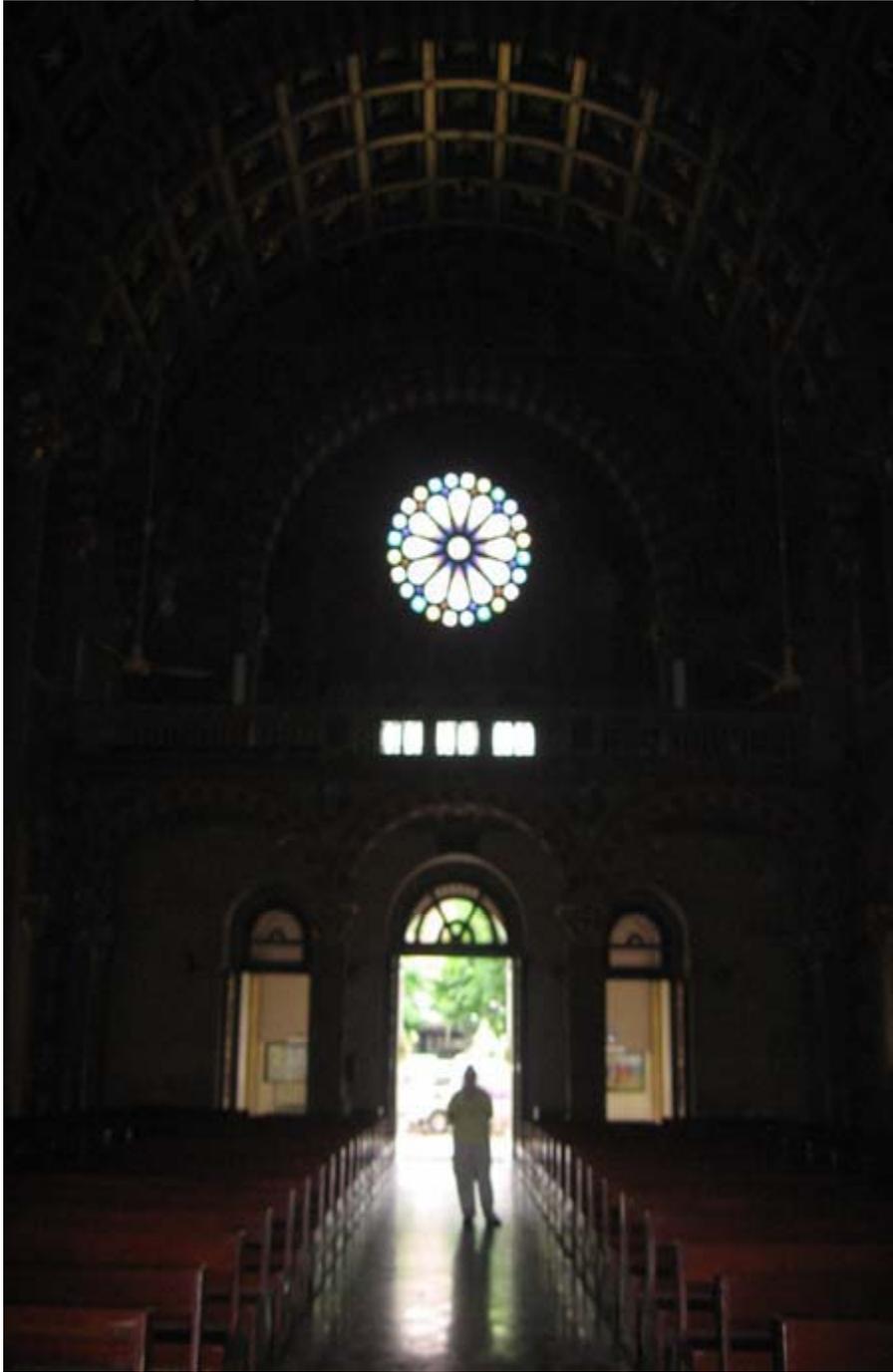


IC Prayer and Practice Module



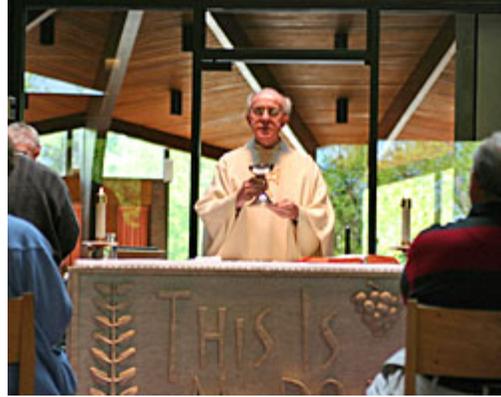
Hi and welcome. The activity that follows will assist you in learning about and trying a prayer practice that is suited to your preferred style of learning and of experiencing things.

Because we are each unique, we learn and process experiences in ways that are particular to us.

- *We have certain preferences for things such as foods and work and leisure activities.*
- *Different individuals also vary in their preferences for types of prayer and for which types of prayer are most helpful to them in their growth as disciples and servants of the Gospel.*
- *During various times in our lives, the Spirit calls us to pray in particular ways.*
- *The goal of prayer should be ongoing conversion of our hearts to the Gospel lived out as service to others in the context of our unique aptitudes and talents.*

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Catholicism is rich and diverse in her spirituality and truly has something for everyone. If you want to explore new ways to pray or to renew your prayer life or to perhaps begin to pray more regularly, you are invited to explore the topics which follow. **Just keep in your mind and heart that the Mass, or Eucharistic Liturgy, should be the “anchor” of our prayer.** As Catholics, we believe that nothing is a substitute for this symbolic meal in which we come together to make Christ actually present in the Word, the ritual, the bread and wine, the assembly of the faithful and in the priest as presider.



Remember, too, that ideally every moment of every day, lived with an awareness of grace and blessing, can be a prayer and a continuation of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Any interaction with another person can be an opportunity to share and receive Christ through relationship. In fact, it may be that formal prayer is really meant as a means to get us into this kind of “praying constantly” or “prayer in action” kind of mode.



IC Prayer and Practice Module



Starting on the next page is a chart that can give you an overview of some traditional and some newer practices of prayer. You can also consider the questions that follow the chart. As you proceed you will be directed to additional topics.



IC Prayer and Practice Module

