

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

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, Our Lord is with you.
Blessed are you amongst 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.

Glory Be

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.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that any one who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help,
or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
We fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins my Mother;
to thee do we come, before thee we stand,
sinful and sorrowful,
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in thy mercy hear and answer them. Amen.

The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

And the Word was made Flesh.
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord,
thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy son,
was made known by the message of an angel,
may by his passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection,
through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
hail, 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 vale 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.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartfully sorry for having offended thee,
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishment,
but most of all because I have offended thee my God,
who is all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace,
to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Saint Michael Prayer

Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

Be our protection against
the wickedness and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host,
by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits
who prowl throughout the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Miraculous Medal Prayer

O Mary, Conceived without Sin, pray for us
who have recourse to thee, and for those who do not have recourse to thee,
especially the enemies of the Church. Amen.

Morning Offering

Dear Lord, I do not know what will happen to me today
— I only know that nothing will happen
that was not foreseen by you and directed to my greater good from all eternity.
I adore your holy and unfathomable plans,
and submit to them with all my heart for love of you,
the pope, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Amen.

Guardian Angel Prayer

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts,
which we are about to receive, from thy bounty,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace After Meals

We give thee thanks for all thy benefits,
O Almighty God, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Suscipe

(St. Ignatius)

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.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O Good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Permit me not to be separated from you.

From the wicked foe, defend me.

At the hour of my death, call me

and bid me come to you

That with your saints I may praise you

For ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for Generosity

(St. Ignatius)

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
teach me true generosity.

Teach me to serve as you deserve

—to give without counting the cost,

to fight heedless of the wounds,

to labor without seeking rest,

to sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
except for the knowledge that I have done your will.

Serenity Prayer

(Friedrich Oetinger)

God grant me the serenity

to accept the things I cannot change,

courage to change the things I can,

and the wisdom to know the difference.

Prayer Exercise: Nine Breaths

This is a simple and quick way to be attentive to God's presence in our lives and simply slow down enough to silence our minds. Here's how to do it:

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. We close our eyes and begin to focus all our attention on our breathing in and out.
3. Inhale and exhale slowly 3 times
4. Inhale and exhale slowly another 3 times inaudibly saying,
 - a. Jesus—as we inhale
 - b. I love you—as we exhale
5. Inhale and exhale slowly another 3 times without words
6. Open our eyes and continue with our prayer or activity

Prayer Exercise: Open Hands and Open Heart

This is a prayer to be attentive to God's presence in our lives and simply empty ourselves of our worries and fears, emotions and thoughts, frustrations and anger. Here's how to practice it:

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
3. As we start our prayer, keep both hands closed in tight fists and think of all the things that are between God and us at this moment:
 - a. Worries about family and friends who are sick.
 - b. Questions and confusion about where God is in this world right now.
 - c. Frustration, bitterness, and disappointments of life.
 - d. Hate, anger, and unforgiveness towards those who have hurt us in the past.
 - e. Emotions and fears that perplex us.
4. Ask Jesus to help us let go of everything.
5. As we invite Jesus to help us let go, unclench one fist and open that hand and breath saying:
 - a. Jesus—as we inhale
 - b. I love you—as we exhale
6. Then pray:
 - a. *Dear God*
I am so afraid to open my clenched fists!
Who will I be when I have nothing left to hold onto?
Who will I be when I stand before you empty hands?
Please help me to gradually open my hands
and to discover that I am not what I own,
but what you want to give me.
And what you want to give me is love—
unconditional, everlasting love.
Amen.
7. Unclench both fists and open both hands wide.
8. Inhale and exhale slowly another 3 times without words.
9. Continue with our prayer or activity.

Praying Through Distractions: Logs on the River

It is often the case that when we sit to pray that we have many thoughts that go through our mind. Thoughts about your spouse, children, friends or about your work situation or the many other concerns that pass through our minds. It is sometimes hard to settle these thoughts and we can get consumed by them. This methodology should help deal with the more routine distractions.

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
3. Open our hands wide in acceptance of his invitation to be in God's presence.
4. When the distractions appear, and they will not leave or lessen.
5. Then imagine ourselves sitting on the side of a river watching the water flow by.
6. Notice the large logs floating down the river.
7. Each log represents one of our distracting thoughts.
8. We may look at the log, examine it, and even name it if we want, but do not attempt to take the log out of the water.
9. We might even want to briefly stop the log to examine it, but we must kick it back out into the fast-flowing river.
10. There are other logs behind it and if we stop it then the logs will pile up into a logjam and the water will eventually stop flowing freely.
11. Now imagine ourselves sitting at the bank of the river, watching all these logs floating on by, each representing one of our thoughts.
12. Now notice the flowing river and the power of the water and see that the logs are carried by the power of that river.
13. In the same way, the power of the Holy Spirit will carry our thoughts and distractions away down the river of prayer.
14. Continue with our prayer or activity.

