

“Lord, teach us to pray ...”



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 2024  
IN THE WORLDWIDE YEAR OF PRAYER 2024 AND  
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST.

## From the Readings

“... the appeal that we make in Christ’s name is: be reconciled to God ... For he says: At the favourable time, I have listened to you; on the day of salvation I came to your help. Well, now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation. *Ash Wednesday 2 Corinthians 6:2*

**Beloved:** Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. *1 Peter 3:18*

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. “The time has come,” he said, “and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.” *Mark 1:12–14*

## Teach us to Pray

### *I: BEGINNINGS*

**Ultimately, our restless aching is a yearning for God.** We need to connect with God. We need prayer. We know this, both in our more reflective moments and in our more desperate moments. It is then that we feel our need for prayer and try to go to that deep place. But given our lack of trust and our lack of practice, we struggle to get there. We do not know how to pray or how to sustain ourselves in prayer. *Rolheiser, R., Prayer: Our Deepest Longing, viii.*

**There is no bad way to pray and there is no one starting point for prayer.** All the great spiritual masters offer only one non-negotiable rule: You have to show up for prayer and you have to show up regularly. Everything else is negotiable and respects your unique circumstances. *Rolheiser, R., Prayer: Our Deepest Longing, viii.*

**“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”** *St John Damascene, quoted in CCC 2590.*

**Experiencing the unconditional love of God** is what prayer, in the end, is all about. *Rolheiser, R., Prayer: Our Deepest Longing, 19.*

... **A very precious way to pray is just through silence.** No thoughts or words, just wanting to be silent in the presence of God ... No need for thoughts – and

words can get in the way. Cardinal Basil Hume in Brundell et.al., *Search and You Will Find*, 51.

**BREATH PRAYER:** Sit in a comfortable position in a supporting chair, or lie flat on the floor. Close your eyes and also your body to relax. If you are aware of any tension in yourself, tense and then relax each part of your body until you find yourself in a state of relaxed awareness, and you are letting yourself be totally supported by the chair or the floor. Allow your mind to relax also and let yourself be at peace. ... Focus on the action of breathing in. Think of the air you breathe as God's gift to you; breathe in gift; breathe in life; breathe in God. ... Continue to breathe in life, to breathe in God, and to breathe out your weakness, each time filling the space thus made with life until you imagine yourself alive and filled with the gift of God. Dwyer, Margaret, "Breath Prayer", 47.

## **II: THE OUR FATHER – THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US**

- **We have to pray to the Father! It is a powerful word, "father".** We have to pray to the one who has begotten us, the one who has given us life. He has given life to everyone ... He has given life to you. He has given life to me. He is the one who accompanies us on our journey. He knows our whole lives, the good and the not-so-good .... Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 11.
- **... he is our Father! I am not an only child;** none of us is ... Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 12.
- **We go home ... we know a father is waiting there for us ...** Yes, he is always there waiting for us. And "in heaven" he is powerful and great and majestic – this is what the expression "who art in heaven" means – but he is close and walks with us. Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 32.
- **"Hallowed be thy name"** means it should be hallowed, it should be revered and honoured, in us, in me. ... God's name is mercy ... Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 39.

## **FOR THINKING AND TALKING**

- **What words or phrases stand out for you in the readings and insights on prayer?**
- **What insights might you take with you on your own journey in prayer?**

# Let Us Pray

*Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.*

Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.



Prepared for Lent 2024 (Year B) for the Sandhurst Diocese, PO Box 201 Bendigo, Vic. 3552

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[www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM); Rolheiser, Ronald, *Prayer: Our Deepest Longing*,

Cincinnati, Ohio: Franciscan Media, 2013; Brundell, M. O. Carm. et al. (Eds.) *Search and You Will Find*, Brisbane:

Catholic Adult Education Brisbane, 1998; Dwyer, Margaret, *Praying Personally*, Strathfield, NSW: St Paul's, 1998.