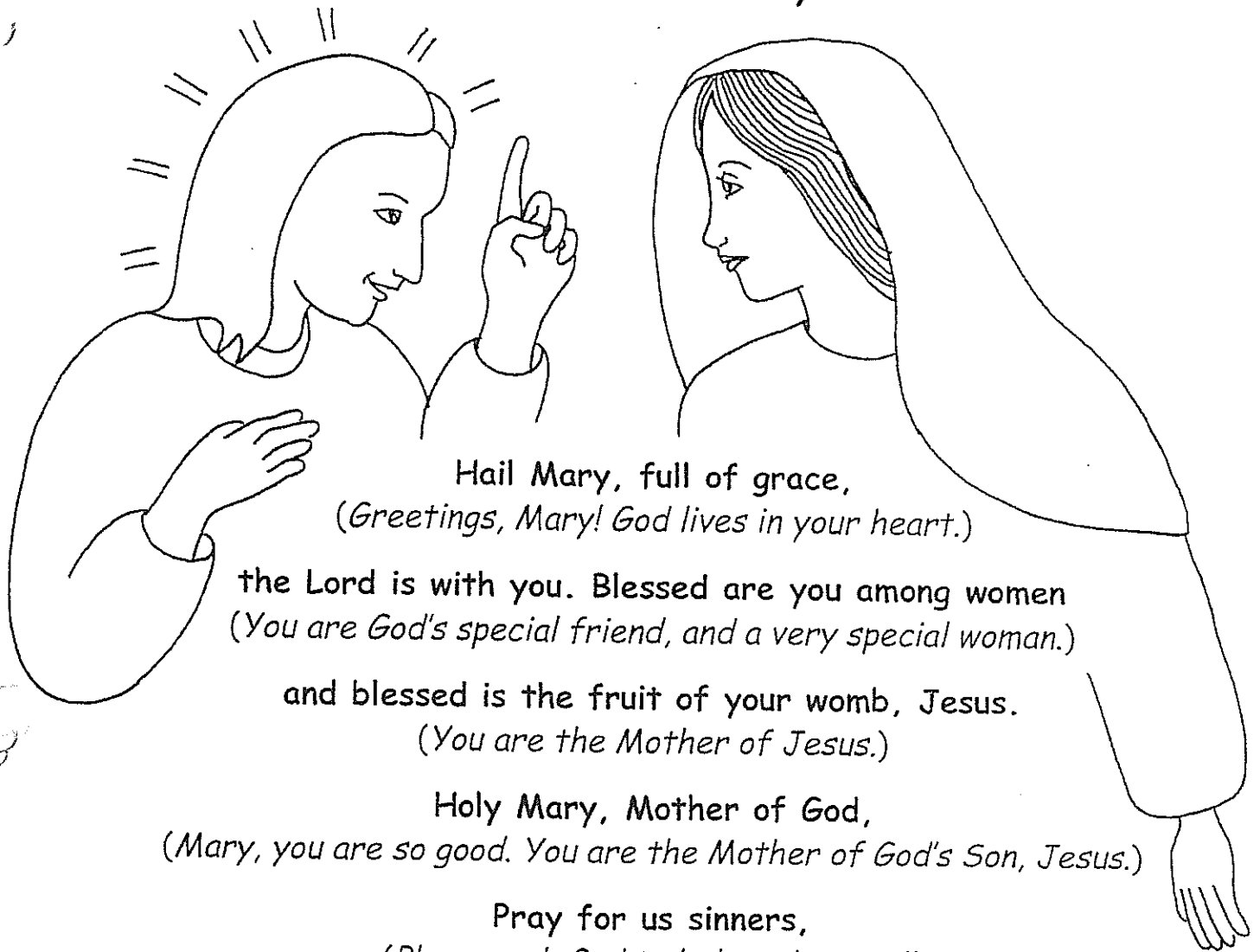


# Prayers of the Rosary

## The Hail Mary



Hail Mary, full of grace,  
(Greetings, Mary! God lives in your heart.)

the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women  
(You are God's special friend, and a very special woman.)

and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
(You are the Mother of Jesus.)