Prayer Through Journaling

The prayer journal is like a diary of the spiritual movements of our lives. We can use the journal itself as an instrument of prayer. We can begin our prayer time with the solitude exercises of the nine breaths. Then when our spirit is quiet and peaceful, we start writing in a sort of stream-of-consciousness way – without thinking about it or censoring it, we write the first things that come to our mind.

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
3. Write “Dear God...” and write whatever comes to mind
4. Here are some examples:
 - a. My deepest desire
 - b. My greatest fear
 - c. Relationship in my life that I wish were stronger
 - d. My biggest confusion
 - e. My biggest sin
 - f. The gifts God has given me
 - g. The people I love and who love me
 - h. Things that I am grateful for this day
5. We close with the exercise of nine breaths and thank God for the gift of this prayer today.

Drawing God and Me

Adapted from “Armchair Mystic”, Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ

1. Before beginning this prayer, I set out a blank sheet of paper and a bunch of colored pencils.
2. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
3. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
4. After spending a while in stillness, I pick up a pencil and write at the top of the sheet of paper, “God and me.” Then, remaining quiet and relaxed, I draw a picture of the two of us—choosing images (persons, animals or objects) to represent God and me. I do not stop to think about how I should portray God or how I want myself to appear. I just draw.
5. After I am finished, I put the pencils down and try to descend back into the stillness.
6. After a while, I spend some time discussing what I have drawn with God. Why have I chosen that particular color for God? What is the image I have chosen for God? A father? A storm? A tree? Why have I chosen that image? What image have I chosen for me and why? In the picture, where am I in relation to God and why? Is there anything else in the picture? Why did I include this?
7. After telling God all about my picture.
8. I close by returning to the silence exercises, inviting God to transform my life.
9. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and close the prayer.

Healing Prayer Exercise: Meeting a Younger Me

Adapted from "Armchair Mystic", Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ

The following is an exercise that may help to heal some past wounds. It is a potentially painful exercise and should not be taken lightly. We will probably need to pray this exercise many times before lasting healing can take place

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
3. Imagine sitting in the chair across from me is a me from my past. I choose some difficult period in my life when I was troubled, anxious, angry, traumatized, or was experiencing some problems
4. I speak tenderly to the troubled me, showing him/her my present perception of his/her problem. I might want to express forgiveness of my younger self for the mistakes s/he made or comfort him/her or tell him/her that he is going to be OK.
5. Or I may not be ready for such gentleness yet. I may need to yell at him/her or scold him/her right now. There's only one rule here: I should be honest, and I should not censor myself.
6. When I have said all that has come to mind, I relax every part of me and allow the quiet of my prayer to take over.
7. Regardless of what I say to him/her, I invite him/her to leave telling him/her that I love him/her (...provided that I do love him/her. If not, then tell him/her the most loving thing that we can muster at that moment)
8. Once my younger me leaves the room, I notice Jesus now sitting in the chair. I tell him everything I'm feeling about the conversation I just had. Again, I allow myself to say whatever comes to mind without worrying about how Jesus will respond.
9. I sit in the stillness and silence for as long as I can. Thank God for the prayer time

Prayer Exercise: The Mantra

Adapted from "Armchair Mystic", Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ

The word "mantra" means "quieting the mind." It is a secret word or phrase repeated several times over in order to quiet oneself and become focused on God. Here's how to do it:

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. I close my eyes and begin to focus all my attention on my breathing in and out. Many spiritual guides say, "Become aware of your breathing," because most of the time I don't even notice it. I observe it as though I were a scientist who has just discovered to his astonishment the strange and wondrous act of respiration. I note that as a further relax, my breathing gets slower, quieter
3. I choose a word or phrase that expresses my desire for God to be present. Some favorite mantras are "Jesus," "Maranatha" (or English translation, "Come Lord Jesus") and "My Lord, My God." I begin to call on God slowly and reverently repeating my mantra over and over in my mind.
4. I noticed that my mantra is gradually coming in sync with my breathing. Using the word, "Jesus," as I inhale I say the syllable "Je" and as I exhale I say "sus."
5. I continue this practice for several minutes. Over time (and it does take time), I will notice myself reaching a state of quiet.

