

2024

*Prayers & Reflections  
for your  
sacred day*

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garratt  
PUBLISHING

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## Introduction

In the busyness of our lives, prayer gives us time to take a spiritual breath. It demands that we dispense with the external impositions that keep us distracted, distanced and fragmented. It offers an oasis, an internal sanctuary, where we can pause and slow and surrender.

Whether this prayer is undertaken individually or collectively, its intention is to address God in all our frailty and to know that we are heard. When we pray, deliberately and attentively, we become present not only to the God who loves us but to our own true selves. In this surrendered sacred time, we have the opportunity of unmasking ourselves, facing God without the layers we don, the borrowed robes of public life and performance. As CS Lewis reminds us, *We must lay before Him what is in us.*

As we surrender ego and importance, we shed some of the obstacles that can prevent the soulful communication that prayer invites. We face ourselves. That can be confronting, but we know that prayer is healing and rehabilitating. It can restore that spark of humanity, awakening us to the divinity that compels us. During the course of prayer our spiritual universe changes. We have been reshaped because we have entered into the mystery of the divine and allowed it to work its miracle in our hearts.

Our prayer may not have changed our circumstance or situation but it has changed us. We are attitudinally different. It is that change that is God's answer. It is that change that propels us to reorient what we do, with whom and how. That change is the Spirit energising us where we are.

Prayer reminds us of our purpose. We are here to love God and neighbour; to do our best and to leave something good behind us.

Prayer feeds the soul. The daily practice of prayer helps to develop a thoughtful and reflective capacity, much needed in a world where busyness and immediacy seem to prioritise the superficial and the shallow. Prayer can make us look at the world and its wonder and woes in a new, deep and hopeful way. It can open our eyes, enlarge our hearts, and enable us to find God in all things and grace abundant in the world around us.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2559) prayer is the raising of one's heart and mind to God. In this encounter one enters a personal relationship with God and joins with all those past and present, the communion of saints, who have prayed with similar fidelity. Praying together unifies us in a manner of belonging and it is something easily undertaken when the right disposition, individually and collectively, is present. The Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister, reminds us that prayer is an attitude of mind, a quality of soul and a dimension of the daily.

To bring prayer properly it is important to get into the zone of stillness and surrender; to be receptive to the prayerful moment. We need to be fully present. Put that phone away and the cup of coffee down. Focus and stop fidgeting.

The prayers we respond to collectively may be particular to our specific community, parish, neighbourhood or city. We may pray in sympathy or solidarity for global issues, war and injustice and know that prayers multiplied lay siege to heaven in an energy of intention that pleads for others.

Our private prayer is our resting in God – our letting God into the secrets of our successes and sorrows, our doubts and delights, letting him in, unconditionally, no ifs or buts or maybes.

Prayer can give us ballast and balance as we are reminded that we are spiritual beings. Prayer can build within us the

gentleness and strength to keep going for God, self and others on life's mission possible.

This book aims to provide you with prayers and reflections for every day of 2024. Each entry is there to provoke reflection or insight or a renewed way of thinking about who and how you are in the world.

It is hoped that these selections give you something to think about, a prayerful pause point in the busyness of your day, and a reason to recognise the good you do in carrying out God's work.

**Ann Rennie**

January

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*Monday*

**1.1.2024**

**Mary Mother of God**

*Prayer of the New Year*

*Faithful companion, in this new year I pray:*

*to live deeply, with purpose,  
to live freely, with detachment,  
to live wisely, with humility,  
to live justly, with compassion,  
to live lovingly, with fidelity,  
to live mindfully, with awareness,  
to live gratefully, with generosity,  
to live fully, with enthusiasm.*

**Joyce Rupp**  
***Anchors for the Soul***

*Tuesday*

**2.1.2024**

*Lord of all people of faith and goodwill,  
Bless the rich quilt of different cultures and creeds that  
makes up the peoples of this ancient land.  
Bless our differences and the things we have in common.  
Let us respect each other's ways to God.  
Let us build a future together where we reverence and  
respect others' faiths, creeds and traditions while we live  
our own journey to God.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Part of our spiritual maturity as a nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be how we embrace the good men and women of other faiths and find the common ground that binds rather than divides us.

**Ann Rennie**



*Wednesday*

**3.1.2024**

Australian holiness is found in the homeless man who keeps an eye out for his mates and faithfully prays a blackened pair of rosary beads. It is found in the shopkeeper who always keeps a little food for people down on their luck. It is found in the Muslim man who faithfully observes Ramadan, in the woman seeking asylum who keeps in good humour over many years of being warehoused on Nauru, in the young man who is faithful to his fiancée in another state, in the family who look out for one another, in the old grandmother who is at morning Mass every day, in the group of young Catholics who live and pray together.

The faces of holiness are as many as the faces of Australians. Whoever we are and wherever we find ourselves in this ancient Southern Land we call home, we are all children of a loving God.

**Fr Andy Hamilton**  
***Rejoice & Be Glad***

*Thursday*

**4.1.2024**

Nourish your mind  
with the beauty perceived  
by your heart and senses.

**Daniel O'Leary**  
*The Healing Habit*

SAMUEL  
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