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
(Mary, you are so good. You are the Mother of God's Son, Jesus.)

Pray for us sinners,  
(Please, ask God to help us be good.)

Now and at the hour of death. Amen.  
(Be with us always. Be with us when we're happy,  
and when we're sad or afraid. Amen.)

The *Hail Mary* is a very popular prayer taken from two Bible stories. The first is the story of Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary when he told her God wanted her to be the Mother of His only Son, Jesus. (Cf. Lk 1:28) [--- 27] The second is the wonderful greeting Mary received from her cousin Elizabeth. Mary went to visit and help her cousin after learning from the angel that Elizabeth was going to have a son, too. (Cf. Lk 1:42)

**Activities:** • With the help of your teacher or parent(s) practice saying the *Hail Mary*.  
• Color the picture of Mary and the Angel Gabriel.

# Annunciation of the Lord

★ LUKE 1:26-38

★ LECTONARY: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

★ SEE ALSO MARY, MOTHER OF GOD (CARD 155)

★ CATECHISM 148, 273, 484-485, 2676

**B**efore you were born, your parents might have known your sex or whether you were a twin. But the most important things about you were unknown—who you would be and what you would do in life.

According to the Gospel of Luke, a young Jewish girl named Mary knew a great deal about her child before he was born. God told her through a messenger. Mary lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Tradition tells us that her parents were Ann and Joachim. When Mary was about 13 or 14 years old, she was betrothed or engaged to Joseph, a carpenter who was descended from King David. This engagement meant that Mary and Joseph were legally bound as in a real marriage, but they would have to wait several months before coming together as husband and wife.

As told in Luke 1:26-38, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary one day. He greeted her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." Mary wondered what the words meant. The angel continued, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Gabriel announced that Mary would have a son whom she was to name Jesus. He would be great and be called the Son of the Most High. God would give him the throne of David, his father, and he would rule over the house of Jacob forever. With these words, Gabriel revealed that Mary's son would be the Son of God and the promised Savior from the house of David.



No doubt Mary had always prayed for the coming of the Messiah. Now God was letting her know that she was the one chosen to be the mother of the Savior. But Mary was puzzled. She asked how she could have a baby when she was still a virgin and only betrothed to Joseph. Gabriel answered that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her. Gabriel also informed Mary that her elderly relative Elizabeth was six months pregnant.

Mary, a woman of faith, was always open to God's will. Her response to the angel was, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." And the angel left. At Mary's "Yes," the Word became flesh. All that the prophets had foretold about the Messiah would be fulfilled through her. Mary became God's mother and ours.

Mary's child would truly be the Son of God, and his body would be totally formed from her body. In Genesis the Spirit of God had brooded over the waters, and the universe was created (1:1). Then God breathed into man the breath of life, the Spirit. Now with Mary, God's Spirit was beginning a new creation. A new Adam would be conceived.

During the Exodus God was present with the people in the ark of the covenant. In Mary, the new ark of the covenant, God is with us in the flesh. Her Son is called *Emmanuel*, which means "God with us." Mary's role as the Mother of God and all the privileges that come to her because of it make her name very appropriate: *Mary* means "exalted one."

