a dogma by Pope Pius IX in his constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, published December 8, 1854 (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception).

Christmas (December 25th)

Christmas (literally meaning the 'mass of Christ') celebrates the nativity of Jesus. The actual date of Jesus' birth and is very much debated by scholars today. During the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord we celebrate the Incarnation. Preceding the feast day is a season of penitence known as Advent, which lasts for four weeks. The liturgical season of Christmas follows beginning on Christmas Day and ending on the Baptism of our Lord.

Mary, Mother of God (January 1st)

Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ and the betrothed of Joseph. We say therefore that Mary is the Mother of God and we proclaim the unity of Christ's two natures: he is both God and man. The Son of God existed before all time, as the eternally begotten of the Father. The union of the two natures in Christ did not occur until his conception in St. Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth affirmed the divine presence in St. Mary by saying "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should visit me?" In his own way, St. John the Baptist also affirmed the divine presence by leaping inside Elizabeth's womb.

Epiphany (January 6th)

Epiphany is a feast that celebrates the 'shining forth' or revelation of God to mankind in human form, in the person of Jesus Christ. We celebrate it today as the visit from the East of the three Magi (Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar) in Bethlehem. The observance originally included the birth of Jesus Christ; the visit of the three Magi; and all of Jesus' childhood events, up to his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. The feast was initially based on, and viewed as a fulfillment of, the Jewish Feast of Lights. This was fixed on January 6. The eastern churches treated January 6 as the day marking Jesus' birth, while in the western church, based in Rome, December 25th was marked as the day marking Jesus' birth. In the later half of the 4th century, the Eastern and Western churches adopted each other's festivals. This has given rise in the west to the notion of a twelve day festival, starting on December 25, and ending on January 6, called the twelve days of Christmas, although some Christian cultures - especially those of Latin America - extend it to forty days, ending on Candlemas, or February 2 (known as Candelaria in Spanish).

Saint Joseph (March 18th)

Joseph the Betrothed (also referred to as *Joseph of Nazareth*) was the foster-father of Jesus Christ. Not much is known of Joseph except that he was "of the House of David" and lived in the town of Nazareth. He is the patron saint of workers and has several feast days. He was betrothed to the Virgin Mary at the time that Mary conceived Jesus. Luke says that he lived at Nazareth in Galilee (Luke 2:4); however, according to Matthew, it was only after the return from Egypt that he settled in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23). He is called a "just man." He was by trade a carpenter (Matthew 13:55).

Saint Peter and Paul (June 29th)

It is appropriate that these two figures are celebrated on the same day as many times they are compared and contrasted in their differences and similarities of theology and their lives.

Saint Peter was one of the Twelve Apostles. His original name was *Simon*. Peter, who became the first bishop of Antioch and later bishop of Rome, "was the rock upon which Christ would build his Church."

Saint Paul of Tarsus (originally *Saul of Tarsus*) or *St. Paul the Apostle* is said to be the most important disciple of Jesus. Paul did much to advance Christianity among the gentiles, and as an author is considered one of the primary sources of the early Church.

The Assumption of Mary (August 15th)

The body of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, was taken into Heaven along with her soul after her death. Mary's passage into heaven is called the *Assumption of Mary*. "Since the church understands death to be a consequence of the first sin and believes that Mary was born without original sin, some theologians have wondered if Mary died or simply was assumed into heaven without dying. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* doesn't answer the question, but says, "The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven..." (CCC #974, #966)." (Klein, Rev. Peter. *The Catholic Source Book, Third Ed.* Orlando: BROWN-ROA, 2000. See p. 352).

All Saints Day (November 1st)

The festival of All Saints, also formerly known as "All Hallows," or "Hallowmas," is a feast celebrated in honor of all the saints and martyrs, known or unknown. It is a festival of the first rank, with a vigil and an octave. (The origin of the festival of All Saints as celebrated in the West is on May 13 in either 609 or 610). Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. The feast of the *dedicatio Sanctae Mariae ad Martyres* has been celebrated at Rome ever since. The chosen day, May 13, was a pagan observation of great antiquity, the culmination of three days of the Feast of the Lemures, in which alleviated the malevolent and restless spirits of all the dead. The modern placement of the feast of All Saints on November 1st is now traced to the foundation by Pope Gregory III (731-741) of an oratory (small chapel) in St Peter's for the relics "of the holy apostles and of all saints, martyrs and confessors, of all the just made perfect who are at rest throughout the world."

The Ascension (40 days after Easter)

The *Ascension* is one of the great feasts in the liturgical calendar, and commemorates the Ascension of Jesus Christ being taken up into Heaven forty days after His resurrection from the dead. We celebrate his return to the Father in heaven and his sending the power of the Holy Spirit upon his Church. The event is recorded in the New Testament in Acts Chapter 1. Ascension Day is always a Thursday; in some churches (especially in the United States) it is commemorated on the subsequent Sunday (the Sunday before Pentecost).

Corpus Christi (60 days after Easter)

Corpus Christi means *Body of Christ* in Latin. It is a moveable feast celebrated by Catholics on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday (eighth Sunday after Easter), i.e. 60 days after Easter, in order to commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine. He responds to the natural craving of the human heart after a food which nourishes unto immortality (a craving also expressed in many pagan religions), by dispensing to mankind His own Flesh and Blood. The day is a national holiday in some Catholic countries.

Websites used for worksheet:

http://www.fact-index.com/h/ho/holy_day_of_obligation.html

<http://www.creighton.edu/~alackamp/holydays/holydays.html>