

A Time for Prayer
Article 1, October 2020

Covid 19 has affected our reality, and our way of life has radically changed because of it. Masks are worn everywhere, and social distancing has become the law of the land. At first, students everywhere rejoiced at not having to go back to school; first for a week, then a month and then a few more, but that was short lived. Now they hunger to be with their friends, to sit in a classroom, to be “free”. At the same time our churches were closed, and we were unable to pray in them, to receive the sacraments and most importantly to receive the most Holy Eucharist. This left most of us feeling like exiles. Filled with fear and anxiety, we were left to reach out to God in the silence of our hearts and minds, but for many of us silence is unattainable, unwanted, or even terrifying. That’s because silence causes us to introspect, to reflect, and to have the deep conversations with ourselves that we have avoided over and over again.

So, even though Covid 19 has managed to isolate us from one another (physically), it has united us in prayer: a more profound connection with and through the Mystical Body of Christ. In this communion, we are connected to one another as we pray for our family, friends, and the entire world. But what does all of this silence and isolation mean? Well, it means that this is the time to pray and to pray well, to trust in the Lord, to take advantage of this time to be with our families, to sit in silence, to talk with God.

In silence, our soul meets God, our hearts finally unite themselves with our Creator, and our restless hearts find peace. Silence allows us to detach ourselves from the unhealthy emotionalism that can sometimes creep into our spirituality and consequently our relationship with God. Emotionalism tricks us into equating God’s love with happy emotions and feelings, but then the moment that those happy emotions and feelings cease we are left in desolation thinking that God has abandoned us. Even so, God will never abandon us.

St. Teresa of Avila, this month’s featured Saint, shows us how her longing for God overcome her ego and self-preservation. St. Teresa displays many of the symptoms that we experience today due to Covid 19, such as anxiety and insecurity, but most importantly the longing for God in the midst of distress. This same anxiety we experience as we wonder what will the world be like when all of this is over? Will my family be safe? Yet, anxiety, fear, isolation, and insecurity led St. Teresa to contemplate in silence and ultimately to complete surrender of herself to God’s Will. We too must do the same.

Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices.

-- St. Teresa of Avila

A Time for Prayer
Article 2, November 2020

As Thanksgiving Day approaches it is good for us to bring to mind the goodness of the Lord and the good that He has done for us, especially during these uncertain times. So as we gather together as a family during this holiday let us also pray for the needs of the world.

For Holy Mother Church, that she may gather all the lost sheep so that we may all be one.

For the Vicar of Christ, that he may be loyal to the magisterium of the Church.

For Bishops, that they may be faithful shepherds and lead all souls to Christ our King.

For Priests, that they may continue to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass reverently for the salvation of souls.

For Religious, that they may live their lives authentically in anticipation too the coming of the kingdom of God.

For Seminarians, that they may strive for holiness, conforming their lives to imitate that of Christ.

For Vocations, that the Lord continue to send laborers into the vineyard, so that all things may be renewed.

For our Families and Friends, that they may always be protected from all evil, and unite themselves to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

For young people, that they may be attentive to the calling of our Lord.

For the Poor, that their needs may be met.

For the Sick, that they may recover and give glory to God.

For the Suffering, that they may be consoled through the intercession of Our Lady of Sorrows.

For all of those in need of our prayers, that the Lord may provide them with strength and perseverance.

For the Souls in Purgatory, that they may attain the pardon that they most desire and see God face to face.

A Time for Prayer
Article 3, December 2020

As the year draws to a close, we pray for an end to Covid-19, that life may not only return to normal but that we may also be inspired to live our lives with greater fervor, remembering not to take life and the smallest of its treasures for granted. We pray that the lives of those who are affected by unemployment, fear, and death may be consoled by our heavenly Father.

We pray that our churches may return to normal so that we may once again worship our Lord in the highest of ways.

We pray for the humility to accept whatever God gives us.

The Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,
Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved...
From the desire of being extolled...
From the desire of being honored...
From the desire of being praised...
From the desire of being preferred to others...
From the desire of being consulted...
From the desire of being approved...
From the fear of being humiliated...
From the fear of being despised...
From the fear of suffering rebukes...
From the fear of being calumniated...
From the fear of being forgotten...
From the fear of being ridiculed...
From the fear of being wronged...
From the fear of being suspected...

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I...
That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease...
That others may be chosen and I set aside...
That others may be praised and I unnoticed...
That others may be preferred to me in everything...
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

A Time For Prayer
Article 4, January 2021

As this new year begins, let us ask Mary for Her protection, that through Her Immaculate Heart our families may be safe from harm's way, and that we may strive for holiness imitating the Holy Family.