## "HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU"

READ the birth announcement to Zechariah in Luke 1:5-25. Make a chart with two columns.	DRAW the Annunciation. Where was Mary and what was she doing when the angel appeared?	DISCUSS St. Augustine's words: "Mary conceived Jesus in her heart before she conceived him in her womb."
<p>Title one "same" and the other "different."</p> <p>Fill in the chart comparing the two Annunciation stories.</p>	<p>What did the angel look like?</p>	<p>look like?</p>



# Visitation

★ LUKE 1:39-56

★ LECTIONARY: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT,

YEAR C

★ SEE ALSO ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

(CARD 28)

★ CATECHISM 273, 495, 2097, 2618-2619, 2676

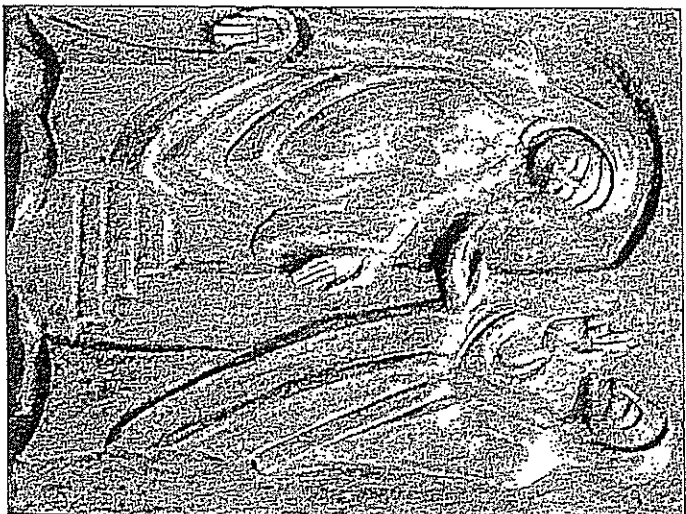
If you have ever been to a live theater performance, you know that before the curtain rises, the buzz of happy voices fills the room. Once the lights dim, the voices are stilled so the drama can unfold. The life of the Savior was the greatest story ever played out on Earth.

According to the Gospel of Luke, months before Jesus' debut, women spoke in happy voices and an infant even leapt joyfully. These things occurred when Mary visited her relative Elizabeth.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the Mother of God, he also told her that her aged relative was expecting a child. After the angel left, Mary went as quickly as she could to Elizabeth, who was already six months pregnant. Mary knew Elizabeth could use her help. Perhaps Mary also wished to share her own good news with someone. In this visit to Elizabeth we see Mary, the first Christ-bearer, carrying out an act of love and service.

Elizabeth lived in the hill country of Judah. Tradition has named her town Ain Karim, which is about five or six miles west of Jerusalem. Mary probably made the four-day journey with a caravan, a company of travelers.

At the house of Zechariah, Mary entered and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard her voice, the baby within her leaped. Elizabeth cried out, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my



Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:42, 43) Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth realized that Mary was the mother of the Messiah. Elizabeth's unborn son John also responded to the presence of the unborn Savior.

Just as King David once danced before the ark of the covenant in which the Lord was present (2 Samuel 6:14-15), John danced before the Lord.

Elizabeth had praised Mary and Mary's son. Mary in turn praised God who worked such wonders in her. She sang a canticle, a beautiful song of praise and thanksgiving called the Magnificat from its first words, "My soul magnifies the Lord." Mary began the hymn by voicing her joy and gratitude that despite her lowliness God had chosen her and had done great things for her. Then Mary observed that God puts down the proud and wealthy, and helps the lowly and poor. She concluded by mentioning God's mercy in keeping the promises made to Abraham and his descendants (Luke 1:46-55).

Mary stayed with Elizabeth three months, probably until John was born. She then returned to Nazareth to await the birth of her own son.

At the Visitation the Old Testament and the New Testament met. John would be the last and greatest prophet to announce the coming of the Messiah. He would prepare the way of the Lord.



ACT OUT	CREATE	CONSIDER
the scene of the Visitation. Does Zechariah try to communicate with Mary in gesture and writing?	your own version of the Magnificat. What are the great things the Lord has done for you? Or write a version of the Magnificat for your family, your neighborhood, or your parish.	the things Mary might have done to help Elizabeth during her stay. Plan a way you can imitate Mary's selfless love by serving someone.