<p><i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description</i></p>	<p><i>More Info</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Rosary</p> <p><i>The rosary is the oldest and most popular of all Catholic devotions. Interestingly, the origin of bead circlets to aid in meditation is found in Eastern religions. Such circlets were also used by Christians in the middle ages who counted on them while praying the Our Father, the Glory Be and the Hail Mary. In the thirteenth century, European Christians began to call such circlets “rosaries,” named after Mary’s flower, the rose.</i></p>	<p><i>1. Stop in the back of Immaculate Conception Church and pick up your own rosary beads with instructions on how to pray the rosary. Members of our parish make them as a service to the faith community.</i></p> <p><i>2. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</i></p> <p><i>3. Check out</i> www.rosary-center.org/howto.htm</p> <p>Try It Out:</p> <p><i>Once you master the basics of the rosary, you can try it while going for a walk. Try praying the rosary as a group with family or friends. It builds shared faith and also community. Consider praying the rosary alone in a quiet soothing place. Once the prayers become second nature, the rosary can become a meditative experience.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sacramentals</p> <p><i>Catholicism is rich with symbolism. Sacramentals, such as holy water, sacred oils such as those used in the Sacraments of Confirmation, Baptism, Holy Orders and Anointing are sacramentals. The crucifix and medals and scapulas as well as making the sign of the cross are also sacramentals. Sacramentals are material things or activities that help us to direct our minds and our hearts to the sacred. Typically, they help us enter into more full participation in the sacraments by engaging our senses in our spiritual practice.</i></p>	<p><i>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module</i></p> <p><i>2. Check out</i> www.aboutcatholics.com/worship/sacramentals/</p> <p>Try It Out:</p> <p><i>Be deliberate when you bless yourself and focus your attention on the meaning of words as you say “In the name of the Father....” Also reflect upon the symbolic meaning of the act of making the sign of the cross on yourself.</i></p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