Prayer Exercise: Linking the Many Me's and Others

Adapted from "Armchair Mystic", Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ

A way to pray ready-made prayers is to allow the prayers to link myself with the past and/or with others who prayed this particular prayer throughout the years. Doing so allows me to bridge across rifts between myself and my past.

1. Make ourselves comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
2. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
3. I choose a prayer that I have prayed since my childhood and throughout my life.
4. I pray it aloud very slowly and reverently, as I might imagine cloistered monks do.
5. I pray it a second time, imagining all of the me's of my past standing before God, praying it together in one voice. I pray with a happy six-year-old, an awkward 15-year-old, the idealistic 18-year-old and so on. I might pray it over and over again, each time bringing in a new (old) me from the past.
6. I pray it another time, imagining this motley crew being joined by future me's (a 50-year-old me, a 70-year-old me and 80 year old me) all fervently praying this prayer, each with its own motivations, dreams, and failures. I imagine that, despite the diversity within the many me's, my prayerful voices are in perfect unison as they reach out to God.
7. I pray it another time, imagining the me's slowly merging into one another. As this happens, I keep praying the prayer but slow it down as the me's merge.
8. I keep slowing down the prayer and imagining the merging until there is only one me praying softly. I allow the prayer to quietly slip away and allow myself some time in the stillness.
9. Repeat the exercise by imagining other people important in your life, alive or dead.

Examen

Examination of Consciousness
(adapted by Fr. Brendan McGuire)

Spend 20 minutes at the end of each day thinking, praying, and recording the Examen. Use the below as a model of steps:

1. Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
2. Ask Jesus to open your eyes to see as God sees your day. Open your clenched fists.
3. Ask Jesus to guide you to the moments of blessing of the day; ask him to lead you to the graces God showered upon you in that day. Think of two or three blessings or moments of grace that you witnessed that day. It can be an action, thought, event, or encountering a person.
4. Look for the *movement of the Good Spirits (pattern of virtue)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the blessings or moments of grace. Ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go where he leads you. There is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of grace.
5. Look for the *movement of the Evil Spirits (pattern of vice)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the negative moments of the day or times when you were not your best self. Maybe there was a temptation or thought that recurs or maybe there was an action that led you astray. Again, there is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of temptation or weakness or sin. It is very important that one be gentle with oneself and ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go only where he leads you.
6. Give thanks to God for the grace of your prayer.

Daily: Write in your journal the thoughts you just prayed.

Weekly: Read over the journal entries of the last week and examine the pattern of the week for the movement of goodness and movement of weakness. Then ask the Lord how you can address any potential ways to modify actions or thoughts to make changes in your life. Be gentle with yourself and do not make any large steps; only baby steps of adjustments. Listen to Jesus. Verify it is Jesus you are listening by asking Mary to verify it is Jesus' voice.

Praying With Worthy Distractions

Adapted from "Armchair Mystic", Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ

Sometimes it is the case that our distractions are so persistent that we cannot seem to let them go. It may be because we are particularly consumed with some person of significance in our life dealing with a health issue or other major trauma. Or we find ourselves consumed with some future event such as a test, talk or presentation for which we are preparing.

1. Pray the exercise of nine breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
2. When the persistent distractions appear, and we have determined that they are significant and need our attention, then change strategies and now focus on it.
3. Person
 - a. If the distraction is a person (that we are worried about because of illness, or angry with because of a fight or we are in love with) then focus all our attention on this person.
 - b. Ask God to show us that person through God's eyes.
 - c. Allow God to walk us through some other perspectives of that person from God's point of view (POV).
 - d. For example, if we feel angry at our boss over the way he treated us, then we ask for God's impression of our relationship and is our anger righteous. Are we being fair with our assessment? Ask God is this the right way to deal with this matter. Do we have any fault in the deterioration of the relationship?
 - e. We spend some time thanking God for the life of this person (even if our present feelings towards that person are very negative) and ask God to help us to carry God's POV of this person throughout the rest of our day. If we feel called to act a certain way today, then we ask God for courage to act that way today.
4. Future distraction
 - a. If the concern is about the future, then ask God if we are right to be concerned about this potential issue? Do we have our priorities well placed? How can we promote gospel values in this future event?
 - b. Ask God to show us God's point of view (POV) and put this future event into the context of our life and how God sees it
 - c. We ask God to help us see any spiritual pitfalls or traps in this situation. Could we be too focused on success or failure? Are we being fair and just in this upcoming business deal? Etc.
 - d. We ask God to show us what we can do to avoid the pitfalls and to give us the strength and courage to do what needs to be done in this situation.
5. We close with the exercise of nine breaths and thank God for the gift of this prayer today.