# Saint Agnes

Feast Day: January 21

Let us pray.

Dear God, thank you  
for Saint Agnes.

Help us to be as kind  
and gentle to others  
as she was, and let us  
be your "little lambs"

who give joy and  
happiness to

everyone around us.

Amen.

Once there was a young girl in Rome named Agnes. Agnes loved simple things. Her favorite dress was plain white. People who saw her wearing this dress on the way to school said that she looked as pretty as a flower. They called her "a charming blossom."

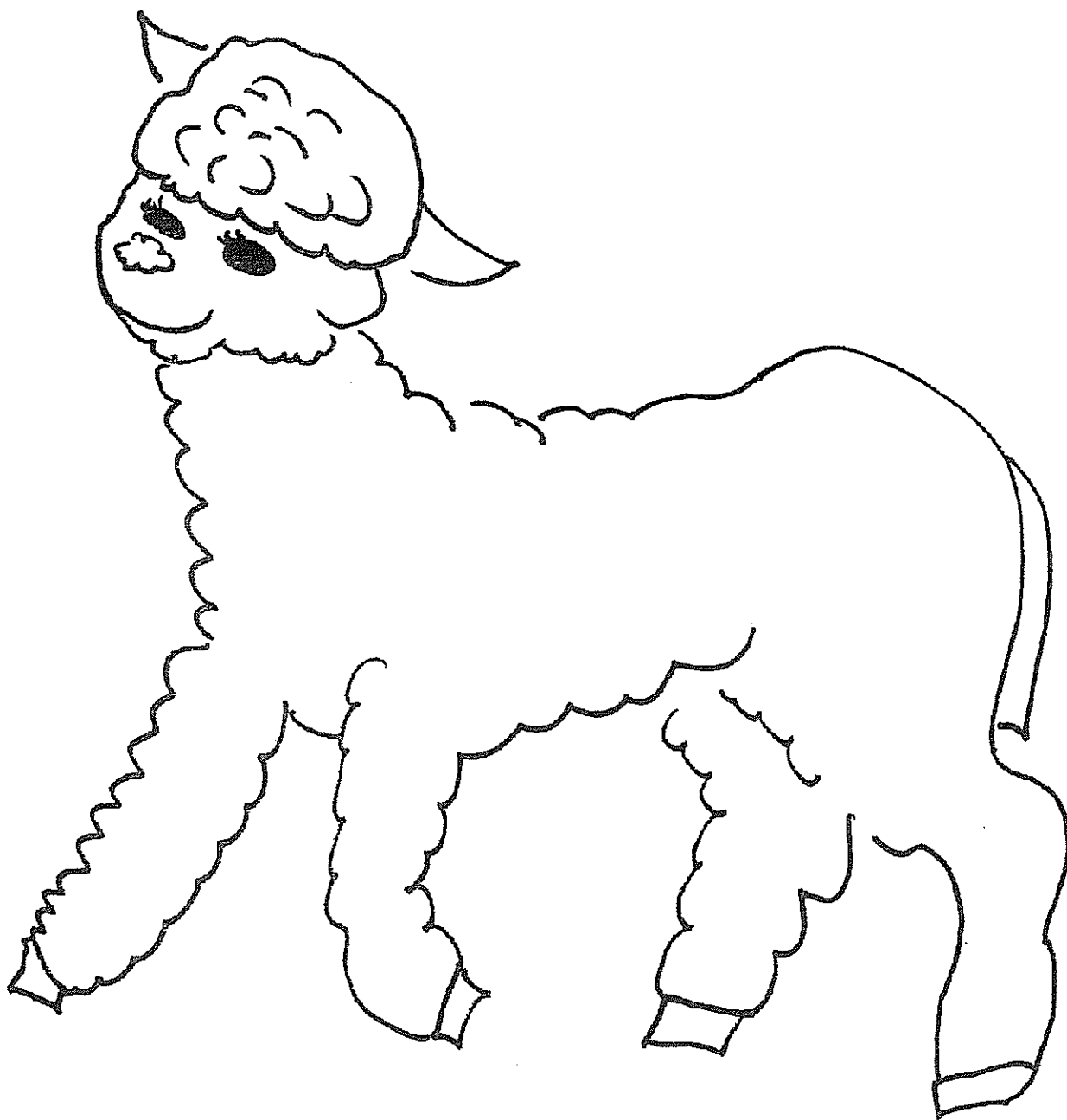
Agnes was always gentle and sweet like a little lamb. She always thought of others. She was warm hearted with cheeks as pink as roses and eyes as blue as the sky. Agnes enjoyed being kind to others.

