

Casting Out the Evil Spirit in the Church



Praying to Become True Disciples in the Kingdom of God

**A resetting of John Wesley's
"A Collection of Forms of Prayers for Every Day of the Week"
1738**

Nick Campbell

Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you are able! —All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer.

Mark 9:17-29 (NRSV)

Brother Lawrence (1611-1691) said, "All things are possible to him who believes. They are less difficult to him who hopes. They are more easy to him who loves, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues. The end we ought to propose to ourselves is to become, in this life, the most perfect worshipers of God that we possibly can be, as we hope to be through all eternity. The greater perfection a soul aspires after, the more dependent it is upon divine grace."

Another way to say that we believe in grace is this: we depend on God. We depend on God for helping us know that we need God. We depend on God to help us be in a right relationship with God and our neighbors. We depend on God to give us a new spirit in our spiritual rebirth.

The reality for Christians today, as it has been in every age of the Christian era, is that we most often do not depend on God. We depend on ourselves. We depend on our training. We depend on our leaders. We depend on our government. We depend on the goodness of others. We depend on the latest advancements and theories. And in an interdependent life, those are all necessary dependences. They become sin, however, when we expect these dependences to save us and to give us meaning apart from God.

Jesus, at his resurrection, promised to be with us always, and Jesus keeps his promises. In our sin, however, we often find ourselves apart from God. Is it any wonder, then, that in the name of Christ, we have seen people rush into the latest hot issues only to be burned by fires that do not refine? Is it any wonder that we have seen disciples dive into the swells of cultural tidal changes only to be drowned in a sea of opinions? Instead, the world witnesses Christians who "foam and grind their teeth and become rigid" in their positions – which Jesus immediately identifies as a lack of faith! We have been

possessed by a spirit that keeps us from “speaking and hearing” the Word of God which has come to redeem the creation, and to bring God’s kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven.”

Prayer can cast out the sin that keeps us from hearing the Word of God and speaking the Truth in our every thought, word, and work. Or, to say it another way, prayer can help prepare in our hearts a place where only Christ may be heard. Prayer can help conform our lives to Christ, so that the power of God can work in and through us. Prayer can help us learn to have confidence in the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us in the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To expect to be able to cast out the evil spirits – in ourselves and in the world – without prayer is a sign of dependence on something much less than God.

In 1738, an English cleric by the name of John Wesley published a small book titled, “A Collection of Forms of Prayers for Every Day of the Week.” Every morning and every evening, every day of the week, a prayer was entered into that examined his dependence on God, his conformity to Christ, and his confidence in the Holy Spirit. The prayers were grounded in Scripture, shaped by Tradition, prepared for Christian Experience, and utilized the tool of Reason to identify those places where God’s grace and our sin interact.

These prayers take very seriously what it means to depend on God for life and meaning. They push, and pull, and dissect, and pore over our intentions, our behaviors, and our understandings. Yet they also affirm, lift up, put together, and encourage us to depend on God, who is revealed in Jesus Christ, and at work among us through the Holy Spirit.

These are not prayers for those persons who are content to limit themselves to the uplifting experiences of the beginner Christian. They are not for the casual Christian who is not willing to die to the world, or the “almost” Christian who is scandalized by the idea that their form of godliness is without the true power of perfect godly love. These are prayers for those who are ready to trust God to strip away all that is not in keeping with God’s will in their life. These are prayers to separate out the chaff from the wheat. These are prayers to refine the gold. These are prayers for those desiring earnestly to go on to perfection in love. These are prayers to cast out the Evil Spirit that is in the Church!

It would be a “stumbling block” (see Matthew 16:23, 18:6-7) to ask you to read and use these prayers in their 18th century language. This book is my effort to remove the stumbling block for you, so that God may speak clearly to you in your time of prayer. The prayers, as much as possible, are Wesley’s own words. Since that era, however, some words in the English language have changed in meaning; some are no longer in common use; some take on different meanings when separated from Wesley’s context of “going on to perfection.” Some of the language is archaic; other expressions might offend our contemporary sensibilities (i.e., praying for “ideots and lunaticks.”) Some of his expressions are best understood against his theology: “I am nothing” is descriptive of our humble status before God, but not our status before other persons. His expressions, “a detached heart” and “an indifferent love,” refer to trusting God with ultimate outcomes, not with a lack of caring. When I thought that Wesley’s meaning would not be

clear for these reasons, I have substituted a word or phrase to come as close as possible to its original meaning. At a few places, I have added a phrase to clarify the meaning, though this has been done sparingly. When an expression has been used several times, I have on a few occasions substituted imageries that are included in the root meanings of the words.

Yet, even with these adjustments and adaptations, there will still seem to “stumbling blocks” throughout the prayers. These most often will be signs of where the world’s spirits are still tripping us into a fall from grace!

While I have “translated” these prayers for today, and there is great power and beauty in the words and imagery used in the prayers, these prayers are not to be admired for the way they are crafted, or for their inclusive and expansive imagery of God. They are tools to help form us, to help create a place within us that can only be filled by God.

The prayers then did not stand alone, but also included questions for self-examination according to a theme for the day. Those questions are also included here. The purpose of the questions is to promote critical self-examination from within the context of going on to perfection in love, so that the vestiges of sin can be exposed to the redeeming and sanctifying power of God’s grace. The questions are often open-ended, inviting an examination of the past day’s actions and intentions, and therefore are only as useful as we are honest with ourselves and before God. We can depend on God for forgiveness, mercy, patience, long-suffering, and gentleness, so have the confidence to share all in your time of praying.

Part of the challenge of these prayers is what we bring to the prayers. What do you expect will happen if you make these prayers part of your daily spiritual discipline? One possibility is that you will develop the virtues that seem to be the focus of each day; i.e., love of God, love of neighbor, humility, mortification, etc. And I will readily admit that you will likely be a “better person” for having developed these virtues. Yet if your goal is merely to become “better,” then you will have missed the point of the whole exercise. These virtues are forms that help shape us as vessels so that we may be filled with God’s grace and live as disciples of Jesus Christ. As ends in themselves, they are unable to save us, for that is the work of Jesus Christ alone.

It is not our goal in becoming perfect that we will be “more humble” than everyone else (think about that oxymoron for a while!), but that through humility we find room to meet with the God revealed in Jesus Christ who comes to us in “the least of these.” The prayers and questions can sometimes seem contradictory, when really they are simply trying to keep our focus on God as our beginning and end, and not on our self.

It is also not our goal in these prayers to gain new insights, deeper revelations, or more honest appraisals of our own sins and need for Jesus -- though that will likely happen. Our intent should not be to know more about ourselves, or even to know more about God, but to know God directly. At the risk of being redundant, the goal of going on to

perfection is not in making better people, or more informed people, or more enlightened people, but in having people living out a holy relationship with God and their neighbors.

John Wesley recommended at least 30 minutes each morning and each evening with these forms of prayer. A quick examination will reveal that it would not likely take that much time to simply read the prayers. Wesley's expectation was that praying for persons meant more than simply reciting their names – it meant remembering them to God in all their circumstances. The examination of our soul requires an honest struggle with our self-image, our relationships with our neighbors, and our appropriation of our salvation.

Wesley also wisely counseled that what we put into our prayers is an indication of what we can expect to get out of our prayers. A lively expectation that we will meet with God in these times of prayer is vital to being open to receiving whatever graces God is pleased to pour out upon us in God's own time. Conversely, an expectation that praying will take only a few minutes, as one more thing to cross off our "to do" list will not seriously divert us from seeking to do our own will instead of the will of God.

At the end of your "formal" time of praying, to further develop your sense of depending on God, you may continue to be prayerfully mindful by taking a "word from God" with you to repeat, reflect, and renew in throughout the day. This "word from God" may be a word or phrase from that session's prayer. Some examples that I have carried throughout the day include:

Make my heart fully yours (Sunday morning)

Make me be like yourself (Monday evening)

Let me beg for mercy for the physicians of my soul (Tuesday evening)

The world crucified to me (Wednesday morning)

I am not mine, but yours (Thursday morning)

In obedience, not worthiness (Friday morning)

If only I had the heart of an angel (Saturday evening)

There is an evil spirit in the world, and its influence is seen in the Church. May we remember that only prayer can cast it out!

Nick Campbell

Sunday Morning

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
it is my desire to come before you with all humility,
to offer to you my love and thanksgiving,
even though I know I am unworthy to serve you in even this small way.

Glory be to thee, O most adorable Father,
who did not only create everything that is good
but rested in order to enjoy its goodness.

Glory be to thee, O holy Jesus,
who by thy eternal Spirit
offered a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,
rose again on the third day from the dead,
and then received all power to rule heaven and earth.