<p><i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids:</i></p> <p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>More Info</i></p>
<p><i>Sacramentals – continued</i></p> <p><i>Sacramentals are not a practice of prayer but we can use them with our prayer to engage us more fully and to help us be more aware of the communion between our physical, sensing selves and our spiritual selves.</i></p>	<p>Try It Out: (continued)</p> <p><i>Each time you encounter holy water, remember your baptism and its meaning. Call to mind the many symbolic deaths and resurrections that occur in our lives. Keep in mind that water is necessary for life but that it also can cause death. Remember water’s ability to cleanse and flush away. You may wish to have a small container of holy water for use at home. Children especially are interested in this sacramental and, for example, enjoy blessing themselves with it at bedtime.</i></p> <p><i>Try praying while burning incense or candles. Our Orthodox sisters and brothers frequently use incense in their liturgies. The smoke of incense can call to mind the image our prayers “rising up” to God. The fragrance can remind us of grace that permeates our beings and the sweetness of a life converted to the Gospel.</i></p> <p><i>If you are going to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation consider the following: When you are confirmed, feel the sensation of the oil on your forehead. Note any aroma it may have. Reflect upon the value and uses of fine oil. Traditionally it was used to anoint royalty, to seal covenant agreements and even to anoint those going into battle. Today fine oil is used to enhance foods and as an ingredient in and a garnish for bread. Consider how this can symbolically be related to Confirmation.</i></p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

<i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description</i>	<i>More Info</i>
<p data-bbox="310 342 667 426"><i>Stations of the Cross (The Way of the Cross)</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 478 737 615"><i>Tradition holds that Mary, Jesus' mother, walked to Calvary with her son and that she may have sometimes retraced the path that Jesus walked on the way to Calvary.</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 653 773 825"><i>In keeping with this, most Catholic churches depict Jesus' journey to Calvary on Good Friday in the form of fourteen plaques or pictures, called stations, displayed sequentially on the walls of the sanctuary.</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 863 784 963"><i>Historically, praying the stations of the cross was a way to make a pilgrimage without having to travel away from home.</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 1003 789 1104"><i>We can walk from station to station and pray a series of prayers which help us reflect on Jesus' journey to Calvary as he carried His cross.</i></p> <p data-bbox="185 1144 792 1211"><i>We should be aware of the symbolic meaning of this journey in our own lives.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="818 342 1487 373"><i>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module</i></p> <p data-bbox="818 411 1466 478"><i>2. Check out</i> www.Creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/s-9.html</p> <p data-bbox="818 516 971 548"><i>Try It Out:</i></p> <p data-bbox="818 585 1503 825"><i>You can pray the stations by visiting a Catholic church and walking from station to station. You can use the guide from the web site above as a reference or one of the many books that depict and describe the stations. Most churches, including Immaculate Conception, usually have booklets which can guide you through the stations. You could ask to borrow one of these while visiting the church.</i></p> <p data-bbox="818 829 1503 980"><i>You can pray the stations on line on the site above without even moving from your computer station or you can pray them anytime and any place using a book as a guide. The reference list at the end of this module suggests a book.</i></p> <p data-bbox="818 1010 1503 1346"><i>It's not that hard to commit the fourteen stations to memory since they retrace Jesus' walk to Calvary. If you commit the stations to memory, you can pray the living stations by being on the lookout in your daily life for situations which call to mind a particular station and by responding in a way that incarnates the Gospel here and now. For example, if you witness a classmate being teased and picked on, you may reflect on the tenth station where Jesus is stripped and humiliated. You may also consider how you could help your classmate out.</i></p> <p data-bbox="818 1375 1487 1495"><i>Get a group, such as your Confirmation small group, together and pray the stations as a communal experience of prayer. Add your group's prayers and intentions as you reflect upon each station.</i></p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description

Lives of the Saints

Traditionally the Church has designated certain individuals as “saints” after they die. These individuals’ lives are exemplary in service of the Gospel and serve as benchmarks for us on our own journeys.