When she was only 13, Agnes was killed because she refused to give up her Christian faith. (People who die for their faith are called martyrs.)

Because of her gentle and pure ways, Agnes is still known today as "the little lamb of Jesus."

Agnes is the patron saint of young girls.

Saint Agnes was called the "little lamb of Jesus." Color this lamb, and then smile and show kindness to everyone you meet today.





# aint Patrick

Feast Day: March 17

Let us pray.

Thank you, loving  
God, for Saint Patrick.

Thank you for the  
clover that grows  
in the fields and  
reminds us of your  
loving presence.

We pray this  
in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Once there was a little boy named Patrick who lived in Great Britain. When he was sixteen years old he was captured by pirates and taken to Ireland.

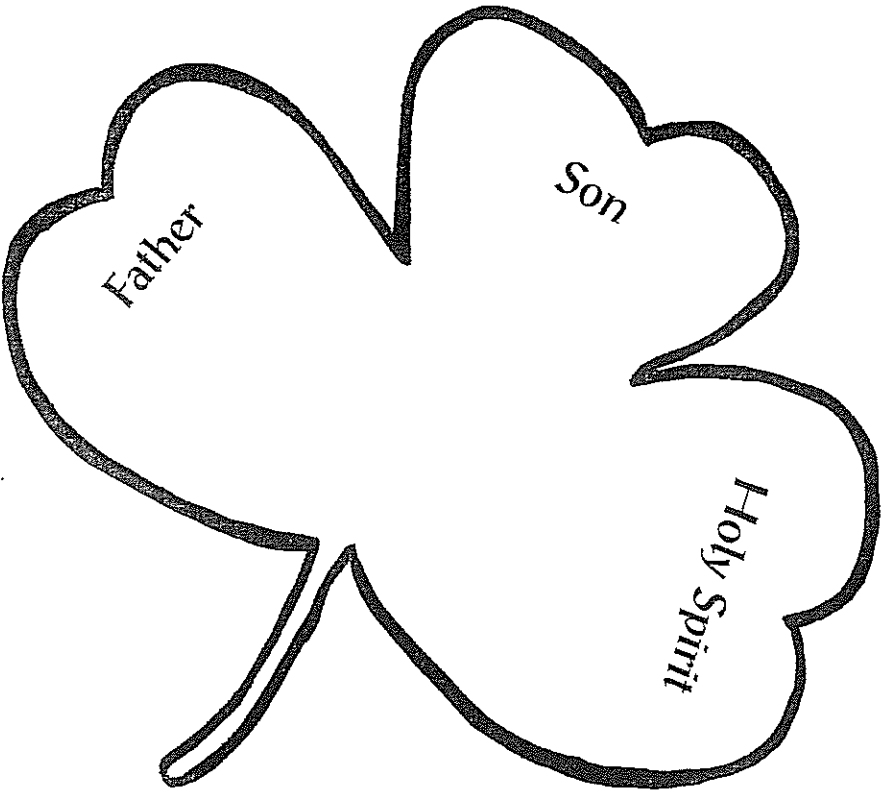
Patrick worked as a slave, taking care of sheep in the mountains. He spent much of his time praying to God. He felt very close to God. And then one day, Patrick escaped from Ireland.

