

Family Prayers For Family Occasions

Compiled by the
Adult Faith Formation Committee



Praying Families are Strong Families



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Msgr. Clement Kern Council #8294

**St. Thomas a'Becket Church
Canton, MI**

For Family

Dear Family of St. Thomas a' Becket,

The Church feels very strongly that the family is the "basic cell of society," no matter what the makeup of that family: adults only, two parents or single parent with children or multiple generational. Strong, healthy families build a strong, healthy society. For believers, bringing God into very fabric of the home is essential for stability, strength and peace. In fact, statistics prove that husbands and wives who pray together at home have an extremely low divorce rate. This should not be surprising because such couples draw on the grace of the sacrament of marriage and secure a firm foundation for their marriage. This foundation extends to their children. Our Church documents further teach that parents are the primary givers of faith to their children and are to take seriously this role if they truly hope to see their children embrace the faith as adults.

With all this in mind, we as a parish community, offer to your family this book of prayers for family occasions. I encourage you to make time for prayer a priority in your home. Find the time and place that is comfortable and convenient for your family: once a day, once a week or at least once a month, maybe around the kitchen table, sitting together on a bed or maybe the living room floor. Where and when you gather will be your "sacred space." Reap the blessing of a family that prays together!



Fr. Pat Casey

For Your Marriage

Almighty God, we are one in the sacrament of Marriage. The love that we pledged on our wedding day was just the beginning of our lives and destinies as one. We ask for your continued blessings, especially that our love may be loyal and true to the end.

Keep us faithful to your commandments. Never let selfishness or sin drive us from one another and from you. As long as we rest securely in the grace of the sacrament we share this is possible and true happiness will be ours in this life and eternity. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer for Your Spouse

Dear Lord, look lovingly and kindly on my beloved spouse. Bestow generously your gifts of grace so that the life we share in common may be a living witness to your presence in our marriage.

Give me wisdom and understanding to accept the little things which may not always be to my liking. Let me be aware of the differences in personality we bring into our marriage. May these, when used together with your help, complement our union and make it strong

Unite our hearts in the never-ending bond of pure love, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Your Children

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this treasured child of mine. Keep him always in your care. Help me as a parent, Lord, with my weaknesses and imperfections. Give me strength and godly wisdom to raise this child in the light of your love. Keep my child walking on the path that leads to eternal life. Help him to overcome the temptations in this world and the sin that would so easily entangle him.

Dear God, send your Holy Spirit daily to lead and guide him. Ever assist him to grow in wisdom and stature, in grace and knowledge, in kindness, compassion and love. This I pray in Christ holy name. Amen.

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Lent Ideas

On Ash Wednesday discuss as a family what you will do individually and/or as a family for Lent. Say a prayer that you will have the strength to carry it out. Attend Ash Wed Service together.

- Give up something as a self-denial statement. Encourage each person in the family to select something to deny themselves of during this season. Giving up ice cream does not make one a better person, but when it is desired it can be a reminder of what Lent is about. We can learn that we do not have to give into our every desire. We can offer a prayer to God instead.
- Or decide as a family what to deny themselves of - with everybody voting. Maybe dessert and the money saved can be given to the missions; fast from television and concentrated on more family activities each evening.

Gather as a family each evening for a bedtime “service” focused on the final year of Jesus’ ministry, making a symbol or picture for various events. Kids can hang these on the wall and review them each day as a litany of Jesus’ life.

Focus especially on “**Holy Week**” by retelling the activities of the last week of Jesus’ life.

Attend Triduum Services - Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday - together as a family.

Easter Prayer

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made.

All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Leader: Lord, you gave us new life.

All: Alleluia!

Leader: Lord, you gave us our world and all its good things.

All: Alleluia!

Leader: Lord, you gave us each other.

All: Alleluia!

Leader: We praise you God, maker of the universe, for sending us Jesus and calling each of us to new life in him. Amen.

General Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, Who is in heaven,
Holy is Your Name;
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father and to
the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us Lord and the gifts we are about to receive,
From your bounty through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Or make your own prayer before meals something like:

Bless us Lord, and bless this food.
Bless especially our guest, _____ and his/her family.
Thank you for _____ .
Please be with ... [*pray for particular need*].
Keep us always mindful of those in need. Amen

The Blessing Cup

At the dinner table, have a “blessing cup” available. This can be any special glass, filled with any liquid. Family members say a brief prayer aloud, (e.g., “I’m thankful for my spouse and children,” “Let’s pray that our national leaders be more responsive to the poor,” or one that is attuned to the victims of a recent natural disaster or local news item.)