Glory be to thee, O blessed Spirit,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who came in fiery tongues on the apostles
so that they could proclaim Good News,
who moves in our hearts as at the creation,
bringing us out of chaos and into life.

Glory be to thee, O holy undivided Trinity,
for your unifying work for our redemption,
and for restoring us again as your children.

Glory be to thee, O compassionate God,
for providing us in our weakness and sin
a day set aside for the remembrance of your grace,
a day when we may be joined at the heart with you.

May this day be a day of privilege and happiness
set apart for the concerns of my soul,
free from worldly distractions and engagements,
with nothing to do but to praise and love you.

May this day be ever sacred to divine love, rest, and your creative renewal.

Let the Holy Spirit descend on me,
that I may be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,
as were your apostles.

Let the Spirit's inspiration guide and assist me
in all that you would have me do this day,
that my wandering thoughts may be fixed only on you,
that my tumultuous affections may know your peace,
that my apathy may become fervent desire for you.

Let me join in the prayers and praises of your Church
with ardent and heavenly affections,
hearing your Word with earnest attention
and a fixed resolution to obey it.

Let me approach your altar expecting to be filled
with humility, faith, hope, love, and all holiness,
receiving these gifts in remembrance of my crucified Savior.
Let me be about the works of necessity and mercy,
in prayer, praise, and meditation.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
always be acceptable in your sight.

I know, O Lord, that I am yours to command,
and it is my duty to love you with all that I am.
I know you are infinite holiness and perfection of love.
I know you have created me,
so that my being and blessings are the effect of your power and goodness.
I know that you are the End for which I was created,
and that there is no happiness apart from you.
I know that it was your love for me,
even while I am in sin,
that caused you to send Jesus, the Lord of glory,
to humble himself on the cross
so that I may be raised to glory.
I know that you have provided me with all that I need
in order to set aside my sin
and to live in your love,
showing mercy to one who deserves no mercy.
I know that it is you alone who works in me
for your pleasure, both to will, and to do your will.

I confess that it is my duty to love you, O God,
with all my heart,
with all the strength you give me,
with all the love that you pour into my heart,
so that I may, with pure motive and intention,
make use of my understanding, affections, senses, health, time,
and whatever other talents you give to me.
Let this duty so fill my heart,
that there will be no rival for my affection, and
let this be revealed in the disposition of all my thoughts, words, and works.

O thou infinite Goodness, confirm your past mercies to me
by enabling me for what remains of my life
to be more faithful than I have been in the past.
For the rest of my life, let me satisfy this great duty to love you with all that I am.
Keep me from the delusions that this duty is easily done
by only external devotions, words, sighs, and tears
but that this duty can only be fulfilled as I love you
and the neighbors you give me.

Let me feel and to know what it is to truly love you.

O merciful God, whatever else I may be denied in this life,
do not deny me this love.

Save me from the idolatry of loving this world
and any of the things of this world.

Let me never love any creature, except for your sake,
and in fulfillment of my commanded duty.

Make my heart fully yours,
and reside and reign there
as you do in heaven.

Being created by you, let me move at your direction.

Being created for you, let me act for your glory.

Being redeemed by you, let me return what is yours
and rest assured I am by your side.

Almighty God, graciously accept the prayers and offerings
of your Church this day.

Clothe your ministers with righteousness.

Forgive all your people who come unprepared.

Prosper all those who are sincerely engaged
in either propagating or promoting your faith and love.

Hasten the day when Jesus shall reign in every heart
and in every corner of the world.

Enable us who follow Jesus to serve you in all holiness,
and to know the love of Christ is greater
than all the knowledge and wisdom of the world.

Continue to pour out on us your grace,
particularly when we are most in need because of our sin.

Pour out your blessing on our schools,
that they may promote true religion and sound learning.

Show mercy, O God, to the members of my family.

Show mercy to my friends.

Show mercy to those who are my enemies.

Show mercy to those who are in affliction.

May your hand guide them, and your Spirit be with them
that submitting themselves to your will
and directing their thoughts, words, and works to your glory,
they may receive the life you intend for them,
a life with you in the glory of your kingdom.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, blessed forever.

Amen.

General Questions

which a serious Christian may propose for reflection before devotions

With what degree of attention and fervor did I use my morning prayers, either public or private?

Have I done anything without a present (or at least a previous) perception as to how it would reflect on the glory of God?

Did I consider what particular virtue I was to exercise, and what business I had to do this day?

Have I been zealous to undertake, as well as active in doing, what good I could do?

Have I interested myself any farther in the affairs of others than love requires?

Have I, in all my encounters with others, considered how I might either give or receive improvement that leads to perfection in love?

Have I mentioned the failing or fault of anyone when it was not necessary for their good, or the good of another?

Have I unnecessarily grieved any one by word or deed?

Have I before, or in, every considerable conversation or action, considered how it might be made a means of improving in the virtue of the day?

Particular Questions relating to the love of God

Have I appropriated some part of this day for reflecting on God's perfections and mercies?

Have I labored to make this day of heavenly rest sacred to divine love?

Have I used those parts of the day that were not employed in prayer, reading, and meditation, in works of necessity and mercy?

Sunday Evening

O my Father, my God, I am in your hand;
 may I rejoice above all things that I am there!

Do with me what seems good in your sight,
 only let me love you completely.

I magnify you for granting me to be born in your Church,
 for persons who have been my spiritual parents,
 for washing me in your baptism,
 for instructing me in your truth and holiness,
 for sustaining me by your gracious providence,
 for guiding me by your Spirit,
 for admitting me with the rest of my Christian family
 into your place of worship and praise,
 for often feeding my soul with your body and blood,
 those pledges of love,
 and conveyances of strength and comfort.

O be gracious unto all of us who this day (or any day)
 gathered together at your table.

Strengthen our hearts in your ways against all temptations,
 and make us more than conquerors in your love.

O my Father, my God, deliver me from all violent passions!

 I know how much they keep me away from both the knowledge and love of you.

O let none of them find a way in my heart,

 but let me ever possess my soul in meekness.

O my God, I desire to fear these passions more than death!

Let me not serve these passions, but only you.

Let me be your servant, loving you with all my heart.

Deliver me, O God, from the love of company and diversions.

I know these can be pleasant snares that ask me to pursue them for their own sakes,
 and not for your glory.

Give me that true wisdom which allows me to seek out company
 which will strengthen my weaknesses,
 and who are necessary for my growth in love.

Let me be aware of enslavement to false charms,
 reserving my whole heart for you alone.

Deliver me, O God, from being too zealous even for necessary business,

 so that it may not take your place in my thoughts,
 and in my perceptions that it is you who guides me and strengthens me;
 and not me, but Christ in me, that does good.

I know the narrowness of my heart,

 and that too much attention to earthly things leaves no room for heavenly things.

Teach me to go about my business with a heart disengaged from worldly concerns,
that I may see you in all things,
that I may see you watching me and searching me,
that I may never impair the liberty of your Spirit
which is necessary for gracious love of you.

Deliver me, O God, from a lazy mind,
from all lukewarmness concerning your will and grace,
from all dejection of Spirit.

I know that all these can serve to deaden my love for you.
Mercifully free my heart from these weaknesses,
and give me a lively, vital, active, and cheerful spirit
that I vigorously perform whatever you command,
thankfully suffer whatever you choose for me,
and be wholly obedient in all things to your holy name.

Deliver me, O God, from all idolatrous love of any creature.
Let me not be lost by loving any creature more than their Creator.
Preserve me from all such blind affection.
Guard my desires, so that I may love in ways that build up your kingdom,
and increase my love for you.
You require me to love you with all my heart.
Guard my heart so that it is opened to share your love.

Above all, deliver me, O God, from idolatrous self-love.
I know (by your infinite mercy and knowledge) that this is the root of all evil.
I know that you have made me to do your will, not mine.
I know the corruption of the devil is having a will contrary to yours.
O be my Helper against this most dangerous of all idols,
that I may both discern all its subtleties
and withstand all its forces.
O Thou who commands me, give me strength to renounce myself,
give me strength, and I will obey your command.
My choice and my desire is to love myself, and all your creatures,
in and for your glory.
O let your Almighty Arm establish, strengthen and settle me
that you may ever be the Ground and Pillar of my love.

By this love of you, my God, may my soul be fixed
against its natural inconstancy in fully loving you.
By this love, may the passions of my soul
be reduced to an entire indifference as to all things else
that I may only desire what is pleasing in your sight.

O my God, let your glorious Name be duly honored and loved
by all your creatures, as befits their Creator.

Let your infinite goodness and greatness be ever adored by all angels and all people.

May the Church be protected from all powers of darkness.

O give to all who call themselves by your Name
at least a short glimpse of your goodness.