When he got back home, he made the decision to become a priest. Later he became a bishop and he went back to Ireland to teach the people about Jesus. He traveled from village to village talking about God. He used a green shamrock that grew in the countryside to teach the people that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Patrick was a good man. He was even kind to his enemies. He wrote many prayers and he built the first Christian church in Ireland.

Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland.

Saint Patrick loved God very much. He was kind to everyone. We can be like Patrick when we are kind to others. Color this shamrock green, and then make the Sign of the Cross.



# The Promise of Immortality: Celebrating All Saints and All Souls

by Jem Sullivan, Ph.D.

*On the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls we are invited to ponder with the eyes of faith the mystery of time, eternity, and death itself. These liturgical celebrations remind us that the human desire for immortality is concerned with not only our physical bodies. Immortality is a spiritual reality made concrete in the lives of the saints and the souls who precede us in faith.*

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On the first two days of November, the Church celebrates God's promise of immortality in Jesus Christ.

On the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls we are invited to ponder with the eyes of faith the mystery of time, eternity, and death itself. These liturgical celebrations remind us that the human desire for immortality is concerned with not only our physical bodies. Immortality is a spiritual reality made concrete in the lives of the saints and the souls who precede us in faith.

## Saints as Exemplary Christian Disciples

The Solemnity of All Saints, celebrated each year on November 1, recalls the Catholic tradition of looking to saints as models of faith and as intercessors on the faith journey.

In connecting catechesis to the Church's liturgical rhythms of feasts and fasts, catechists recall the particular saint of each day. The liturgical year offers catechists a continuous cycle of inspiration in the lived witness of individual holy men and women who are daily reminders of our baptismal call to holiness.

One day in the Church's calendar is given to celebrating the entire company of saints as a community of exemplary disciples of Christ. Taken together, this great assembly of the "holy ones" gives catechists the opportunity to highlight the many ways in which human potential has and can be transformed by God's grace. The Communion of Saints also offers a vision of Christian hope in eternal life—for the saints fulfill their human desire for immortal life in the eternal presence of God.

## Remembering the Faithful Departed

The commemoration of All Souls Day is rooted in the Christian conviction that death is not the final word on the human condition. The search for immortality finds its true end only in God.

So we, the living, are called in love to accompany with prayer those who have died and are now being purified to stand in the presence of God. To prepare for All Souls Day, invite special moments of remembrance of lost loved ones. Such prayerful remembrance brings consolation in separation and loss.

Catechists can encourage students to recognize that grief is the other side of love. And the eternal side of human love is the love of God.



In preparing to mark All Saints and All Souls, catechists can find in these resources and activities some practical ways to encourage reflection on the lives of the saints and prayerful remembrance of all souls.

\* Draw on the stories of the lives of American saints found in the opening section of each chapter of the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Discuss how these holy men and women show us concrete paths to live the gospel today.

\* Purchase copies of Pope Benedict XVI's *The Saints* (Spiritual Thoughts Series) to distribute to students. Focus on one or more of the saints featured in this book to invite reflection on the call to holiness addressed to every Christian.

\* Encourage year-round study of the lives of the saints by compiling a list of classic writings of well-known saints such as St. Augustine's *Confessions*, St. Catherine of Siena's *The Dialogue*, and *The Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales.

\* Create a Book of Remembrance in which students write personal prayers for lost loved ones. On All Souls Day, place this book in church as a way to join these personal prayers with the Mass for All Souls.

\* Distribute prayer cards, such as the "Prayer for the Dead," that commends souls to the loving mercy of God.

We reflect on the lives of the saints in order to better imitate their example. We remember souls to find consolation and strength to live a life worthy of God. Both liturgical celebrations are catechetical moments that recall that any human life open to God's grace can be transformed into a living reflection of Christ in this world and in the life to come.

