

- What specific gift is Jesus inviting you to use in building the kingdom of God? What is your specific mission? Spend time sharing with Jesus your response to his invitation.



- List the names of people who serve God's kingdom in the world today. What do you admire most about them? Thank God for the virtues you see in them. Decide what you can do to become more Christlike in your own attitudes. Pray for the courage to take the first step.

Slowly read the following Scripture passage:

"Do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."

Matthew 6:31–33

Anxiety and worry preoccupy us and drain our energy. They prevent the Spirit of God from freeing us to live the Christian life in a vibrant and victorious way.

- What worries keep you from seeking first the kingdom of God in your life?



Give God each of these worries and ask him to help you set your heart on the kingdom first, knowing that he will care for all the things that trouble or worry you.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus came to reveal the depths of God's boundless love. We pray that, like Jesus, God's will may be done in all we say and do.

Look back over your life. Can you see how your joys, sufferings, and failures are connected to your relationship with God and forming who you are? Can you thank God for the good and beg forgiveness for the bad? Can you say, "For all that has been: I give you thanks, my God! For all that your will holds for me, I give you my full 'yes?'"

- What changes do you need to make in your life to bring it into conformity with God's will? What are the obstacles to doing God's will?
- Think of events that happened to you during the past day, week, and month that really touched your heart and reminded you of God's presence.
- How do these experiences reflect God's will in your life?



Give us this day our daily bread;

According to some biblical scholars, this phrase responds to Jesus calling us to trust him to take care of our needs. Catholics especially profess that Christ himself is our bread of eternal life; he is our "food for the journey."

Prayer Suggestions

Spend some time bringing your needs to God. Picture Christ holding you and your intentions in his heart. As you pray, lift up the needs of the world, the nation, and the Church, as well as your personal intentions.

Christ satisfies our spiritual hunger with the gifts of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Receiving holy Communion transforms us into new reflections of the Body of Christ. Jesus is present in the world through our presence to our sisters and brothers.

- How can you make Jesus present in the world through your presence to others?



Did you know that the pope chooses special intentions every month and that the Church is invited to join him in praying for these intentions? Find out what the Holy Father's intentions are for this month.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;

In this phrase, we acknowledge that we're sinners and also recognize God's great love and mercy. We believe God truly forgives our sins when we seek forgiveness and are willing to forgive the offenses of others. Jesus clearly laid down this latter condition for our forgiveness:

"If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions."

Matthew 6:14–15

Sometimes, forgiveness is a process that begins with an intention or desire to forgive and only later results in deep healing. Be patient with the process and continue to trust in your ability to forgive through the power of God's merciful love within you.

Contact someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from. Invite him or her to meet you for coffee or a meal or to do something you used to enjoy doing together. Keep it light. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to a new place in this relationship.

If reaching out to this person is difficult, prepare yourself by:

- Playing some classical or religious music.
- Taking time to relax and quiet yourself.
- Getting in touch with any feelings related to this person or transgression, turning each one over to God.

- Visualizing God as a bright light radiating warmth, compassion, and justice into your heart. Allow the light to expand and surround the person or people affected.
- Asking God to take from you any impediment to reconciliation.
- Taking this person or situation to a trusted confessor or spiritual director.

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

It's easy for us to get lost, fail, or slip into a sudden weakness. When we're empty and aware of our sins, weaknesses, and failures, God can fill, heal, and deliver us.

Prayer Suggestion

Light a candle to represent the light of Christ. Pray that God's power may free you from sinful tendencies. As you pray, imagine the light of God's glory filling the dark areas within you, transforming you into a radiant reflection of God's love to others.

Recite the following prayer over and over, mentioning the areas of weakness (examples: pride, stubbornness, fears, anger, need for control, sexual sins, refusal to trust) from which you most need to be set free:

"Come, Lord Jesus, shine the light of our glory on... Oh, Lord, heal and restore me. Set me on my feet again to live the life of grace you had in mind for me when you created me. Amen."

The peace that Jesus offers his followers is his own peace, which flows from his intimate communion with the Father. It doesn't leave us in times of poverty, suffering, oppression, temptation, or illness. Jesus carries us, lifts us into the arms of our *Abba*, where we encounter the love and peace that surpass all understanding and that sustain us.

- When and how has Jesus lifted you up?

