

Prayer for new life in the Spirit



PART 1: WEEK OF PRAYER

You are invited to set aside time each day to pray and reflect on God's word. We suggest the pattern of "Days" below, but please adapt it to your own situation.

EACH DAY: Start by relaxing for a minute or two, breathing evenly whilst praying "Come Holy Spirit". Then read the following and take time to let the words sink into your heart:

"God is Love, and he who abides in Love abides in God, and God in him." —1 John 4:16

The Lord wants to be better than your best friend and closer than the most loving spouse. He wants a deep, personal relationship with you that is beyond words. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Receive His love freely, personally, deeply, and totally.

Next read the opening Scripture verse for each day slowly several times, followed by the commentary. (If you have time, look up the Bible passages referred to.) Spend another couple of minutes in silence, either reflecting on what you have read, or praying about it in your own words. Then finish by saying the prayers at the end of this sheet, and any other prayers that you feel led to include. When saying set prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, say them slowly, pausing between phrases to reflect on their meaning.

DAY 1: ACCEPTING JESUS AS LORD, SAVIOUR, AND GOD

"For if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." —Romans 10:9

The purpose of life is to develop a deep, personal relationship with Jesus and love Him with all our hearts (Luke 10:27). But no matter how long we "hang around" Jesus by engaging in religious and humanitarian activities, we will never truly know Him until we totally surrender to Him (see John 14:9). We must be baptized into Jesus (Romans 6:3), that is, immersed in Him. We must decide to live for Him and not for ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15), to do His will and not our own. We must say with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live but Christ Who lives in me. I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:19-20)

DAY 2: THE GREATEST RELATIONSHIP

"Thus you will be able to grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love, and experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may attain to the fullness of God Himself." —Ephesians 3:18-20

We can have a much deeper relationship with Jesus than with any other human person, even a spouse. The Church teaches of "the supremacy of the bond with Christ" (*Catechism*, 1619). Because Jesus is human, we can relate to Him on our level. "For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but One Who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned" (Hebrews 4:15). Because He is also divine, Jesus can put thoughts in our minds, orchestrate events, put words in people's mouths, make us remember certain things, communicate to our subconscious, and express Himself in ways beyond the power of speech. Because Jesus is both a fully human being and the divine Communicator, our relationship with Him can be the greatest and deepest relationship of all. We can say with Paul: "The gospel I proclaimed to you is no mere human invention. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I schooled in it. It came by revelation from Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

DAY 3: INVISIBLE

"Although you have never seen Him, you love Him, and without seeing you now believe in Him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith's goal, your salvation." —1 Peter 1:8-9

Some mistakenly feel that a deep relationship with Jesus is hindered because we cannot presently see Jesus' physical body. Jesus maintains this is not a hindrance to our relationship with Him but a help. He told Thomas: "You became a believer because you saw Me. Blest are they who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:29). When Jesus physically walked the earth, very few people developed a deep relationship with Him. For example, all the apostles deserted Jesus at His arrest, Passion, and death (Mark 14:50). They got to know Him in depth only after He ascended and gave us the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "I tell you the sober truth: it is much better for you that I go" (John 16:7). The Spirit guides us to ever greater depths of relationship with Jesus and through Him to the Father.

DAYS 4-7: A.C.D.C. (Awareness, Communication, Dependence, Community)

Awareness

"Perhaps you yourselves do not realize that Christ Jesus is in you." —2 Corinthians 13:5

The Lord is communicating His personal love for us simultaneously in thousands of ways. All of these creations, expressions, and actions say something about His personality and His love for us. For example, when people give us gifts, it says something about their relationship with us. However, receiving a gift deepens our relationship with someone only if we know who gave it to us. When Jesus is Lord of our lives and we are aware of His active presence, every person, event, or trial becomes an opportunity to grow in relationship with Him. All creation says something about the One Who loves us (Daniel 3:58-82). Every moment of life is charged with the excitement of discovering more about His love.