They then take a sip from the cup and pass it to the person on their right, who repeats the process. Each table will go at its own pace. When all have had a turn, they say “Amen” and begin to eat.

Prayer for the Family

O God, You have created us in love and saved us in Your mercy. You have established the family and the union of love that exists between families. It is Your will that families should become a sign of Christ’s love for his church.

Show your blessings on all families. Enable those who are joined by love to support one another by their favor of spirit and devotion to prayer. Make them responsive to the needs of others and witnesses to the faith in all they say and do. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christmas

Before Christmas, have a “gift” for Jesus under the tree - a gift-wrapped box with all family members names inside on slips of paper. Decide ahead of time what will be done that year when the names are drawn. Perhaps the person who draws another family members name is to share what they appreciate most about that person, or state a wish they have for them in the coming year, or share a happy memory involving the person or share a funny story. Or it can even be something that will take some time - make, bake, or do something extra for the person in the next month, spend some quality time alone with the person, etc.

On Christmas, before opening gifts, read a Christmas story: Luke 2:1-20 or Mathew 1: 18-25. Perhaps sing “Silent Night” or other carol. Have a birthday cake for Jesus and sing Happy Birthday, then have the youngest present open the “gift” for Jesus and pass the gift for everyone can take a name. Follow through with the decided plan for the gift for that year. What better gift to Jesus than giving something of ourselves for another.

Christmas Card Prayers

Either as you receive them or during the Christmas season, choose one or more Christmas cards everyday before supper or before bedtime and pray for the person who sent the card.

Epiphany

Epiphany means to “make manifest.” The Wise Men were looking for Jesus, and he was made manifest to them. An old tradition is to write the names of the wise men on the front door with chalk. Have each person name someone in their lives this Christmas season that made Jesus more visible. After each is named, all respond: “Open our hearts to your presence.”

Then write above the front door: “20 + C + B + M + 09.” The numbers represent the year, the letters represent each of the Wise Men.

Advent Traditions

The Advent Wreath

Make or purchase a wreath and place 4 candles around it. Light one candle for each week of Advent on the Sunday's of Advent. Follow the appropriate Advent prayers of the week using a resource such as: <http://www.cptryon.org>.

Straw for the Manger

Set up the manger scene with the manger empty. Place a small box of straw next to it. Any time someone does a good deed, that person quietly adds a piece of straw to the manger. This is done secretly so that it does not become a competition.

Blessing of the Christmas Tree

Play Christmas carols. Have hot cocoa and cookies ready for afterward. Gather the family around and put up the tree, but before decorating it hold hands around the tree and say this blessing:

Leader: Holy Lord, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of your Son, who rescued us from the darkness of sin by making the Cross a tree of life and light. May this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving Cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

As you decorate the tree share stories of Christmases past.

Blessing of the Crèche on Christmas Eve

Up till now, the baby Jesus has not been put into the manger. You will make a "family journey" to the crèche. One family member leads the way with a lit candle, another carries baby Jesus, and the rest follow behind all singing a favorite Christmas carol making the way through the house to the crèche. Baby Jesus is laid in the manger and all sing "Away in the Manger."

Close with this prayer:

Leader: Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.

In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Family Prayer Ritual for Forgiveness

Use this prayer especially during times when someone has done something to hurt another and seeks forgiveness or in times of family tension and stress.. Or make use of it periodically acknowledging the wonder of God's mercy. It is meant as a celebration of God's forgiveness and never in a way that would make anyone uncomfortable. Ask everyone to bring a small stone to the table. Have a bowl of candy or paper hearts on the table and an empty dish on the table.

Leader: Let us turn to God and listen to his word.

Reader: Ezekiel 36: 24-28

(Have everyone read a petition below. After each petition is read the person puts their rock in a dish in the middle of the table, and takes a heart from the bowl. All join in the response following each petition.)

Response: Forgive us, Lord.

Reader: For the times we have not been patient with each other. *R..*

Reader: For the times we fail to obey. *R..*

Reader: For the times we have been unkind. *R..*

Reader: For the times we have been untruthful. *R..*

Spontaneous prayers can be substituted.

Leader: Thank you God, that you forgive us when we come to you sorry for what we have done. Help us to forgive each other as you forgive us. Thank you for always loving us. Amen.

Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

Peace be with you.

(Hugs all around!)