The Church’s formal recognition of such individuals is called canonization.

The Church teaches that these individuals are already and certainly with God for eternity. We can read about and reflect upon their lives and activities to learn how to better serve the Gospel in our own lives. Such reflection can be a type of prayer if we read slowly and thoughtfully.

We can ask the Holy Spirit to move us to live the example of a particular saint. Sometimes people pray to saints and ask them for guidance and support or to ask them to bring their prayer and petitions to God.

According to the New Testament, all Christians are saints, followers of Jesus and his Gospel, even if not formally canonized.

As Christians, we are all spiritually connected to each other and to those who have gone before us in faith. This is a spiritual lineage called the Communion of Saints.

More Info

- 1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.*
- 2. Check out www.catholic.org/saints/*
- 3. Refer to a text such as Lives of the Saints by Richard McBrien.*

Try It Out:

Reflect upon how you might apply a particular saint’s example to your life.

As you pray, ask a particular saint who inspires you to help you become more Christ like.

As you pray, ask a particular saint to pray for you and with you before the Lord.

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description

Prayer of the Heart

This type of prayer focuses on coming to quiet and resting in your depth or center where you can hear God speak to your heart.

Once you are in this place of the heart, no words are used in this prayer. In this type of prayer, we seek to empty the mind and heart of all that is not of God and ultimately of all that is not God.

This type of prayer is similar to the classical type of prayer called contemplation but it differs in that there is a method one can learn to foster this type of prayer.

In contrast, contemplation, as it is traditionally understood, is a type of prayer that is given by God to a small number of those who have been praying meditatively for many years.

Prayer of the heart may actually be contemplation. Perhaps the change is not in the prayer but in our understanding; many now believe that this type of prayer is accessible to anyone with genuine desire for God, even if that person has not been praying for a long time.

The outcome of this type of prayer prayed regularly seems to be the fruits of the Spirit (See Galatians 5:22-23) manifested in how a person lives and acts.

More Info

1. Refer to the references list at the end of this module.

2. Check out www.centeringprayer.com/cntrgpryr.htm
This web site will further explain the method that teaches you how to open yourself to the prayer of the heart.

Try It Out:

Learn the method and then practice this type of prayer every day for twenty minutes.

Sit with a group of friends, such as your Confirmation small group, and practice this type of prayer together. Live that which you learn in your prayer time.