SCRIPTURAL MEDITATION

(Also known as Ignatian Contemplation or Imaginative Prayer)

Through scriptural meditation we step into a gospel story and imagine ourselves to be there in that scene. Rather than reading the Bible abstractly, we enter the story to more deeply experience and encounter Jesus in the scene and listen to what God is saying to us. We might be a disciple in the boat with Jesus, one of the crowd at the feeding of the five thousand, or the woman at the well asked by Jesus to draw up water for him. In these and many other gospel stories, we use our God-given imagination to listen to see, hear, taste and smell the scene around us. As we do we observe what we are thinking and feeling as the events unfold around us, inviting God to speak to us through that.

A scriptural meditation invites us to become a part of the gospel story being played out in our own lives and neighborhoods. Not everyone finds this easy or natural. But God is at work no matter whether we feel or experience anything. The most important thing is our desire to know God more deeply, something which will always be treasured by God.

Scriptural meditation is not complicated, and the few simple steps involved are outlined below:

- Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
- Begin prayerfully, asking God to bless your imagination and the Holy Spirit to guide and protect you.
- *Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my heart and mind to listen to your Word.*
- Choose a gospel passage in which Jesus is active and present.
- Ask Jesus to accompany you on this journey.
- Read through the passage several times until it becomes familiar. It may help to read it aloud. Pause for 30 seconds or so between each reading to let the story soak in and begin to imagine the scene.
- Use all your senses to let the gospel passage unfold in your imagination...
 - What is the location like?
 - What time of day is it?
 - Who are the people there?
 - What can you hear... smell... touch... taste...
 - What emotions are evoked throughout?
- Try to let the story unfold naturally. You may be an observer or one of the main characters talking with Jesus. That's ok. Let the Holy Spirit guide you through without striving to make anything happen.
- Try to avoid analyzing actions or finding applications (e.g. "I should be more like Peter when he..."). The blessing comes through experiencing the story with our whole being, not just our mind.
- Stay in the story as long as feels natural, and then end with a period of silence in Jesus' presence.
- End by spending a few minutes reflecting on what took place, perhaps by journaling.
- Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and give thanks to God for being with you during this time.

LECTIO DIVINA

- PREPARATION
 - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
 - Begin with silence for a few minutes, humbly asking God to quieten your heart and make you aware that you are in His loving presence. Ask Jesus to accompany you on this journey.
 - Offer a prayer to the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance:
 - *Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my heart and mind to listen to your Word.*
 - When you are ready, begin reading and praying through the four movements, described below.
 - With time and practice, these movements will become simple and easy as they flow naturally from one to the other.
- LECTIO (READ)
 - On the first reading, simply open yourself to the presence of God.
 - Read the passage slowly and prayerfully, allowing short pauses between sentences.
 - Over time you will discover whether it is more helpful for you to read silently or out loud.
 - Try them both.
 - As you read, take in the words and the overall flow of the passage.
 - Allow a time of silence following the reading continuing to open yourself to God's Spirit.
- MEDITATIO (RECEIVE)
 - On the second prayerful reading of the passage, listen for a particular word or a phrase through which God wants to speak to you.
 - You will notice your attention being drawn to something.
 - Once you have "received" the word or phrase, begin to silently meditate on that.
 - Reflect on why God would highlight this for you today, ask God any questions that come to mind, and note things that seem important as you meditate on what God has given you.
 - Remember that the focus is on listening to what God has to say to you.
- ORATIO (RESPOND)
 - On the third prayerful reading of the passage, listen now for God's invitation, and respond from your heart.
 - God is always inviting us in some way... to let go of something, or to take up something; to do something or be something. Let Jesus accompany on this invitation.
 - The invitation can take innumerable forms.
 - Following the reading, continue to listen for God's invitation and then respond silently or out loud from an honest heart.
- CONTEMPLATIO (REST)
 - The focus of the fourth prayerful reading of the passage is to simply rest now in the love that God has for you.
 - Let the words wash over you.
 - There is no further need to reflect or respond as you simply allow the Spirit to draw you close and fill you with God's love, grace and peace. Feel Jesus with you.
 - Linger in this place of deep connection.
 - You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey.
 - Take your word, phrase, or image with you.
 - It is something to which you can return throughout the day.
 - A reminder of the love of God has for you and the special word God had for you today.
 - You may want to spend time reflecting on your experience or write in your journal
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths and give thanks to God for being with you during this time.