May they once taste and see how gracious you are,
that everything else may be tasteless to them,
that their desires may always be for you,
that they may render you love and praise,
that their obedience may be pure and cheerful,
constant, zealous, universal, and uniform,
like the angels who wait on you in heaven.

Send forth your blessed Spirit into the midst of these sinful nations,
and make us a holy people.

Stir up the hearts of those who lead us in the government, the Church, and society
that they may be happy instruments of your will
and in promoting your good work.

Be gracious to our universities,
and to people in every station in life.

Be gracious to all in affliction.

Let the trial of their faith work patience in them,
and perfect them in hope and love.

Bless my family and friends.

Bless all those whom you have given me as neighbors.

Bless all those who have been instrumental to my good,
by their assistance, advice, example, or writings.

Bless all those who do not pray for themselves.

Change the hearts of my enemies,
and give me grace to forgive them,
even as Christ has forgiven us.

O Thou Shepherd of Israel, receive me this night, and always, into your protection.

Accept my poor services,
and pardon my sinfulness in these and all my other holy duties.

I look for the day when sin and misery, infirmity and death shall be no more,
and your kingdom is on earth as it is in heaven.

May your Spirit stir in me, and in all who wait for the completion of your will,
eternal love and praise of God, the Father; God, the Son; God, the Holy Spirit;
throughout all ages, world without end.

Amen.

Monday Morning

Questions in preparation for praying each morning

Did I think of God first and last?

Have I examined myself how I behaved since last night's retirement?

Am I resolved to do all the good I can this day, to be diligent in the business of my calling?

O God, you are the giver of all good gifts!

I, your unworthy servant, desire entirely to praise your Name
for all the expressions of your bounty toward me.

Blessed be your love for all the temporal benefits
that you have with a liberal hand poured out on me,
for my healing and strength,
food and clothing,
and all other necessities you have provided me, a sinner.

Blessed be your patience with me
even when I have refused your grace time and again,
for you have still preserved me to this day
having brought me safely through the night
that I may have another opportunity to be renewed
and to perfect my repentance.

Forgive me, O Lord, all my former sins
and make me zealous and diligent to grow in grace
to build up my soul in faith and love every day.

Give me grace to always know you are near,
and let your love fill and rule my soul,
in all those places, companies, and employments
to which you have called me this day.

As I pass through this world, keep me from setting my heart on any part of it
but always let my sight and my attention be on the prize of my high calling.

This one thing let me do today,
let me so press towards the prize as to make everything else minister to it
and be careful so to use them in order to fit my soul for that pure bliss,
which you give to those prepared to love you with all their heart and strength.

O Thou, you are good, and by you is good done.

You extend lovingkindness to all people,
the works of your hands, creatures in your image
who are capable of knowing and loving you eternally.

Do not let me exclude even one, O Lord, from your love
for all are to receive your works of mercy.

Let me treat all my neighbors with that tender love
that is due to your servants and your children.
This is the love you have commanded me to do!
For if I fail to love even one of my neighbors,
it exposes to your sight my ingratitude,
and I forfeit your loving kindness in my life,
which I need more than life itself!

Grant that I may assist all my brothers and sisters with my prayers,
when I cannot reach them to assist them with my personal service.

Make me zealous to embrace all opportunities to serve by
assisting the needy,
protecting the oppressed,
instructing the unknowing,
exhorting the godly,
reproving the wicked.

Let me consider the failings of others as if they were my own,
that I may be grieved for them,
that I may not embarrass or reveal them, except as love requires,
and even then, with tenderness and compassion.

Let your love to me, O blessed Savior, be the pattern of my love to my neighbor.
Nothing was too dear to you, to keep you from saving me.

Let me think there is nothing too dear to me
that would keep me from doing everlasting good to my neighbor.

These persons are your inheritance as the Son of God;
therefore I will cherish them.

These persons you have redeemed at inestimable cost;
as enabled by the Holy Spirit, I will try to recover all
from a state of destruction.

By this, I will bring glory to your gospel
by doing good according to my power and capacity.

May I then be received into your eternal home
where I may join in the singing of your eternal praises,
and the praises of the Lamb, sacrificed for me,
who is now enthroned in Glory forever.

I humbly ask that your mercy extend to all persons
so that they may become your humble servants.

Let all Christians live up to your commandments,
even in the midst of sinful nations.

Bring glory to yourself by our reformation,
and not by our destruction.

Turn toward us, so that we may be turned towards you.

Favor us with your grace, O Lord,
that our provocations may end and
that our afflictions may cease.

Defend your Church from schism, heresy, and sacrilege;
keep our secular leaders mindful of their sacred trust;
bless our spiritual leaders with apostolic grace,
exemplary lives, and sound doctrine.

Grant to our lawmakers, your wisdom;
our judges, your integrity and zeal;
our universities, an environment for true learning;
and to all persons from every station in life,
pious, peaceful, and loyal hearts.

Preserve, in their bodies and souls, these persons
who have been for me vessels of your grace;
among them, my parents,
my brothers and sisters,
my friends and relations,
my co-workers.

Forgive my enemies, and in your due time, make them kindly affected toward me.
Have mercy on all who are afflicted in mind, body, or estate
that they may have patience under their sufferings,
and find strength out of all their afflictions.

Grant that we, with those who have shown us your way,
may be raised into the joyful resurrection
through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, world without end.

Amen.

Monday Evening

Particular questions relating to the love of our neighbor

Have I thought any thing (other than my conscience) too dear to part with, which kept me from serving or pleasing my neighbor?

Have I rejoiced or grieved with my neighbor, as befits my neighbor's condition?

Have I received my neighbor's shortcomings and failures with understanding and concern, and not with anger?

Have I taken an opposing viewpoint from any one when I had no good reason to, or have I argued where there was no chance of changing my neighbor's opinion?

Have I been so concerned with being right that I refused to let a neighbor in the wrong (in relatively unimportant matters) have the last word?

Most great and glorious Lord God,

I desire to humble myself before your divine majesty,
under a deep sense of my unworthiness,
with sorrow, shame, and mixed emotions,
to confess my many sins, which deserve your most severe judgments.
Father, I have sinned against you, and am no longer worthy to be called your child!
May your parental love still include me,
and for the sake of Jesus, graciously receive me.
Accept my imperfect repentance,
and send your Spirit of adoption into my heart,
that I may know that I am yours,
that as a child I may call you Father,
and that I may share in the blessings of your children.

Your goodness fills me with adoration for all the benefits
that you have already given to me on every occasion;
for the good things of this life,
for the hope of eternal happiness,
for my preservation even to this day.

If I have avoided any sin, it is because of your restraining grace.
If I have avoided any danger, it was because your hand has guided me.
This was not my own doing, or wisdom, or knowledge,
but only your grace and mercy towards me,

May I receive all your blessings with this same sense that is it all to your glory and honor,
and may I become more diligent to daily devote all that I am,
and all that I have, to your glory.

O my God, fill my soul with a complete love of you
that I may love nothing, except for your sake
and in response to your love.
Give me grace that I may study your Word daily,
so that as my knowledge increases so does my love for you.
Create in me a holy desire to keep your commandments,
a cheerful patience under your holy discipline,
and a thankful resignation in your holy service.
May my thoughts of you always be filled with awe!
When I speak of you to others, may my words reflect adoration, devotion, and humility.
In all that I do in this life, let your servant glorify you
by every thought of my heart,
by every word of my mouth,
by every work of my hand,
by professing your truth, even to death
(if my death is in service to your will)
by engaging all, as far as I am able, to glorify and love you.

Let your unwearied and tender love for me be the model of my love for my neighbor.
Let me pray for my neighbor to procure and promote health and safety,
ease and happiness.

Let me be active in providing comfort, succor, and relief
to all in whom your love and their need meet
in calling me to respond in love and charity.

In all my dealings with those neighbors you give to me
make me peaceful and reconcilable,
easy to forgive, and glad to return good for evil.

Make me like yourself,
kindly and incapable of harming your children,
good-hearted, gentle, meek, and long-suffering.

O Thou lover of my soul, raise in me a compassionate zeal
to never lose this eternal life given to us,
and by caring advice, exhortations, and reproofs,
to reclaim the wicked and the lost by your grace.

Be pleased, O Lord, to take me into your protection tonight,
as well as members of my family,
my friends and relations,
and my enemies.

Give to us your rest, that we may rise refreshed and more fit for your service.

Let me fall asleep with holy thoughts of you,
and awake fully aware of your presence with me.

Show mercy to the whole world, O Father of all!
Let the gospel of Jesus be glorified in all the world!