IC Prayer and Practice Module

<i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description</i>	<i>More Info</i>
<p data-bbox="191 268 354 304">Adoration</p> <p data-bbox="181 352 787 909"><i>As Catholics we believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharistic bread consecrated at each Mass. Simply stated, “to consecrate” means to bless or to make holy. After Mass, some of the Eucharist is placed in a special box called the tabernacle. The tabernacle is generally made of some fine material such as gold or silver and is located beside or in an area behind the main altar in the church. In some newer churches, the tabernacle is often in a chapel separate from the sanctuary where liturgy is celebrated. One of the reasons for this is that when liturgy is celebrated, it is most desirable for the faithful present to receive the Eucharist consecrated at that liturgy and to concentrate fully on the liturgy as it proceeds.</i></p> <p data-bbox="181 951 787 1711"><i>Historically, any extra consecrated hosts were held in reserve in the tabernacle after Mass. This was done mainly for two reasons. One reason was that Eucharistic ministers could retrieve the hosts consecrated at Mass and bring communion to those who were sick or infirmed and could not come to liturgy. The second reason was that the faithful could receive communion at a communion service lead by lay people that would be held in the absence of a priest during times of priest shortages. Generations of Catholics have been devoted to praying to Christ truly present in the Eucharist both at Mass and also in the tabernacle. The Eucharist is central to the faith life of Catholics because of what we believe it literally and actually is-Christ truly present. The Eucharist is consecrated at Liturgy by the priest with participation of the congregation. Each and all of the faithful assembled serve to make Christ truly present not only at Mass but also in the world.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="820 300 1502 336"><i>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</i></p> <p data-bbox="820 373 1502 409">Try It Out:</p> <p data-bbox="820 447 1502 625">Stop by a church and sit quietly. You may wish to slowly pray the Our Father or Hail Mary. You may wish to put before the Lord your cares, concerns, hopes and ideas. You may wish to apply the method of Prayer of the Heart described above as part of Eucharistic Adoration.</p> <p data-bbox="820 657 1502 720">Go to Mass frequently, concentrate and participate fully.</p> <p data-bbox="820 751 1502 867">Realize that Christ is truly present in each person that you meet and also in yourself. Act in a way that communicates reverence for the person’s inherent dignity and for Christ made present in them.</p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

<p><i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids: Description</i></p>	<p><i>More Info</i></p>
<p>Litanies</p> <p><i>Litanies are essentially lists of invocations and a response such as “Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (invocation), Pray for us (response)”. There are various litanies of the Church including the Litany of the Saints, the Litany of the Sacred Heart and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Litanies can be prayed or sung within the Mass. Perhaps the most notable litany within the Mass is that which is sung at the beautiful Easter Vigil Mass. Litanies can also be prayed or sung as stand alone group or private prayer.</i></p>	<p>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</p> <p>2. Check out www.catholic-pages.com/dir/litanies.asp and www.catholicyouth.freesevers.com/index.htm</p> <p>Try It Out:</p> <p>Get together with your family and try praying a litany in place of a standard grace before meals or as a prayer at the finish of meals.</p> <p>Memorize a favorite litany and pray it as you drift off to sleep, ride the school bus or stand on line at the grocery store.</p>
<p>Liturgy of the Hours</p> <p><i>The Liturgy of the Hours is also known as the Divine Office and is often called the prayer of the church. It is liturgical in that it follows a set format or ritual and involves alternating responses between participants. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the participants pray the psalms, general intercessions and proclaim a scripture reading. Much like the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mass), the Liturgy of the Hours follows the liturgical calendar. The Liturgy of the Hours for the entire church year is contained in four volumes and an abbreviated version is contained in a volume called <u>Christian Prayer</u>.</i></p> <p><i>Traditionally and typically, clergy and religious pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Increasingly, lay Catholics are also praying the Liturgy of the Hours both in groups and privately on a regular basis. The Liturgy of the Hours can be incorporated into the Liturgy of the Eucharist. A congregation can also pray the Liturgy of Hours as a form of liturgical worship which is distinct from the Liturgy of the Eucharist but that complements the Liturgy of the Eucharist.</i></p>	<p>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</p> <p>2. Check out http://liturgyny.catholic.org/lithours1.htm</p> <p>Try It Out:</p> <p>Attend the 6:25AM or 9:00AM daily weekday liturgy at Immaculate Conception where the community prays the Liturgy of the Hours as part of the Eucharistic Liturgy.</p> <p>Ask someone who prays the Liturgy of the Hours to teach you the basics or obtain a copy of Christian Prayer, an instruction book on praying Liturgy of the Hours and an annual guide(see the reference list below) and try it yourself. Be advised, however, that it can be complicated to figure out alone. Keep in mind that because the Liturgy of the Hours is liturgical prayer, it is best prayed in community with others. Try using it as a family prayer. You may want to try it in the context of using the blessing cup as described below.</p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

