

PRAYERS IN THE PEW™ MONTHLY

FAITH IN ACTION CALENDAR / HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY MAR 5	Ash Wednesday, Beginning of Lent
MONDAY MAR 17	St. Patrick, Bishop and Patron of Ireland
TUESDAY MAR 25	Solemnity of the Annunciation of Mary

Faith Formation Companion to Prayers in the Pew™

→ MONTHLY SYNOPSIS ←

March 2025 – Lent encompasses virtually the whole month of March this year. It is a penitential season in which we aim to overcome our worldly tendencies and strengthen our spiritual lives. Greater devotion to the sacramentals this month will dispose us to receive the immense graces of our Sunday Mass attendance.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' PREPARATION FOR MASS

One of the Catholic Church's many saints of the Eucharist is St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a Dominican priest who lived in the Middle Ages and is considered the Church's greatest theologian.

Because of his great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, Pope Urban IV asked him to compose the prayers and hymns for the Church's newly-established Feast of Corpus Christi, prayers which we still recite in the liturgy more than 750 years later!

St. Thomas believed that no one should come to the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood "without reverent devotion and fervent love, without true repentance, or without recalling the mystery of his redemption."

In order to help others prepare themselves to receive the Eucharist worthily, the great saint composed a "Prayer Before Mass," which is one of the finest devotional prayers of the Church.

As you read this prayer, note especially how St. Thomas contrasts the poverty of the human condition with the immense greatness and power of God. Through this Blessed Sacrament, God invites us to become enriched by His very life and holiness!



PRAYER BEFORE MASS

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of Your only-begotten Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ, I come sick to the doctor of life unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of Heaven and earth. Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness.

May I receive the bread of angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with humble reverence, with the purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me to salvation. May I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and its reality and power.

Kind God, may I receive the Body of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His mystical body and numbered among His members.

Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive Your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see Him face to face in glory, who lives and reigns with You forever. Amen.

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

In this Lenten Season, let us challenge ourselves to spend an extra five minutes sitting before the Lord before or after Sunday Mass. Let's also take account of the fervor of our devotions so that we can more easily hand on our love for Christ and His Church to others.

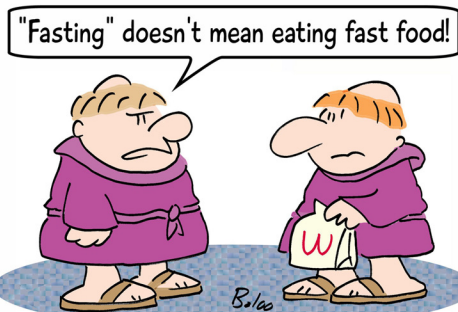


Sacraments vs Sacramentals

There is a fundamental distinction between Sacraments and sacramentals. "The sacraments are tangible signs instituted by Christ to give grace." This means that sacraments have grace *within them*, intrinsically. Sacraments are sacred institutions which require us to be living in union with the Church in order to receive them worthily.

Sacramentals are also tangible signs, but they don't have their holiness in them and do not confer grace the way the sacraments so. They are instituted by the Church, not by Christ directly. Their purpose is to sanctify the circumstances of our lives and to dispose us to receive grace. Using them opens us to God's holiness.

The *Catechism* (1671-73) identifies three categories of sacramentals: blessings, exorcisms, and devotional items and prayers. Of these, the blessings have greatest priority since they represent the direct intercession of the Church for our lives. (Exorcism is a form of blessing in this sense.) There are also innumerable ritual blessings of people and things. The Church blesses devotional objects which are very familiar to us: Rosaries, scapulars, medallions, crucifixes, candles, etc.



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— CATECHISM CONNECTION —



1668 – Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man.... They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism).

— THE SCHOOL OF SAINTS —



"Prayer ought to be short and pure, unless it be prolonged by the inspiration of Divine grace." ~ *St. Benedict*

"Our wish, our object, our chief preoccupation must be to form Jesus in ourselves, to make his spirit, his devotion, his affections, his desire, and his disposition live and reign there." ~ *St. John Eudes*

Featured Prayer for March

Tantum Ergo

*Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui,
et antiquum documentum
novo cedat ritui.
Præstet fides supplementum
sensuum defectui.*

*Genitori genitoque
laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
sit et benedictio!
Procedenti ab utroque
compar sit laudatio!
Amen.*

(This prayer is taken from the Prayers in the Pew *Family Edition* Prayer Card. Please refer to our website SitStandKneel.com for the online version of this newsletter and all our prayer cards.)

— BIBLE BASICS —



2 Kings 5:10 "Elisha sent him the message: 'Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean.'"

Acts 19:11-12 "So extraordinary were the mighty deeds God accomplished at the hands of Paul that when face cloths or aprons that touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them."

CALENDAR OF FAITH | March

- MAR 3** St. Katherine Drexel, Virgin and Founder of Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
- MAR 4** St. Casimir, Confessor
- MAR 5** ASH WEDNESDAY
- MAR 7** Sts. Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs
- MAR 8** St. John of God, Religious
- MAR 9** St. Frances of Rome, Religious
- MAR 17** St. Patrick, Bishop and Patron of Ireland
- MAR 18** St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
- MAR 19** SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY
- MAR 23** St. Turibius de Mongrovejo, Bishop
- MAR 25** SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF MARY

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Helping Catholics to Learn, Live, and Love their Faith.