May it be heard and made known to those who do not believe,
and may it be embraced and shared by those who do.
Be merciful to your Church and this nation!
Give to our bishops a discerning spirit,
that they may choose fit persons to serve as ministers.
Enable all those who are ordained to your service diligently to feed their flocks,
instructing them in saving knowledge,
guiding them by their examples,
praying for them and blessing them,
exercising spiritual discipline in your Church,
duly administering the sacraments.
Pour out your blessings on persons of every station in life
that they may all, according to their talents received,
be faithful instruments of your glory.
In particular, I name:
judges and government servants,
employers and workers,
neighbors, friends and enemies.
Give to our schools and universities zeal, prudence, and holiness.
Visit in mercy all the children of affliction.
Satisfy their needs, lighten their burdens, and give them hope
as they submit to your gracious will.
In your good time, bring them, and all of us,
along with those who already rest from their labors,
into the joy of our Lord Jesus.
To the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all praise, now and forever.
Amen.

Tuesday Morning

O eternal and merciful Father,
I give you humble thanks (increase my thankfulness!)
for all the blessings spiritual and temporal,
which in your rich mercy you have poured upon me.
Lord, let me not live but to love you, and glorify you.
Particularly I give you thanks for preserving me
from my birth to even this moment,
and for bringing me safe to the beginning of this day, and every day,
that by your grace I may hope that all my thoughts, words, and works
may tend to your glory.

Heal, O Father of Mercies, all my infirmities,
those that I know,
and those of which I am ignorant.
Strengthen me against all my follies,
those that I know,
and those of which I am ignorant.
Forgive all my sins,
those that I know,
and those of which I am ignorant.
May my prayers for forgiveness
be heard over cries for vengeance.

O blessed Lord, enable me to fulfill your commands,
whatever your commands are for me.
O Thou Savior of all that trust in you,
do with me what seems good in your eyes.
Give me the mind that was in you:
let me learn from you how to be meek and lowly.
Pour into me the whole spirit of humility;
I ask that you fill every part of my soul with it
and make it the constant, ruling habit of my mind,
that all my other desires may arise from it.
Grant that I may have no thoughts, no desires, no designs,
but those that are the true fruit of a lowly spirit.
Grant that I may think of myself as I ought to think,
that I may know myself, even as I am known.

May this be the constant spiritual discipline,
when I lie down and when I rise up,
that I may always appear poor and little,
mean and base and vile – a sinner – in my own eyes.
Let me compare myself to you, so that I may be convinced,
that I have neither learned wisdom nor knowledge of the Holy.

Give me a lively sense that I am nothing,
that I have nothing, and that I can do nothing,
apart from your power and grace.
Enable me to feel that I am all ignorance and error,
weakness and uncleanness, sin and misery,
that I am not worthy, before you,
of the air I breathe,
the ground I walk on,
or the sun that shines upon me.
Let me be fully content, O Lord,
when others think of me as I do of myself.
Save me from either desiring or seeking
the honor that is only human.
Convince me that the words of praise,
when they are smoother than oil,
are like swords attacking my spirit.
Give me to dread them more than the poison of snakes,
or the pestilence that walks in darkness.
And when these cords of pride, these snares of death, do overtake me,
let me find no pleasure in them,
but enable me to instantly flee to you, my only true pleasure,
and enable me to cry out to God from my bones,
only you are worthy to be praised!
Only then shall I be safe from those who would lead me into sin.

Bless, O gracious Father, all the nations
whom you have placed upon the earth
with a knowledge of you, the only true God.
Bless your holy and universal Church
and fill it with truth and grace.
Where it is corrupt, purge it.
Where it is in error, rectify it.
Where it is right, confirm it.
Where it is divided and rent asunder, heal it,
O Thou Holy One of Israel.
Replenish all those you have called into your ministries
with Truth of doctrine and the innocence of life.
May their prayers be pleasing to you,
that their cries and tears for the kingdom of God
may not be in vain.

O Lord, hear the prayers of our leaders
in the days of their troubles.
Let your name, O God, be upon their minds and hearts
that they may be able to fulfill all righteousness.
Give them hearts set firmly on you,

and upon other things only as they reflect and reveal your will.
Guide and save them by the strength of your right hand!

Have mercy upon my country;

 forgive the sins of its people.

Turn to us in our need,

 bless us, and give us hope

 even as you reveal our desolations and idolatry.

Inspire our leaders and judges with prudent zeal,

 and all your people with humble loyalty.

Pour down your blessings on all seminaries of true religion and learning,

 that they may remember and be faithful to their calling.

Comfort all who are in affliction,

 and those who suffer for righteousness sake.

Bless my family, my friends and relations.

Bless those with whom I labor each day.

Forgive all my enemies,

 and so reconcile them to me, and us to you,

 that we all may receive Life Everlasting,

 through the merits and intercession of Blessed Jesus,

 to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit

 be ascribed by all of Creation,

 all honor and might, and wisdom, and glory and blessing.

Amen.

Tuesday Evening

Particular questions relating to humility

Have I labored to conform all my thoughts, words and actions to these fundamental maxims: I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing?

Have I set apart some time this day for thinking upon my infirmities, follies, and sin?

Have I ascribed to myself any part of any good, which God has done through me this day?

Have I said or done anything so that others might praise me?

Have I desired the praise of others?

Have I taken pleasure in it?

Have I commended myself, or others to their faces, unless for God's sake, and only then with fear and trembling?

Have I despised any one's advice?

Have I, when I thought so, said, "I am in the wrong"?

Have I received contempt:

- a) for unimportant things, with meekness;
- b) for doing my duty, with joy?

Have I omitted justifying myself where the glory of God was not concerned? Have I submitted to be thought by others to be in the wrong?

Have I, when treated with contempt, first, prayed God that I would neither become discouraged nor puffed up; secondly, that this action might not be held against the one who shows me contempt; thirdly, that this might correct my prideful ways?

Have I, without some particular good to be served, mentioned the contempt I had met with?

I desire to offer unto you, O Lord, my evening sacrifice,
the sacrifice of a contrite spirit.
Have mercy upon me, O God, after your great goodness;
after the multitude of your mercies
do away with my sins.
Let your unspeakable mercy free me from the sins I have committed,
and deliver me from the punishment I have deserved.
O save me from every work of evil,
and cleanse me from all filthiness of flesh and spirit
that, for the time to come,
I may with a pure heart and mind follow you, the only True God.

O Lamb of God, who both by example and precept
showed us how to be meek and humble,
give me grace, throughout my whole life,
in every thought, word, and work,
to imitate your meekness and humility.
Destroy in me every trace of sinful pride!
Grant that I may feel that, without you, I am nothing,
that, without you, I have nothing,
that, without you, I deserve nothing
except shame and contempt, misery and punishment.
Grant, O Lord, that I may look for nothing, claim nothing, and resent nothing,
that I may go through all the scenes of life, not seeking my own glory,
but looking wholly to you, and acting wholly for you.

Let me never speak any word that may tend to my own praise,
unless the good of my neighbor requires it.
And even then, let me be aware, that in order to help another,
I wound my own soul.
Let my ears and my heart be closed to the praise
that comes from those set only on human things,
and let me refuse to hear the words of the Charmer,
no matter how sweetly this evil is presented.

Give me a dread of undue applause,
in whatever form, from wherever it may come.
I know that many persons stronger in the faith than I have lost their life with you,
slain by praise.
O deliver my soul from this snare of hell;
neither let me spread it for the feet of others.
Keep me from being responsible for the spiritual death of others,
who would learn of sinful pride from me.

O Thou Giver of every good and perfect gift,
if at any time you choose to work through me,

teach me to discern that part which is mine,
from that part which is another's to do,
and then to render to you the things that are yours.

The good that can be done on earth can only be done by you,
even when it is poured out of earthen vessels like me,
so let me always return to you all the glory.
Let me, as a pure crystal, transmit all the Light you pour through me;
but never let me claim it as coming from me
that Light, which is yours alone.

O Thou who was despised and rejected by prideful people,
when I am slighted by my friends,
disdained by my superiors,
overborne or ridiculed by my peers,
or treated contemptuously by those under my authority,
let me cry out, as have your saints before me,
“It is now that I am tested as a disciple of Christ.”
Then let me thankfully accept, and faithfully use this occasion
for improving my meek and lowly spirit.
If for your sake others call out my name as evil,
let me rejoice and be exceedingly glad.
Even when this is difficult for me to understand,
let me acknowledge your goodness,
in giving me these opportunities to heal my sin-sick pride and vanity.
Let me beg your mercy for those physicians of my soul,
by whose hands this cure is administered.
As I go to rest this night, make me remember you
so that I may be thinking of you when I rise in the morning.
You have preserved me from all the dangers of this day,
and supported me since my birth, even to this day.
Under the shadow of your wings, let me pass this night in comfort and peace.