AUDIO DIVINA

- PREPARATION
 - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space.
 - Find a comfortable position where you can listen to the music.
 - Choose the piece of music you wish to use.
 - Know that God can be known through many different forms and sounds.
 - Be present. Be open.
- EARS TO HEAR: READ
 - Listen to the selection.
 - If the piece has a text, pay close attention to the words or follow along with a lyric sheet or piece of music.
 - Let the music fill your heart without judgment
 - If you chose instrumental music, think of a favorite Bible verse or a message of gratitude.
 - Breathe in the music and let it flow through you.
 - Are you called back again and again to a certain phrase in the lyrics?
 - Simply notice where your energy is drawn.
 - Notice where your ear is avoiding or passing over.
 - Slowly become aware of feelings as you listen.
 - Be open and present to this.
- OPEN HEART: RECEIVE
 - Take a second listen.
 - Focusing on the feel of the music and the imagery that it brings, perhaps imagery associated with the phrase you chose.
 - Open your imagination.
 - As you reflect on music and sound, what feelings or longings are evoked?
 - What memories or hopes are stirred?
 - Make room within your heart for whatever wants to emerge.
 - Be here. Be present.
 - Let go of judging or critiquing.
 - Simply be, lingering here, opening your heart to whatever wants to rise.
- OPEN MIND: RESPOND
 - Listen a third time but connecting especially with the phrases you chose.
 - Let the thoughts and feelings that the music has inspired wash through you.
 - How is God speaking to you through the music you chose to pray with today?
 - Slowly notice what is being revealed in your listening and through what you are feeling.
 - What is the invitation in this moment of your life?
 - What insights have you gained?
 - What invitation is growing in you?
- ENJOY: REST
 - Let go. Rest.
 - Linger in this place of deep connection.
 - You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey.
 - Take your word/phrase or melody with you.
 - Enjoy a few moments of stillness in this space.
 - You may want to spend time reflecting on your experience or write in your journal
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths and give thanks to God for being with you during this time.

VISIO DIVINA

- PREPARATION
 - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible.
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths to relax and invite God into our space
 - Find a comfortable position where you can gaze at the photo/painting.
 - Move your awareness from your head into your heart.
 - Know that God can be known through many different forms and images. Be present. Be open.
- EYES TO SEE: READ
 - Allow your eyes to gaze gently on your image.
 - Let them sweep the whole of the picture.
 - Notice the shapes and the colors.
 - Notice the lines and the details.
 - Look for symbols.
 - Notice if there is a place on the image where your eye is invited to linger.
 - Are you called back again and again to a certain detail or color?
 - Try not to think about it too much.
 - Simply notice where your energy is drawn.
 - Notice where your eye is avoiding or passing over.
 - What part inspires you?
 - Where do you experience resistance?
 - Slowly become aware of the place in the image that is just for you today.
 - It might be a color, a shape, or a tiny detail.
 - Linger here.
 - Be open and present to this.
- OPEN HEART: RECEIVE
 - Take a second longer look.
 - Open your imagination.
 - As you reflect on your place in the image, what feelings or longings are evoked?
 - What memories or hopes are stirred?
 - Make room within your heart for whatever wants to emerge.
 - Be here. Be present.
 - Let go of judging or critiquing.
 - Simply be, lingering here, opening your heart to whatever wants to rise.
- OPEN MIND: RESPOND
 - Slowly notice what is being revealed in your seeing and through what you are feeling.
 - What is the invitation in this moment of your life?
 - In the day-to-day life you are living, what is God calling you to do or be?
 - What insights have you gained?
 - What invitation is growing in you? What work would you like to do today?
- ENJOY: REST
 - Let go. Rest.
 - Linger in this place of deep connection.
 - You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey.
 - Take your image with you.
 - Enjoy a few moments of stillness in this space.
 - You may want to spend time reflecting on your experience or write in your journal
 - Pray the exercise of 9 breaths and give thanks to God for being with you during this time

Prayer and Silence

(adapted from *With Open Hands*, Henri Nouwen)

Lord, speak gently in my silence.
When the loud outer noises of my surroundings
and the loud inner noises of my fears
keep pulling me away from you,
help me to trust that you are still there
even when I am unable to hear you.
Give me ears to listen to your small, soft voice saying:
“Come to me, you who are overburdened,
and I will give you rest...
for I am gentle and humble of heart.”
Let that loving voice be my guide.
Amen.