Jem Sullivan, Ph.D., is staff to the USCCB Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis. She has served as a high school catechist and has taught undergraduate and graduate theology. All titles mentioned are available from USCCB Publishing ([usccbpublishing.org](http://usccbpublishing.org)).

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*Source: CATECHIST Magazine, October 2009*

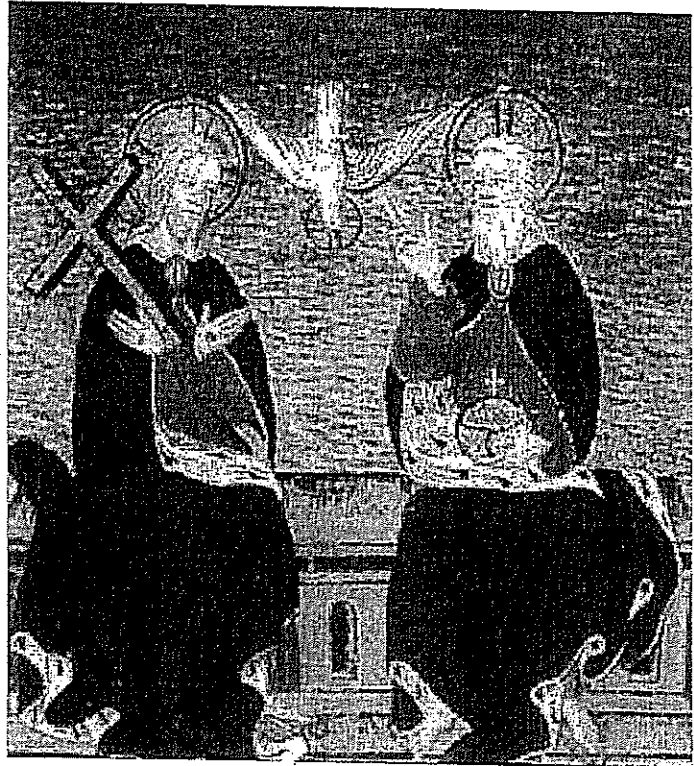
Lord,  
teach us  
how to pray

## Praying in words and signs: The Sign of the Cross

by Victor Hoagland, C.P.  
based on the New Catholic Catechism 1077-1109;  
see also: The Sign of the Cross - for children

Other Sites  
on Prayer  
•  
The Gift  
of Prayer  
•  
Taught by  
the Holy Spirit  
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Jesus Prayed  
•  
The Prayer  
Jesus Taught Us  
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Hail Mary  
and the Rosary  
•  
this page:  
The Sign  
of the Cross  
•  
Praying the  
Days and Year  
•  
go to  
Main Page  
for this site  
•  
or  
return to:  
Real Prayer,  
Virtual Retreat

Christian prayer is modeled after the prayer of Jesus. Like his, it should come from the heart. When he prayed Jesus used words and signs and sometimes cries, as expressions of his heart. And so do we when we pray; our hearts too look for an outward voice.



*The Holy Trinity*

The words and signs that Jesus used when he prayed often came from his own Jewish tradition, from what he learned in his family and from others. As for ourselves, we turn to our Christian tradition for guidance in prayer. We believe it is a tradition inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it is also an outgrowth of the Jewish tradition of prayer that nourished Jesus himself.

The Christian tradition of prayer has a wisdom all its own, with many different forms and expressions. Some basic prayers of our Christian tradition, however, have a special place. The Sign of the Cross is one example.

In the Catholic church and other Christian churches the Sign of the Cross is an important part of personal and public prayer. It originated in the earliest days of Christianity and so it is centuries old. It is the first sign made on us at Baptism and the last sign made as we pass to our future life. It's a vital part of liturgical prayer and



the sacraments. With the Sign of the Cross we begin and end our prayers.

### **A Blessing of the Triune God**

We call it a blessing. We say we "bless ourselves." Tracing with our hand the figure of the cross on our forehead, our breast, our shoulders, we bless ourselves:

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy  
Spirit.  
Amen.