O Thou Creator and Preserver of all humanity,
have mercy on all our human conditions.
Purge your holy and universal church from all heresy, schism and superstition.
Bless our leaders, in their bodies, actions, and relations.
If it pleases you, give
to those who govern, grace, wisdom, and understanding;
to those who adjudicate, equity, courage, and prudence;
to those who lead, industry, and temperance;
to those who labor, increased grace and humble spirits.
Pour upon your Church, and especially your clergy, the continual dew of your blessing.
Grant to our universities peace and piety,
and to those who labor under afflictions, constant patience and timely deliverance.
Bless all my family.

Bless all my colleagues.

Bless all my friends and benefactors.

Turn the hearts of my enemies,

 forgive them and me all our sins,

 and grant that we, and all members of your Church, may find mercy

 when we stand before you for judgment,

 through the mediation and satisfaction of Jesus Christ,

 to whom with you and the Holy Spirit the Comforter,

 be all honor, praise and thanksgiving,

 in all the churches of the saints forever more.

Amen.

Wednesday Morning

O Thou who dwells in unapproachable light,
in whose Presence there is no night, and
in the light of your face is perpetual day;
I, your sinful servant, whom you have preserved through the night,
so that I might live by your power this day,
give praise and glorify you for your concern and care for your kingdom,
and I humbly ask that this, and all my days,
may be wholly devoted to your service.
Send your Holy Spirit to guide me in all my ways,
and to be the sanctifier of my soul and body.
Save, defend, and build me up in your fear and love.
Give to me the light of your presence, the peace of heaven,
and the salvation of my soul when Jesus comes to try me.

O Thou who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life,
you have said that no one can follow you if we are full of ourselves.
I know, O Savior, that you have laid nothing upon us except the design of your love
made necessary for us.
O Jesus, you saw our disease, our idolatrous self-love,
our sin that kept us away from God,
and how we thought of ourselves as gods,
seeking only to please ourselves and do only our will.
Boldly, I come to you, renouncing my will,
so that I may be free to do your will in all things.

I know, O God, that you emptied yourself of eternal glory,
and took upon yourself the form of a servant.
You, who made us to serve and please you, did not seek your own pleasure,
but instead served all.
You, O Lord of the hosts of heaven and earth, yielded your cheeks to be struck,
your back to be scourged, and
your hands and feet to be nailed to the accursed tree.
O Great Master, you renounced yourself for us;
how can I even think of not renouncing myself for you?
My Lord and my God, keep me from thinking I am above you.
May it be the one desire of my heart, to be like my Master,
to do, not my own will, but the will of Jesus,
who sends me to my neighbors.

O Thou, whose whole life cried aloud,
“Father, not mine, but thy will be done!”
give me grace to walk after your pattern, and
to accept its hardship.
Let me so practice all the habits of godliness now,

so I will be ready when the rains descend
and the floods beat upon me.
Let me fast this day from those things which are pleasing to me in my senses and desires,
that in the times of testing I will not renounce you
for fear of suffering or denial of pleasure,
but may stand firmly in faith, and still do your will.

You, who did not please yourself,
although for your pleasure all things are and were created,
let some portion of your Spirit descend on me,
that I may deny myself and follow you.

Strengthen my soul that I may be temperate in all things,
that I may never use any part of your creation
except for some end you command me to pursue.

Let me never gratify any desire that does not have you as the ultimate end.
Let me abstain from all pleasures that do not prepare me for taking pleasure in you,
knowing that those pleasures war against my soul,
and tend to alienate me from you.

O save me from ever indulging either the desire of the flesh or the desire of the eye,
or the pride of life.

Set a watch, O Lord, over my senses and appetites, my passions and understanding,
that I may resolutely deny them every gratification
that does not bring glory to you.

O train me up in this good way, so that when I am old I may not depart from it,
that I may finally have in me a true heart,
crucified to the world, and the world crucified to me.

Hear also my prayers for all your children,
and guide their feet into the way of peace;
for your universal church,
that it may live by your Spirit, and reign in your glory.

Remember the congregations in this land, set here for you,
and particularly those who are the stewards of the Holy Mysteries, our ministers;
give them such zeal and diligence and wisdom,
that they may save both themselves and those who hear them.

Preserve, O Great King of heaven, all true worldly leaders
and their families, particularly our own.

Grant our leaders, and all those under authority
the wisdom to truly and indifferently administer justice to all.

To all your people give heavenly grace,
that we may faithfully serve you while we have breath.

Bless the universities with prudence, unity, and holiness.
May these institutions walk in the way of truth always,
no matter how evilly the truth may be opposed.

Keep us mindful of our high calling,

that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a peculiar people called out of darkness into Light,
and so we are to show forth God's praise.
With a propitious eye, O gracious Lord, behold my enemies,
and all that are in affliction.
Give them patience under their sufferings,
and grant that they, and all the members of your Church,
may find the rest where the wicked cease from troubling
and find mercy in the great Day of Trial.
In particular, I commend to your mercy the members of my family.
Lord, you know best all their wants.
Suit your blessings to their several necessities.

Let these prayers, O Lord, find access to the throne of grace,
through the Son of your love, Jesus Christ the Righteous;
to whom with you, O Father, in the unity of the Spirit,
be all love and obedience, now and forever.

Amen.

Wednesday Evening

Particular questions relating to mortification

(on developing an indifference to earthly pleasures so that they may not rule our lives)

Have I done anything merely because it was pleasing?

Have I not just resisted passionate pleasures, but also sought to deny myself that pleasure?

Were any unavoidable inconveniences gladly received as a means of testing?

Have I made any excuses to avoid self-denial?

Have I thought any chance at self-denial as unimportant?

Have I taken pleasure, at the request of others (except where the glory of God is concerned), as a means of denying myself total control over this discipline?

Have I set aside some time for seeking after a lively sense of the suffering of Christ for my sins?

Have I set aside time to consider God's judgments on me, and how I may seek to grow in grace and discipleship?

O Almighty Lord of heaven and earth,
I desire with fear and shame to cast myself before you,
humbly confessing my many sins and unspeakable evil.
I confess, O Great God, that I have sinned against you
by thought, word, and deed.
Your words and laws, O God, are holy,
and your judgments are awesome and fearful to sinners.
Even so, I have broken your righteous laws,
and deserve your severest judgment.
There is no place for me to hide from your anger.

But you, O Lord my Judge, are also my Redeemer!
I have sinned, but you, Blessed Jesus, are my Advocate!
Do not judge me, or I will surely die, but spare me.
Gracious Lord, spare the servant you have redeemed with your precious blood.
Do not reserve an evil end for me,
but let your mercy be magnified upon me.
Deliver me from the power of sin,
and save me from the punishment for sin.

Thou whose mercy is without measure, whose goodness is beyond speaking,
do not despise me while I beg for forgiveness and reconciliation.
Give me the forgiveness of what is past,
and a perfect repentance for all my sins,
that for the time to come I may with a pure spirit do your will, O God,
walking humbly with you,
speaking lovingly with all persons,
holding my self-will in resignation and holiness,
and my body in sanctification and honor.

My Lord and my God, I know that unless I die with you
I cannot be raised with you.
O strengthen me, that by denying myself and taking up my cross daily,
I may crucify all of my sinfulness.
Give me grace to count as dead all my flesh, works, and feelings,
that come from my sinfulness.
Let me be dead to sin, to every violation of your law,
which is holy, merciful and perfect.
Let me be dead to the world, and all that is in the world,
the desires of the flesh and eyes, the pride of life.
Let me be dead to the pleasures that are not from you,
and alive to the pleasures of your right hand forever.
Let me be dead to my own will, and alive to yours.

I am not my own;
you have bought me with the price of your own blood.
You have died for all, that we should not live just for ourselves,
but for him who died for us.
Give to me the strength of this knowledge;
mark my heart, and make me a new creature.

Let me no longer live to the desires of the flesh,
but to the will of God.
Let the Holy Spirit enable me to say with the Apostle Paul:
“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live;
yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”

O Thou Great Shepherd of souls,
bring home to your fold all those who have gone astray.
Preserve your Church from all heresy and schism,
from half-truths and half-hearted commitments,
from all that persecute or oppose the Truth.
Give to your ministers wisdom and holiness,
and the powerful aid of your blessed Spirit.
Advance your just causes in the world.
Protect our leaders in every position,

and give them grace to do your will in this world,
and give them eternal glory in the world to come.

Bless, O Lord, all our Sunday schools,
that they may devote all their studies to your glory.
Have mercy on all that are in affliction.
Remember the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless,
the friendless and the oppressed.
Heal the sick and the languishing;
give them the trust to lean upon your cross;
and when in your wisdom, the time has come for them,
receive them into the number of your departed saints,
and with them into your everlasting kingdom.