Prayer of Compassion

(adapted from *With Open Hands*, Henri Nouwen)

Lord, as you draw me ever deeper into your heart,
I just discover that my companions on the
journey are men and women
loved by you as fully and as intimately as I am.
In your compassionate heart,
there’s a place for all of them.
No one is excluded.
Give me a share in your compassion, dear God,
so that your unlimited love may become visible
in the way I love my brothers and sisters.
Amen

Nothing

Edwina Gately, *Growing into God*

I must come to understand
What it means
To hold on to nothing —
It is the ultimate
Experience of faith.
There is nothing left,
Only God,
Only God
And me —
My little self
In God.

Living Presence

Edwina Gately, A Mystical Heart

We are each of us
a bit of God,
a scrap of divinity.
If we would know it,
Oh! If only
we could know it,
we would walk the earth
in awe,
eyes shining in splendor,
hearts suspended in delight
at the miracle
of the living God
gracing our days
and nights.

Silent presence

Edwina Gately, Psalms of a Lay Woman

I thought that God
Had come to me.
That after the wild delights—
The suffering and the joys,
The pain and the hopelessness
Of the years—
That God
Had come to me.
That after adventure and achievement,
Pain, despair, and death,
God
Had come to me.
Yes—with relief and mild surprise
I met my God again.
And then I saw,
Oh, fool, I saw!
That God had suffered
The pain and hopelessness,
Had shared the achievements and the joys,
That God,
All enveloping,
All compassion,
Had been there in silence
All the time.

Letting Go

Edwina Gately, *Psalms of a Lay Woman*

It is time to go.
I can smell it,
Breathe it,
Touch it.
In something in me
Trembles.
I cannot cry,
Only sit bewildered,
Brave and helpless,
That it is time.

Time to go.
Time to step out
Of the world
I shaped
And watched become.
Time to let go
Of the status
And the admiration.

Time to go.
To turn my back
On a life that throbs
With my vigor
And a spirit
That soared
Through my tears.

Time to go
From all I am
To all I have
Not yet become.

I cannot cry,
But tremble
At death
Within me,
And sob—
Tearless—
At the grief
That heaves
My soul.

Time to go.
Lonely,
Brave departure
That stands
Erect and smiling
Whilst my very being
Shutters
In utter nakedness.

Blessing for Solitude

(John O'Donohue)

May you recognize in your life
the presence, power, and light of your soul.
May you realize that you are never alone,
that your soul in its brightness and belonging
connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.
May you have respect for your individuality and difference.
May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique,
that you have a special destiny here,
that behind the facade of your life
there is something beautiful and eternal happening.
May you learn to see yourself
with the same delight, pride, and expectation
with which God sees you in every moment.

Prayer for Detachment: Asking For Light

Blessed Peter Faber SJ

I beg of you, my Lord,
To remove anything which separates
Me from you, and you from me.

Remove anything that makes me on unworthy
Of your sight, your control, your reprehension;
Of your speech and conversation,
Of your benevolence and love.

Cast from me every evil
That stands in the way of my seeing you,
hearing, tasting, savoring, and touching you;
Fearing and being mindful of you;
Knowing, trusting, loving, and possessing you;
Being conscious of your presence
And as far as may be, enjoying you.

This is what I ask for myself.

God of Watching

Padraig O'Tuama

God of watching,
whose gaze I doubt and rally against both,
but in which I take refuge, despite my limited vision.
Shelter me today,
against the flipping nature of my own focus,
and help me find a calm kind of standing.
And when I falter, which is likely,
give me the courage and the kindness to begin again
with hope and coping.
For you are the one whose watchfulness is steady.
Amen.

Byzantine Prayer

Serene Light, shining in the
Ground of my being,
Draw me to yourself,
Draw me pass the snares of the senses,
Out of the mazes of my mind,
Free me from symbols, from words,
That I may discover
The Signified
The Word Unspoken
In the darkness
The veils the ground of my being. Amen

Open Hands

(adapted from *With Open Hands*, Henri Nouwen)

Lord, I do not know where you are leading me.
I do not even know what my next day,
my next week, or my next year will look like.
As I try to keep my hands open,
I trust that you will put your hand in mine
and bring me home.
Thank you, God, for your love.
Thank you.
Amen