General Family Prayer Time

Might look something like this:

The Sign of the Cross

Leader: Dear Jesus, we are here to spend a few minutes with you in prayer. We want to pray for ourselves, our friends and neighbors and for everyone in the world. We know that you came to call all of us to know, love and serve your heavenly Father so that we would be one big, happy family.

Reader: (read a Bible story selected from the following or of personal choice.)

The Annunciation - Luke 1:26-38.

The Visitation - Luke 1:39-80.

Jesus' birth - Luke 2:1-20.

Jesus' baptism - Mark 1:3-11.

Cana - John 2:1-11.

Cure of Leper - Mark 1:40-45.

Feeding Crowd - Matthew 15:32-38.

Ten Lepers - Luke 17:11-19.

Laborers in Vineyard - Matthew 20:1-16.

Merciless Servant - Luke 18:21-35.

Pharisee and Tax Collector - Luke 18:9-14.

Good Samaritan - Luke 10:29-37.

Good Shepherd - John 10:1-21.

Leader: Let's talk a little bit about the story. Would you like to tell the story yourself? Did you like the story? Who were the good people in the story? Were there any bad people in the story? Suppose you had been there; what would you have done?

(Here leader gives each one a chance to answer.

At the end, he or she can talk briefly about a lesson that can be learned from the story.)

Leader: Let us pray for our family and for all families. We can begin by remembering the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph. They had their good times and parties and they had their hard times too, like when it rained every day for a week, or when Jesus went to Jerusalem and got lost, or when St. Joseph was sick, or when their friends were sick. But they were happy because they loved each other and were kind and helpful to each other. So let us pray that God will help us to be a kind and loving family with each one trying to obey God and to help one another. Let's pray too for others and for our world. What or who should we pray?

General Intercession. *(Anyone may voice a prayer intention)*

All: Dear Jesus, we pray with you to the Heavenly Father for all the men and women and children of the world, those who live with their families and those who do not. Make us kind and generous to one another and protect us with your loving care. Mary, our Mother and good St. Joseph, keep us close to Jesus so that we too will be a holy family. Amen.

Leader: Now let us close by asking God's blessing.
May almighty God bless us - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Special Family Faith Traditions

Positive family rituals and traditions celebrate everyday family life. They reinforce the distinct identity of any one family. "This is what we do as a family." They create a unique sense of belonging. And they enable shared values and beliefs to be passed on to the next generation. Keep in mind that traditions can and should be adjusted to particular family needs, ages and circumstances.

The Family Journal

To build a sense of gratefulness in your daily family life, create a family gratitude journal. Decorate it with photos of your family and keep it in a central spot. Throughout the week, encourage members of the family to jot down things they're grateful for. Items can be small – time to play outside before dinner – or large – an upcoming vacation. Younger children can dictate their ideas to older siblings or parents or draw them. Every so often, before dinner or bedtime, read some of the past entries out loud and remember together just how much you have to give thanks for.

Periodic Outreach Project

Choose a particular time of year to do family outreach projects, for example, on Thanksgiving make it a tradition to serve in a soup kitchen together, each spring you might participate on a city environmental clean-up project or at Christmas you might adopt a needy family.

Celebrating Anniversary of Baptism

Invite Godparents over for this special day where we remember the baptism of the child. Share a meal and do some special fun activity. Re-light the child's baptismal candle and share a prayer of thanks:

Leader: Dear God, thank you for this child and the light of Christ which has been passed on. Continue to help *N. . .* in your light and love his/her whole life long. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Now break out the baptismal pictures or videos!

Special Celebrations

Celebrating a Success

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made.

All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Leader: We praise you, Lord for calling us together as family. We celebrate *N. . .*, who today *(Name the occasion or achievement)*. We are proud and we thank you for this and for all his/her gifts. We praise you for all your good gifts and keep us ever grateful. Amen.

Invite family members to share reasons why they are happy for this person.

After each, all may respond: "We thank you, Lord."

Celebrating a Failure, Difficulty or Trial

Difficult times are opportunities to learn and grow. Celebrating them and giving God praise even in the midst of hard times helps us to be open to new possibilities and challenges.

Leader: Our soul waits for the Lord.

All: Who is our help and our shield.

Leader: Lord, help us remember that we can't always succeed and things will not always be easy. We thank you that your steadfast love does not depend on our success or on perfect circumstances. Help us to remember that good can come out of bad things. Help us to let go of our disappointment and to trust in you. Give us your strength to do all we can to improve our circumstances.

(Invite family members to name others who may be suffering some hurt or disappointment. Respond after each name: "Help us, O, Lord.")