The Sign of the Cross expresses blessing. It symbolizes God blessing us, God embracing us with blessings. And in this same sign we express our belief in God from whom all our blessings flow. In the Sign of the Cross we embrace our good God with mind and heart and all of our strength.

God blesses. The Jewish scriptures describe God as, above all, the One who blesses. God blessed Noah and saved the world from the flood. God blessed Abraham and Sara with blessings more than the stars in the sky. God blessed the Jewish people, redeeming them from the slavery of Egypt. Life itself and all creation are God's gifts.

And so the Jewish tradition of prayer always approaches God as One who blesses. "I will bless the Lord at all times," the psalmist prays. As we are blessed by God, so we bless the Lord in return.

The Christian tradition of prayer follows this same pattern, but in addition it praises the One who blesses for another incomparable blessing: the blessing of Jesus Christ. "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing." ( Eph 1,3 ) He is "the Word who made the universe, the Savior sent to redeem us." In Jesus Christ God appears as our Friend and Brother. With the Father he sends the Holy Spirit upon us "to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace." In Jesus, God has revealed to us the source of all blessings.

When we bless ourselves with the Sign of the Cross we remember the One who blesses us: the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **Blessed by the Cross**

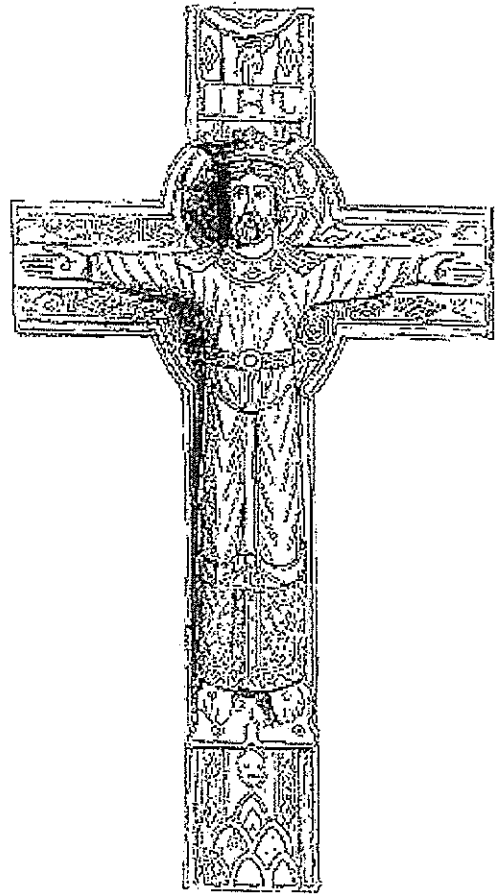
With the Sign of the Cross we recall in particular the blessing of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We trace a cross on ourselves, the cross of Jesus. His death on the Cross was an outpouring of love for us. The Sign of the Cross is a reminder of his

love, a love found not only in the past, but here and now, as we make this sign upon ourselves; for the love of Jesus Christ abides forever.

The Sign of the Cross is a wonderful daily expression of our relationship with God. God is the One who blesses. This prayer reminds us that each day, in good times and bad, in danger and sorrow, God's care and blessings are never far from us.

Tracing this holy sign on our forehead, our hearts and our shoulders, we remember we are blessed in mind and heart and all our being. We can approach God with confidence through Jesus Christ whose ever present love this holy sign recalls.

"Come to me," God says through this prayer, "do not be afraid. Before you take one step, I reach to embrace you with blessings in my hands."



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See also:  
The Sign of the Cross - for children

END

top of page

The Gift of Prayer | Jesus Prayed  
The Prayer Jesus Taught Us | The Hail Mary and the Rosary  
The Sign of the Cross | Taught by the Holy Spirit  
Praying the Days and Year



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