O my God, I praise you for your continued preservation of me
and for your protection over me this day.
For all your comforts with which you have surrounded me,
spiritual and temporal, particularly for the opportunity to pray to you,
I give you thanks.
Accept my poor services,
pardon the sinfulness of this and all my holy duties,
(when I have thought it enough to say these words and to do these things,
without also expecting that you will hear my prayers and change my life).
Bless me, my friends, and relations,
my benefactors and my enemies,
this night and every day,
with the blessing of your children.

Hear my prayers, O most merciful Father,
through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who with you and the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified
in all Churches of the Saints,
One God, blessed forever.

Amen.

Thursday Morning

O eternal God, my Sovereign Lord,
I acknowledge that all that I am,
and all that I have, is yours.
O give me such a sense of your infinite goodness,
that I may return to you all possible love and obedience.

I humbly and heartily thank you for all the favors you have bestowed on me:
for creating me in your image,
for daily preserving me by your good providence,
for redeeming me by the death of your Blessed Son,
and for the assistance of the Holy Spirit;
for surrounding me with Christian witnesses,
for blessing me with plentiful means of salvation,
for blessing me with religious relatives and friends,
for the frequent observances of Holy Communion.

I also thank you for all temporal blessings:
for the preservation of me this past night,
for my health, strength, food, clothing,
and all other comforts and necessities of life.

May I always delight to praise your Holy Name,
and above all your benefits, love you, my Great Benefactor.

Father of Mercies, do not withhold your compassion
toward such a vile and miserable sinner like me.
Despise not the work of your own hands,
the purchase of your Son's blood.
For his sake, I most humbly ask forgiveness of all my sins.
Grant this, so that I may come renewed, to do your will alone,
and by your assistance, I am resolved to live
as if I had no choice of my own,
but with a singleness of heart, to obey your good will,
Father, not my will, but yours be done,
in all my thoughts, words, and actions!

O Thou All Sufficient God of angels and all people,
who is above all, and through all, and in all,
from whom, by whom, and in whom are all things,
may my will be entirely and continually derived from yours,
as my very being and happiness are.

I believe, O Sovereign Goodness, O Mighty Wisdom,
that you sweetly order and govern all things,
even the most insignificant and the most repellent,
for your glory, and the good of those who love you.

I believe, O Father of all the Families of heaven and earth,
that through every event your goodness is magnified
to those whose eyes look for you.

I most humbly ask that you teach me to adore all your ways,
even when I cannot comprehend them.

Teach me to be glad that you are the Ruler of my life,
and to give you thanks for all that befalls me,
accepting that you have chosen this path for me
and have placed your divine seal on these events that,
through faith, they may do good in me.

And for the things to come,
give me your grace to do all things that will please you,
and then, with an absolute submission to your wisdom,
to leave their final outcome to your hand.

O Lord Jesus, I give you my body, my soul,
my substance, my fame, my friends,
my liberty, my life.

Use me, and all that is mine, as it seems best to you.

I am not mine, but yours.

Claim me as your right,
keep me as one committed to your care,
love me as your child.

Fight for me when I am assaulted,
heal me when I am wounded, and
revive me when I am destroyed!

O help me with your grace,
that whatsoever I shall do,
and no matter what I may suffer,
that all will tend to your glory.

Keep me in a loving relationship with you,
and with all persons.

Direct my paths,
and teach me to set you always before me.

Let not the things of this life, nor my many concerns about them,
alienate any part of my affections from you;
nor let me ever pursue or regard them,
except for your glory, and in keeping with your will.

Extend, O Lord, your compassion to the whole of humanity.

May those who have not struggled with you in faith, and all those who have,
be brought into your kingdom.

Be gracious to your holy and universal Church,
and grant that it may always preserve that doctrine and discipline
which you have given to it.

Grant that all the people of this nation, especially our leaders and ministers,
in all that they do, do all to your glory.
Bless all our Sunday schools,
and keep them focused on their divine purpose.
Be merciful to all who are in distress,
and those who struggle with pain, poverty, or reproach.
Guide those who travel by land, air, and water.
Give a strong and quiet spirit to those who are condemned to die.
Give liberty to prisoners and captives,
and ease and cheerfulness to every sad heart.
Be merciful to those who suffer mental handicaps,
and give life and salvation to all
who are incapable of understanding your good news.
Give to all that are in error the light of your truth.
Bring all sinners to repentance,
and give to all who cling to half-truths
humility and grace to receive your whole truth
and to confess publicly the holy faith.
Bless all my friends and relations,
my acquaintances and enemies.
Unite us all to one another by mutual love,
and to you by constant holiness;
that we, together with those who went before us in your faith and fear,
may find a merciful acceptance in the time of judgment,
through the merits of your Blessed Son,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory, world without end!
Amen.

Thursday Evening

Particular questions relating to resignation and meekness

Have I tried to will what God wills, and only that?

Have I received everything that happened to me, that was not of my own choosing, as the choice of infinite wisdom and goodness for me, with thanksgiving?

After doing all that God requires of me, have I left all future things concerning what I have done totally to God's disposal? That is, have I labored to be wholly indifferent as to how God may use me next?

Have I thought to reclaim my body, soul, friends, fame, or fortune after I have given them over to God? Have I withdrawn any of these gifts, when God has already accepted them from me?

Have I tried to be cheerful, mild, and courteous in all that I have said and done?

Have I said anything with a stern look, accent, or gesture – particularly with regard to religion?

My Lord and my God, my heart is open to you,
and you know my true desires, which I cannot hide.
I have been encouraged by my experience of your goodness
so that I may come before you this day
even though I know I am unworthy of your least favor.
I am ashamed when I think of how I have lived as a stranger – no, as an enemy! to you,
taking it upon myself to order myself and direct myself and to please myself
in the main events of my life.
But now, it is my plain desire to return to you,
and to renounce all interest and control over myself,
to give myself up entirely to you.
I want to be yours, and only yours, forever.
But I know that I am nothing, and can do nothing of myself.
If you will have me, I will owe you all that I am.

My God, my Savior, my Sanctifier,
turn not your face away from this poor soul that seeks you.
But as you have kindled in me these desires to be yours,
confirm, increase, and satisfy these desires.
Reject not the poor gift I make of myself,
but teach me how to make it acceptable in your sight.
Lord, hear me! help me! and show me mercy!
for the sake of Jesus Christ.

O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier,
I give myself to you entirely, so that I may serve you, and not myself,
all the days of my life.

I give you my understanding,
so that I may learn of your perfections, your works, and your will.
Let every other pursuit of my understanding seem to me as a waste and a loss,
so that I may thirst for you.
Give me ears of faith, that I may hear only you, who can neither deceive nor be deceived,
when others try to reason me away from you.

I give you my will,
that I may have no will of my own,
that whatever you will for me, I may will, also.
May I glory in all things, as you do,
and make your glory the ultimate end of all I do.
Then I can say with the psalmist,
“Whom have I in heaven but you,
and there is none on earth that I desire beside you.”
May I delight to do your will, O God,
and rejoice to give it flesh in this world.
When I am threatened, let me say, “It is the Lord!
Let God do what seems good to God.
And whatever befalls me, let me give thanks,
since it is your will concerning me.” (I Thes. 5:18)

I give you my affections,
to use them all for your glory.
May you be my love, my fear, my joy;
and may nothing have any share in these affections,
except with respect to you, and for your sake.
What you love, make me love;
what you hate, make me hate;
these things in such measure as you give to me.

I give you my body,
so that I may glorify you with it, preserving it with holiness,
so that it is a fit place for you to dwell in.
May I neither indulge it, nor exercise it too much;
but keep it, as much as I am able, healthy, vigorous, and active,
fit to do all manner of service for you, as you need.

I give you all my worldly goods,
may their value and usefulness be yours alone.
May I recognize you in the poor and needy,

and give back that portion which you have entrusted with me
to those in whom you dwell.
May the necessities of my life be cared for;
and may I be willing to part even with this,
if you, Lord, should require it.

I give you my good name and reputation;
may I never value it, except in respect to you;
may I never protect it, except if it will aid you
and advance your honor in this world.

I give you my self and my all;
let me look upon myself to be nothing, and to have nothing
apart from you.

Be the sole disposer and controller of all that I am,
that I may have you as my portion in life.

O my God and my All,
whenever I am tempted to break this vow
so that I may be conformed to this world,
and to this company and customs that surround me,
may my answer be, "I am not my own;
I am not for myself or for the world, but for my God;
I will give to God the things that are God's.
God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Have mercy, O Father of the spirits of all flesh, on us all.

Convert all who search for you to the truth of Jesus.