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer Format Ideas

Five-Finger Prayer

With your hands folded in prayer the closest finger to you is the thumb. Because it is closest to you, the thumb reminds you to pray for those that are *closest* to you. Pray for your parents and your brothers or sisters.

The next finger is your index finger, and because it is used for pointing let it remind you to pray for those that *point* you in the right direction. Pray for your teachers at school, church, priests, etc.

The next finger is the tallest finger. This finger reminds us to pray for our *leaders*. Pray for the president and other leaders in our government.

The fourth finger is the called the ring finger, and it happens to be the *weakest* of all the fingers. Let this finger remind you to pray for those who are sick, or needy.

The next finger is the smallest finger. The Bible says, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." Let the little finger remind you to pray for *yourself*.

The A.C.T.S. Prayer

The "A" stands for **ADORATION**.

Begin with taking time to adore God - how special God is, how you love God, how you enjoy your friendship with God. Perhaps you will sing a song as a family to adore God.

The "C" stands for **CONFESSION**.

Your family can ask for God's forgiveness for wrong thoughts and behaviors.

The "T" stands for **THANKSGIVING**.

Take time to show your gratitude by thanking God for all your blessings, both individual and family!

The "S" stands for **SUPPLICATION**.

Ask God to meet your needs and the needs of others.

Conversational Prayer in Four Steps

1. **Jesus is here.** *Visualize Christ, Welcome him, Use creative imagination. Be silent.*
2. **Thank You, Lord.** *Voice things you are thankful for.*
3. **Help me, Lord.** *Pray for yourself, be specific, say I when you refer to yourself or we when we want to include all gathered.*
4. **Help my brother/sister.** *Pray for others by name, or for specific world needs.*

Points to remember: Don't fear silence. Let the Holy Spirit Lead you. Be simple, specific, and supportive.

Morning and Night Prayers

Morning:

Almighty and Good God, I thank you for this new day. I offer you all I am, and all I do this day. May it be pleasing to you. Send your Spirit to guide me in all things that I might live your will in my life. Protect me and my family this day, and may I always be grateful for your presence. Amen.

Night:

Gracious God, as I come to the close of the day, I thank you for all that has happened today. In good and bad, I know you have been with me and will always be with me. For the times I have failed you this day, *(Sorrow for particular sins might be mentioned or thought about at this time)*, please forgive me. Grant me a peaceful rest throughout this night and I might rise to serve you another day. Amen.

For Children:

To help children learn to pray, read them a bible story at bedtime. Ask them what they think Jesus wants them to learn from that story. Then help them to pray by asking them to quiet themselves then ask the child: "What would you like to thank Jesus for this day?" Help them to form it as a prayer. After that is voiced, repeat with: "Is there something you would like to say you're sorry for?" "Is there someone or something you want to pray for?" And, "Who should you ask Jesus to bless tonight? "

Prayer for the Sick

Illness is a time when praying together is so important. God's healing can be so powerfully transmitted through the bond of love, compassion and touch. Have all family members gather around the sick person and lay their hands on the sick one's head or shoulders. Be in silent prayer for a time focusing on God's healing presence and love, then pray aloud:

Lord our God, maker of the universe, let your healing power descend on _____. Drive out this illness, let the medicine work quickly and Thoroughly, and restore him/her to health. Take away the pain and give him/her a restful healing sleep. Amen.

Family Blessings

For the Start of the School Year

Father, We thank you for the gift of [*child/ children's name*]. Bless [name/ names] as they go off to school.

May they remember they are loved, and that you love them too! Help them to be good listeners, and to love and respect themselves and those around them.

As they grow on the outside, may they grow on the inside, too, in knowledge and love for you and others! Be with them and help them learn today all the things you need them to know. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Birthday Blessing

Lord God, we thank you for the life of _____. We especially want to thank you for his/her special gift/talent of _____. Grant them a good and special year of blessing, health and happiness. This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Blessing a Home

(Gather family at the front door.)

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

(Dip a finger in Holy Water and draw a cross on the entry door or sprinkle with the water, saying:)

Gracious and welcoming God, bless our home and all who enter here. May our home be a place of safety, peace, and welcome. May we feel Your presence and love surround us here, and may we extend Your love to all who visit. Amen.

Blessing Before a Vacation

Leader: This is the day the Lord has Made.

All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Leader: We thank you for this opportunity for relaxation and fun. We thank you that you are with us wherever we go. May this be special time together and an opportunity to grow closer. Bring us back home safe and rested, and may all we do bring you glory. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.