Prayer for the consecration of the family to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Lord Jesus, Your hidden years with Your Blessed Mother and St. Joseph at Nazareth showed us the beauty of the community of life and love that the family is meant to be. You taught us the value of selfless love, humble obedience, and silent sacrifice. You showed us how to sanctify the daily give-and-take of family life. Today, we, the members of the _____ family, publicly acknowledge You as the true Head of our family and the King of our home. We pledge ourselves to model our family after the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph of Nazareth. We consecrate to You, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Your Mother, in union with St. Joseph, our work, our play, our sorrows, and our joys, along with our interior and exterior possessions, including the value of our good actions—past, present, and future. This is the covenant we make with You, Lord. In return, Lord Jesus, we ask You to bless and protect us, keeping us ever faithful to this covenant, and helping us to sanctify our lives by faithfully fulfilling the responsibility of each present moment only for Your glory. Jesus, King of Families, come and reign over our family! Mary, Queen of Families, take possession of our hearts! St. Joseph, Protector of Families, help us to be absorbed in and reflect the love of the Holy Family!

Amen.

A Time for Prayer
Article 5, February 2021

In a world where Covid restrictions reign supreme, evangelization has taken to the different social media platforms. Although I am a millennial and technologically a product of my time, I was hesitant to our branching out on to TikTok since the few TikTok videos that I had seen seemed to be absurd, full of vanity and pride. I still believed this even after we ventured out into the TikTok realm; I was constantly being updated about how many times a video was seen, the likes received, and new followers added. Many of the videos seemed irrelevant to evangelization or the Glory of God. But how could we give Glory to God in all that we do?

I finally decided to break the blogger rule of not reading the comments on TikTok. (Context, some video bloggers prefer not to read comments because of how ugly and vile people can be on the internet.) I read the comments and found evangelization happening! I was shocked! “I don’t know how I ended up on Nun Tok, but I love this!” “Im an atheist, but this is so great!” Conversations were being had in the comments, perfect strangers dialoging about faith, about Christianity, about their struggles. Questions were being asked about the Catholic faith, about nuns, priests, etc!

This was a humbling reminder that God can use any means, any instrument, to bring about change and conversion. The same can be said for us: how do we glorify God in even the smallest of tasks? A more pressing question for us is: how are we glorifying God with our lives? Well Christ made it clear when He said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).

A Time for Prayer
Article 5, March 2021

I have had the pleasure of leading the men of Our Lady of Guadalupe in a thirty-three day consecration to St. Joseph. It has been both a blessing and a source of inspiration to see their dedication to this consecration. Their prayer and reflection will come to its summit on the Solemnity of St. Joseph when, before the people of God, they will be consecrated to St. Joseph. In living out this consecration, they will work to embody and imitate the person of St. Joseph, as fathers, workers, and protectors of their families and Holy Mother Church.

I ask that you pray in a special way for these men who are answering the call to become set aside and holy as God urges them to be. May they strive always to do God's Will, each in their particular state of life as fathers, sons, and young men by imitating Saint Joseph and always keeping Christ in the center of their lives.

Prayer to Saint Joseph

To Thee, O Blessed Joseph, we have recourse in our affliction, and, after imploring the help of thy most holy spouse, we confidently invoke thy patronage also. By that affection which united thee with the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and by the fatherly love with which thou didst embrace the Infant Jesus, look down, we beseech thee, with gracious eyes on the precious inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by His blood, and help us in our necessities by thy power and aid. Protect, O most provident Guardian of the Holy Family, the elect children of Jesus Christ; ward off from us, O most loving Father, all plagues of errors and depravity; be propitious to us from heaven, O most powerful Protector, in this our struggle with the powers of darkness; and as thou didst once rescue the child Jesus from the greatest peril to His life, so now defend God's holy church from the snares of the enemy and all adversity. Finally, shield every one of us with thy patronage, that, imitating thy example and strengthened by thy help, we may live a holy life, die a happy death and attain to everlasting happiness in heaven. Amen.

A Time for Prayer
Article 7, April 2021

Lent is an opportunity for us to introspect so that we may better unite ourselves to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. During my diaconate training, I learned the words of blessing for the water and wine during Mass, “By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.”

I have since then reflected on these words and applied them to the Cross whenever I gaze upon it. By this saving Cross may we come to share in the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. What does it mean to unite ourselves to the Cross and Passion? Well, nothing more than understanding how Christ in His human nature emptied Himself completely for us; He gave Himself in such a way that we are able to empty ourselves in the same way: in love, in humility, and in trust.

Prayer

O Sweet Jesus! Pierce my heart so that my tears of penitence and love will be my bread day and night; may I be converted entirely to Thee, may my heart be Thy perpetual habitation, may my conversation be pleasing to Thee, and may the end of my life be so praiseworthy that I may merit Heaven and there with Thy saints, praise Thee forever. Amen.