<p><i>Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids:</i> <i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>More Info</i></p>
<p><i>Blessing Cup Prayer</i></p> <p><i>This is a relatively new form of shared prayer that is ideal for families or groups of friends or classmates. It involves a simple prayer service and drinking from a common cup designated as the blessing cup. It is particularly meaningful for Catholics because it recalls the Eucharistic liturgy and the symbolic meaning of sharing a meal and necessity of living a Christian life together with others.</i></p>	<p><i>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</i></p> <p>Try It Out:</p> <p>Obtain a pottery or glass cup or goblet that you can use as a dedicated blessing cup for this communal prayer practice. Obtain and refer to the book <i>The Blessing Cup- Prayer Rituals for Families and Groups</i> by Rock Travnikar, O.F.M. Begin your tradition of blessing cup prayer. Consider utilizing the blessing cup ritual when praying the liturgy of the hours with family, friends or other groups.</p>
<p><i>Praying with Scripture</i> <i>(Psalms and Gospels)</i></p> <p><i>The Old and New Testaments of the Bible record God's saving work in human history. The Bible is the inspired word of God recorded through human authors and interpreted in the context of history and tradition and also in the context of the literary genre used in a particular passage.</i></p> <p><i>There are songs, canticles and poems such as in the psalms and allegorical narratives such as in Genesis. There are historical accounts, proverbs, parables and even letters also called epistles.</i></p> <p><i>As the inspired word of God, the scriptures are a rich source of material for prayer and meditation.</i></p>	<p><i>1. Refer to the reference list at the end of this module.</i></p> <p><i>2. Check out and prayerfully read any of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psalm 27(Hope in God)</i> • <i>Psalm 42(Longing for God)</i> • <i>Psalm 63(Longing for God)</i> • <i>Psalm 139(Intimacy with God)</i> • <i>Matthew 5:1-12(The Beatitudes)</i> • <i>Philippians 2:1-11(How to be like Christ)</i> <p>Try It Out :</p> <p>Read portions of scripture such as those suggested above. Read them once to get a sense of the passage and then read them through a second or third time very slowly. Savor the words and reflect on the meaning of any sentence that moves you. Imagine the meaning of the passage seeping into your soul as rain might soak a dry patch of earth.</p> <p>Read scripture as a family prayer before or after meals. Discuss what the passage means to each person who heard it proclaimed.</p> <p>Try to remember what you've read and reflected upon and let it influence how you think, how you make choices and how you interact with others.</p> <p>Look up Lecto Divina on the internet or in the book <i>Awake My Soul</i> listed in the reference list below. Try this very specific way of praying with scripture.</p>

IC Prayer and Practice Module

So you can't decide what to try?

Keep in mind that some of us like hands on activities. Some of us need to move around more than others. Some like books with lots of text and other prefer that printed information is in the form of pictures and diagrams.



Such preferences influence how we learn and probably which practices of prayer we might prefer.

The following questions help you take into account such preferences as you explore various practices of prayer.

Consider the following questions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers or choices here so have fun and keep an open heart.

The Spirit will also speak to your heart about the particular type of prayer to which you are called at a given point in your faith journey.



Listen and trust the message.

IC Prayer and Practice Module



Do you learn best and focus best when you have the opportunity to move around?

Yes

No

Do you learn best with hands on activities?

Yes

No

When trying to assemble something, do you prefer pictures and diagrams to printed text?

Yes

No

When visiting a new place do you like to bring back souvenirs or do you find that certain objects, such as a favorite carving or figurine, represent favorite memories for you or perhaps soothe you?

Yes

No

IC Prayer and Practice Module

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, you may find that some or all of the following enrich your prayer life and journey as a disciple.

Refer to the *Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids* table above to find out more about the topic of interest.

Rosary

Stations of the Cross

Sacramentals

Blessing Cup Ritual

(Great for family prayer or prayer with a group of friends)

If you answered “no” to most of these questions, you may find the following enrich your prayer life and journey as a disciple.