Communication

"Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you." —Matthew 7:7

The Lord will not force His love on us. But if we communicate with Him and ask Him to show His love, the Lord will "come on strong" in our lives, and we will notice this more because we asked for it. Even when the Lord doesn't do what we ask Him, we'll grow in love if we talk to Jesus about our problems. We'll eventually see that He loves us too much to limit Himself to answering our request. He's doing more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Dependence

"Stop worrying, then, over questions like, 'What are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear?' The unbelievers are always running after these things. Your heavenly Father knows all that you need." —Matthew 6:31-32

We must let the Lord do things for us and depend on Him for everything. If we always try to provide for ourselves, we'll think we're responsible for our blessings, and we won't give Him full opportunity to show His love. "God helps those who help themselves," but they often don't know God's helping them. Those who aren't depending on themselves have much more opportunity for a deep, personal relationship with the Lord.

Community

"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you.' " —1 Corinthians 12:21

Finally, we need community if we are to open all the doors for God's power in our lives. The Lord works through the members of His body (Romans 12:5). As isolated parts, we won't see God do as much in our lives. But in community, we will experience the fullness of God's power. If we don't love our brothers and sisters whom we can see, we don't love the Lord Whom we cannot see (1 John 4:20).

A.C.D.C. may seem impossible. It's difficult to be aware of God. How many times have we broken down in our communication with Him? We're deathly afraid of being dependent, and community life goes against our self-centeredness. However, we need not despair. His grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9).

EACH DAY PRAY FROM YOUR HEART THESE PRAYERS:

"Lord Jesus, I believe You died for me and that you are alive and listening to me now. I repent of my sins and ask Your forgiveness. From this moment on, I decide to live for You and no longer for myself, to do Your will and not mine. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Show me the way to the Father. Now fill me with the Holy Spirit, Who will teach me how to live for You and how to tell the world You are my Saviour and Lord. I love You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Father, without the Spirit I cannot please You (Romans 8:8-9). Not by my might or power but only by the Spirit can I live for You (Zechariah 4:6). Come, Holy Spirit!

Lord, as the Spirit moved over the waters on the day of creation (see Genesis 1:1-2), breathe on me to receive the Spirit (John 20:22). Send forth the Spirit and renew the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30).

Holy Spirit, take me in prayer to the foot of Jesus' cross. Reveal to me how I shared in crucifying Jesus through my sins. Crucify me to the ways of the world and the world to me (Galatians 6:14). Crucify my flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24). (This prayer is based on Pope John Paul II's encyclical on the Holy Spirit.)

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PART 2: RENEW YOUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES

You should also celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) even if you have recently been, and especially if you have not been for a while.

Do you reject Satan? **I do.**

And all his works? **I do.**

And all his empty promises? **I do.**

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? **I do.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? **I do.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? **I do.**

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PART 3: PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Jesus, I know that I am yours and you are mine forever.

Thank you for sending your Spirit to me,
that I might have the power to live this new life with you.

Stir up your Spirit in me, release your Spirit in me.

Baptise me with the fullness of your Spirit,

That I may experience your presence and power in my life;

That I may find new meaning in your Scriptures;

That I may find new meaning in the Sacraments;

That I may find delight and comfort in prayer;

That I may be able to love as you love

and forgive as you forgive;

That I may discover and use the gifts you give me

for the life of the Church;

That I may experience the peace and joy

that you have promised.

Fill me with your Spirit, Jesus.

I wish to receive all that you have to give me.

Amen

PART 4: RESOLVE TO GROW AND WALK IN THE SPIRIT

You will need to persevere, through committing to the following disciplines:

- Set aside daily prayer time, including reading and meditating on a passage of Scripture.
- If possible join a prayer or fellowship group with more mature Christians who can help you grow.
- Increase your spiritual reading and use of the Bible.
- Resolve to grow in understanding of the sacraments and teachings of the Church.
- Become more involved with the Church community.
- Share your experiences with another person or a small group.