Bless your universal Church;
heal it where it is broken in spirit,
and establish it in truth and peace.

Preserve and defend all our leaders who serve you.

Be merciful to this nation.

Bless the clergy with sound doctrines and pure lives.

Give to those who legislate, wisdom;
to those who adjudicate, integrity and zeal;
to citizens of your kingdom, loyalty.

Bless the universities with learning and holiness,
that they may train a continuing supply of persons fit and able to serve you
in all your ways.

Shower your blessings on all my relations,
on all my friends,
and on all who keep me accountable before you.

Give relief to those who labor under any affliction of their body or mind,
especially those whose suffering is because of the world's response to their faith.

Visit them, O Gracious Lord, in all their distresses.
Strengthen the souls of those you see in your service,
 that they may rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer for your glory,
 and that they may always look to you, the Author and Finisher of their faith.
Fill with your Spirit those who are in prison,
 and provide for them the means of grace;
 in your good time, deliver them, and be merciful to them,
 as you are to those who love you.
May you reward sevenfold those who love or do good to me.
Convert and forgive those who hate me.
Grant us all, together with your whole Church,
 an entrance into your everlasting kingdom,
 through Jesus Christ;
 to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
 Three Persons and One God,
 be ascribed all majesty, dominion, and power, now and forever.
Amen.

Friday Morning

Almighty and everlasting God, I bless you from my heart,
that out of your infinite goodness you have preserved me through the night,
both from the evils of this world, and the power and malice of the Evil One.

Do not withdraw your protection from me, I humbly ask,
but be my guardian throughout this day.

Watch over me with your eyes of mercy;
direct my soul and body according to your will;
fill my heart with your Holy Spirit,
that I may pass this day, and all my days,
in the service of your glory.

O Savior of the World, God of God, Light of Light,
you who are the brightness of the Father's glory,
the express image and face of God,
the destroyer of the devil's power,
the one who has conquered death,
the one who sits at the right hand of the Father,
the one who will quickly come in glory to judge us all,

I pray that you will be my light and my peace,
that you will destroy the power of sin in me,
that you will make me a new creature.

O Thou who cast seven demons from the woman,
cast out of my heart all corrupt affections.

O Thou who raised Lazarus from the dead,
raise me from the death of sin.

You who cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind,
heal the sin-sickness of my soul,
open my eyes, and fix them solely on the prize of my high calling,
and cleanse my heart from every desire,
except that of advancing your glory.

O Jesus, poor and lowly, unknown and despised,
have mercy on me,
and let me not be ashamed to follow you.

O Jesus, hated, falsely accused, and wrongly persecuted,
have mercy on me,
and let me not be afraid to come after you.

O Jesus, betrayed and sold for a vile price,
have mercy on me,
and make me content to have you as my master.

O Jesus, blasphemed, accused, and wrongfully condemned,
have mercy on me,
and teach me to endure the opposition of sinners.

O Jesus, clothed with reproach and shame,

have mercy on me,
and let me not seek my own glory.
O Jesus, insulted, mocked and spat upon,
have mercy on me,
and let me run with patience the race set before me.
O Jesus, dragged to the pillar, scourged and bathed in blood,
have mercy on me,
and let me not faint in the fiery trial.
O Jesus, crowned with thorns, hailed in derision,
O Jesus, burdened with our sins and the curses of the people,
O Jesus, affronted, outraged, buffeted, overwhelmed
with injuries, griefs and humiliations,
O Jesus, hanging on the accursed cross, bowing your head, and giving up your spirit,
have mercy on me,
and conform my entire soul to your holy, humble, suffering spirit.
O Thou, who for the love of me,
underwent such an infinity of sufferings and humiliations,
let me also be wholly emptied of myself,
that I may rejoice to take up my cross daily and follow you.
Enable me, also, to endure the pain and despise the shame,
and if it is your will,
to be faithful when it requires my blood.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,
I, a miserable sinner, humbly acknowledge that I am unworthy to pray for myself.
But it is your command that I make prayers for all people;
it is in obedience, not worthiness, and in confidence of your unlimited goodness,
that I commend to your mercy the wants and necessities of all persons.

Lord, let it be your good pleasure
to restore to the Church primitive peace and purity;
to show mercy to this sinful nation;
to give us grace to repent of our sins;
to defend our Church from all the assaults of
half-hearted commitment, half-truths, half reverence;
to bless all bishops, priests, and deacons with apostolic graces.

O let it be your good pleasure
to defend our leaders from their enemies,
spiritual and temporal;
to bless our leaders' families;
to grant to legislators, wisdom;
to those who adjudicate, zeal and prudence;
to all people, piety and loyalty.

Lord, let it be your good pleasure

to give grace to our universities;
to bless those I have wronged,
to forgive those who have wronged me;
to comfort the disconsolate;
to give health to the sick,
and patience to all in their afflictions.

Bless my family with an abiding sense of your presence,
that all their conversations may be holy.
Let them remember how short our time on earth is,
so that we may be careful to improve every moment.
O Thou who has kept my family safe from their births to now,
do not forget us now as we grow older,
but perfect us in every good word and work,
guiding us until our deaths.
Bless all my brothers and sisters,
who have received the gospel of Christ in their lives.
Give them further growth in grace,
that they may serve you with a perfect heart and a willing mind.
Bless my friends and benefactors, all my colleagues,
and all who have asked my prayers for them.
Lord, you know, better than any of us,
all our conditions, desires and shortcomings.
Give us grace, as suits our several necessities.

Hear, O Merciful Father, my prayers, for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son,
and bring us, with all who have pleased you
from the beginning of the world until now,
into the glory of your Son's kingdom;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all praise for ever and ever.

Amen.

Friday Evening

The questions for Wednesday evening are recommended for asking again this evening.

O God the Father,

since you have not made me for destruction,
have mercy on me.

O God the Son,

since you came in your Father's will to save,
have mercy on me.

O God the Holy Spirit,

since you have washed away my sins in baptism,
and are the source of every holy thought,
have mercy on me.

O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity,

the Three Persons I adore as one God,
have mercy on me.

Lord, sometimes I am afraid that you do not care if I perish,

even though it is your will that all are to be saved,
even though it is beneath you to be angry

with a worm, a leaf, a vapor that vanishes in the light, like me.

Remember how short my time is on this earth,

and save me from the power of hell,
for what profit is there in my blood,
and no one can praise you when they are cut off from you.

Let me live in your sight!

Let me live, and I shall praise you!

Forget my disobedience,

which by all rights should anger you,
but look on me in my distress, crying out for help.

Do not look at me as a sinner, but as your creation.

I know I am a sinner, and one who should know better,

but do not let even this keep me from your forgiveness,
for those who are forgiven much, love much in return.

O Jesus, remember for whose sake that you left heaven,

content to be born of your own handmaid.

Remember for whom it was that your tender body was torn and scourged and crucified!

Was it not for the sins of the whole world?

Are my sins so great that I am the exception to forgiveness?

Or should I think that you died only for lesser sinners,

and that there is no hope for me?

If so, what was the final judgment on Paul,

who sought out Christians for arrest and persecution?

If so, what was the final judgment on the adulterous woman,

whom you protected from the stoning mob?

If so, what was the final judgment on Peter,
who strongly denied you three times?

I stand amazed at how easily you forgive,
even though it is your nature.

I marvel at how proper it is for you to save us,
for that is your name.

I glory that it is suitable for you to come into this world,
for this is your creation, and your concern.

And when I consider that I am the chief of all sinners,
may I not, in faith, take the next step and ask that you do your business in me
so that none of your work is left undone?

May leaving me in my sin, unforgiven and undone,
be the farthest thing away from your will!

Have mercy on me!

I do not ask you for the things of this world;
give them to whomever you want,
as long as you give me your mercy.

Let me hear in my heart your pardon,
“be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you!”

Keep me from sinning more than I already do,
and keep me from seeking out sin against you.

As for my daily sins,
either give me strength to conquer them by degrees, until they are no more,
or do not count them against me.

Save me, O God, as a brand snatched out of the fire!

Receive me, O my Savior, as a sheep that has gone astray,
but is now returned to the Great Shepherd,
the overseer of my soul.

Father, accept my imperfect repentance.
Have compassion on my infirmities, spiritual and temporal;
forgive my wickedness,
purify my uncleanness,
strengthen my weakness,
fix my unstableness,
and let your good Spirit watch over me forever,
and your love rule my heart,
through the merits and suffering and love of Jesus,
in whom you were pleased to dwell.