Refer to the *Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids* table above to find out more about the topic of interest.

Reading about and Reflecting on the Lives of the Saints

Prayer of the Heart/Adoration

More questions to consider.....

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Do you like books?

Yes

No

Do you like routines?

Yes

No

If you answered “yes” both of the above questions, you may find the following appealing as a form of prayer. Refer to the *Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids* table above to find out more about the topic of interest.

Litanies

Liturgy of the Hours

Blessing Cup Prayer

(This is great for use in families or groups of friends.)

If you answered ‘no’ to both of the above questions, you may find the following appealing as a form of prayer or as a means to enrich your prayer life or journey as a disciple. Refer to the *Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids* table above to find out more about the topic of interest.

Prayer of the Heart/Adoration

And one more question.....

IC Prayer and Practice Module

When you are experiencing an emotion such as sorrow, joy or anger, is it useful to you to read a poem or listen to a song that expresses emotions similar to yours?

Yes

No



If you answered “yes” to this question, you may find the following appealing as a means to enrich your prayer and journey as a disciple. Refer to the *Prayer Practices and Prayer Aids* table above to find out more about the topic of interest.

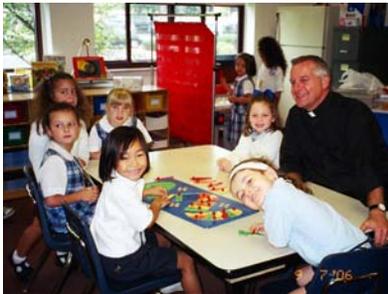
Praying with the Psalms or Gospels and Lecto Divina

Reading about and Reflecting on the Lives of the Saints

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Prayer in Relationship

A verse in the Old Testament book of the prophet Micah states, “Love tenderly, act justly and walk humbly with your God.”



An effective prayer-life should help you to do just this. Prayer should attune us to God within ourselves and also within others.



Prayer should give us a deeper appreciation of the sacred in nature and everyday experiences. Ultimately, prayer should sensitize us and challenge us to live lives of service and lives in which we grow beyond selfishness into other-centeredness.



This does not happen all at once and usually takes a lifetime. The sacraments, liturgy and relationships with others nourish and sustain us on the journey. It is good that we generally have an entire human lifespan to grown in prayer and in relationship.

IC Prayer and Practice Module

Things you can do to help bring prayer into relationship with others and with your life as you live it:

1. **Ask the Spirit for the grace to put into action that which you learn in prayer.**
2. **Talk to your Confirmation sponsor and others about the topics in this module and your reactions to them.**
3. **Journal your experiences of prayer and how they may have affected your behavior on a given day.**
4. **Do some volunteer work in a Church or secular organization. Do it with the intention of serving the Lord through meeting the needs of people.**
5. **Participate regularly and fully in the Mass. We are truly changed when we celebrate Mass with other members of the faith community. The word “mass” is derived from a Greek word which means “to send forth.” (Check out the U.S. Catholic article by David Philippiart “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Mass-Goers” at www.uscatholic.org/2004/06/featb0406.htm)**
6. **If you are praying regularly and you notice that you are living more fully how Jesus challenges us to live, you are likely growing in your love relationship with God.**

IC Prayer and Practice Module

This module was designed and developed by Lynn-Beth Satterly, M.D., M.S. using the following references. Please refer to them for additional information. We hope that this module was enjoyable and that it was useful in enriching your growth as a disciple of Christ.

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Suggested Bible Translations: **The New Jerusalem Bible** and **The New American Bible** **The Divine Office** and **Christian Prayer** and also related guides can be obtained on www.amazon.com and www.monasterygreetings.com as well as most local Catholic shops such as The Catholic Shop in Syracuse.

Photography Courtesy of Alex Ottaviano, John Farnach and the IC Good News.