Give your grace, O Holy Jesus, to all the world,
and let all who are redeemed by your blood acknowledge you

in every way as their Lord.
Let all Christians, especially of this nation,
keep themselves unstained by the world.
Let our leaders rule with wisdom and justice,
and our clergy be exemplary in their lives,
and discreet and diligent in their labors.
Let our universities enjoy freedom from violence and faction,
and excel in true religion and learning.
Be a help to all those who are afflicted,
and assist them to trust in you.
Raise up friends for the grieving and orphaned,
the friendless and the oppressed.
Give repentance to all sinners,
comfort to all troubled consciences,
and strength to all who are tempted.
Be gracious to my family.
Be gracious to all who are dear to me,
to all who have shown me kindness and greeting,
to all who remember me in their prayers,
or desire to be remembered in mine.
Sanctify, O Lord, the friendships I have.
O let our prayers be heard for each other,
while our hearts are united in your fear and love,
and graciously strengthen these bonds in faith.
Strengthen the hearts of all your servants against all corruption and temptations.
Enable us to consecrate ourselves faithfully and entirely to your service.
Grant that we may provoke each other to love,
to serve you and mature in faith together before you,
that we may fully become citizens in your kingdom.
By your infinite mercies, bring us surely into your joy,
with all the saints who have gone before us;
through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ ,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
the blessed and only Ruler, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
be honor and power everlasting.
Amen.

Saturday Morning

O God, Creator and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth,
Father of angels and all persons,
Giver of Life and Protector of all your creatures,
mercifully accept this my morning sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
which I desire to offer with all humility to your Divine Majesty.

Your works, O God, sing your praise!

All that you have created magnifies your glory!

The sun rejoices to run its course,
that it may set forth praise for the One who made it.

The moon and the stars cannot restrain themselves,
as even the silent night manifests your glory.

The earth releases its perfume each day,
as incense to please its sacred King,
who has crowned it with herbs and trees,
and beautified it with hills and dales.

The deep waters speak forth, and lift high its hands,
to praise you, the Great Creator,
the universal King, the everlasting God.

The floods clap their hands,
and the hills are joyful before you.

The fruitful plains rejoice and sing your praise.

It is you who feeds the innumerable multitudes of animals that you have created:
they wait upon you, and you give them their food in due season.

You made light for our comfort,
and brought forth darkness out of your treasures,
to overshadow the earth,
that all living creatures may take their rest.

The fire and the hail, snow and rain, wind and storm fulfill your word
and manifest your glory.

Inanimate things declare you, O Lord of life;
irrational animals reveal their wise Creator.

Amidst this universal jubilee of nature,
let not your people be silent;
but let your noblest work of your creation pay you
the noblest sacrifice of praise.

O put your grace into my heart,
that I may worthily magnify your great and glorious name.

You have made me and sent me into the world to do your work.

O assist me to fulfill your purpose for my being,
and to show forth your praise with all diligence,
by giving myself up to your service.

Prosper the work of my hands, O Lord;

prosper whatever I shall undertake this day,
that it may tend to your glory,
the good of my neighbor,
and the salvation of my soul.

Preserve me from all those snares and temptations
which continually beg me to sin against you.

Guide me by your Holy Spirit in all those places where you will lead me this day;
do not let my interaction with the world dissipate my thoughts
or distract me from your presence,
or lukewarm to your service.

But let me always walk in your sight,
as one who knows that this life is to be the seedtime of an eternal harvest.

Keep me, I pray, undefiled, unblamable, beyond reproach unto the very end of time;
and grant that I may so diligently perform your will
in whatever station of life you may place me,
that I may make my calling and salvation sure
through Jesus Christ our Blessed Lord and Savior.

Hear also, O Lord, my prayers for all humanity,
and guide their feet into the ways of peace.

Reform the corruptions of your universal Church;
heal our divisions, and restore her ancient discipline.

Give to the clergy grace, as good shepherds,
whether they are bishops, priests, or deacons,
to feed their flocks committed to their charge.

Bless our leaders and all those under their authority.
Let them try to exceed each other as much in goodness as in greatness,
as instruments of your glory.

Grant that the universities, and every place set aside for your service,
may flourish as it brings you praise.

O Lord, keep your people, in every station in life,
in constant communion with your holy Church,
in humble obedience to those you give us as leaders,
and in Christian love towards each other.

In particular, I ask you to be gracious to my family,
all my friends and relations,
and all my colleagues.

Forgive us all our sins, and strengthen all our infirmities.

Give them that share of the blessing of this life,
which you know to be good for them,
and the grace to use them faithfully,
so that they may also enjoy you eternally.

With a favorable eye, O Gracious Comforter,
behold all that are in affliction.

Let the sighings of prisoners, the groans of the sick, and the prayers of the oppressed,
the desires of the poor and needy come before you.

Give to my enemies grace and pardon, charity to me, and love to you.

Remove the cloud from their eyes,

and the stone from their hearts,

that they may know and feel what it is to love their neighbor as themselves.

May it please you to enable me to love all my enemies,

to bless them that now curse me,

to do good to those that now hate me,

and to pray for those who despitefully use me and persecute me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to hasten the fulfillment of your reign,

that we, with your whole Church,

may have perfect communion of bliss,

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all honor and glory be unto you, O Father Almighty,

now and forever.

Amen.

Saturday Evening

Have I made time for thanking God for the blessings of this past week?

Have I, in order to be more aware of them, seriously and deliberately considered all the circumstances surrounding those blessings?

Have I considered each of these blessings as an obligation to greater love and truer holiness?

O Most Great and Glorious God,
 who is mighty in power
 and wonderful in all your doings concerning your people,
 accept, I pray, my genuine thanks and praise,
 for my creation, preservation, and all other blessings
 which out of the riches of your mercy
 you have from time to time poured out on me.
It is you, O Lord, who laid the foundation of the world,
 the heavens that cover us are the works of your hand.
You created the sun and the moon, the day and the night,
 and made sunrises and sunsets to praise you.
Out of the mere dust you were able to create humanity
 which received its life from your breath.
You have made us in your image,
 so that we could know and love you eternally.
Originally, our nature was perfect,
 your will our law,
 your presence our only desire.
Yet even in our fallen state, you have not withdrawn your mercy from us,
 but in every generation, you have saved us,
 delivered us, assisted us, and protected us.
You have instructed us by your laws,
 and enlightened us by your statutes.
You have redeemed us by the blood of your Son,
 and sanctified us by the grace of the Holy Spirit.
For these, and all other mercies,
 how can I ever sufficiently love you,
 or worthily magnify your great and glorious Name?
All the powers of my soul are not enough
 to give the thanks you deserve from me.
Indeed, all my powers are not even enough
 to merit that I should come before you now in prayer.
Yet you have declared that you will accept our sacrifice of thanksgiving
 in return for all your goodness.
Therefore, I will bless you,

adore you,
and magnify your goodness forever.
My tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
and will tell of your salvation every day.
I will give thanks to you forever.
I will praise you as long as I have life.

O, if only I had the heart of the angels,
that I might burn with a love like theirs!
Even though I am but a mortal
I will praise you, King of Heaven, as I can.
Even though I am but a mortal,
yet will I join my song with the angels, archangels, dominions, and powers,
while they laud and magnify your glorious Name.
Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of the Sabbath!
Heaven and earth are full of God's glory!
Glory be to God, O Lord Most High. Amen. Hallelujah.

Accept, O Merciful Father, my most humble thanks
for the preservation of me this day.
Continue your loving kindness towards me,
and take me into your protection this night.
Let your angels watch over me to defend me from the attempts
of evil spirits and evil persons.
Let me rest in peace, and not sleep in sin,
and grant that when I rise in the morning
I will be more fit for your service.

O Thou whose kingdom rules over all,
rule over the hearts of all people,
whom you have made.
Reform our corruptions.
Heal the breaks in fellowship within your Church.
and establish your Church in truth and peace.
Be gracious to our bishops, priests, and deacons,
and give them a right understanding of your Word.
Forgive the sins of this nation,
and turn our hearts to you,
that sin may not be the cause of our ruin.
Bless our leaders and their families,
in all the ways that you see they need.
Give to all persons in positions of authority,
dignity and grace to serve you faithfully.
Bless our universities,
that they may defend the faith against the assaults of vice and infidelity.
May persons in every station in life live in constant communion with your Church,

in obedience to the governments,
and in love with one another.

Be gracious to all who are near and dear to me.

You know their names and their needs;

may you give them in proportion to their need the blessings and necessities of life,
out of your goodness towards us.

Pardon my enemies, and give them repentance and charity,
and give me grace to overcome evil with good.

Have compassion on all who are distressed in mind, body or economy,
and give them steady patience and timely deliverance.

Now to God the Father, who first loved us, and made us accepted in the Beloved;

To God the Son, who loved us and washed us from our sins with his own blood;

To God the Holy Spirit, who shows us the love of God in our hearts to all around us,
be all glory now and for evermore.

Amen.