



Series: **TRADITIONAL AND BIBLICAL PRAYERS**

*“I love you.
If you knew how much I love you,
you would cry for joy.”*

Imprimatur

Nicola Rotunno, Archbishop

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Passo Corese, 14.9.1998

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Xxxxxxxx



“PRAY,
PRAY, PRAY”

Spiritual Adviser: **Father Francesco Leone OFM**

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SHALOM
editrice

Via Galvani, 1
60020 Camerata Picena (An)
Italia

Tel. + 39 071 74 50 440

from Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.

Fax + 39 071 74 50 140

on at all times of day and night.

ordina@editriceshalom.it

www.editriceshalom.it

DEDICATION

Thank you, Mary, because you continue to call us to conversion and invite us to return to God, guiding us in our journey of faith and prayer with motherly concern. We wish to dedicate this book to you and to Saint Joseph, your beloved spouse. We would like to offer all those who are already following a path of prayer, and also to those who wish to embark on such a journey, either individually or in groups.

Help us, Mary, to walk towards Jesus day by day in simplicity and humility, not seeking to satisfy our own desires, but seeking rather to fulfil the will of God the Father, in order to bear witness to Christ in every thought, word and action, without shame or false human respect, trying to please God at all times rather than looking for recognition from other human beings. Help us to be attentive to the needs of our neighbours, to treat them with gentleness and patience, and to accept them, especially those who disturb us most because they do not live up to our expectations, and also those who live with us and with whom we may find it difficult to communicate.

Help us to live a life of love, for love of Jesus, even when this calls for a great effort on our part and does not offer us human gratification. May our life's journey of faith not stop at the first difficulties which we meet, but continue, day by day, thanks to your motherly help, in perseverance and faith, even in moments of trial, until we accomplish all that you desire for each one of us: namely the salvation of our souls and the souls of others, as well as our true happiness in this life and in the next.

We ask you therefore, to bless this book and to use it for the fulfilment of your plans.

LETTER

OF MONSIGNOR NICOLA ROTUNNO,
FORMER APOSTOLIC NUNCIO AND BISHOP

*“The Lord my God refreshes me, he leads me in the path
of righteousness for his name’s sake” (ref. Ps 22).*

25th of June, 1992

Men and women of today, perhaps more so than in the recent past, feel tired, discouraged and disturbed by the level of material well-being, by their riches, be they great or small, which they have created with enormous sacrifice in the hope that the possession of more and more things, ever bigger and more costly will bring them peace, serenity, joy and love. We discover instead that what the Word of God has always affirmed through out the centuries is true: money is the root of all evil. Today the scandal of bribery gives the impression that public and private morality has degenerated. Organized crime increasingly threatens the possibility of living together democratically.

Drugs sow death among young people, and the plague of AIDS creates fear. Honest people (and I believe we are in the majority), that is, those who are conscious of not being holy and immaculate, now find themselves in an arid desert devoid of human values, lost, without strength, and not knowing which road to take. And yet they are certain of having a clear conscience.

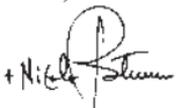
Believers in Christ, the Son of God and Son of the Blessed Virgin. Mother, Mary, will know how to find the voice of God, in this book *Pray, pray, pray* which gives us solace and shows us the right path.

In the light of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 67) this book promotes devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, holds in high esteem the practice and exercises of devotion to her, recommended throughout the centuries by the magistry of the Church, and abstains from fanatical exaggeration as well as from narrow-mindedness. This book succeeds in reminding

the faithful that true devotion does not consist in sterile and passing sentiments, nor in a vain belief, but arises rather from true faith and encourages us to imitate Mary's virtues. I wish this book *Pray, pray, pray* a renewed and great success, because it describes the "Brave Virgin" (Christi Fidelis Laici, No. 64) who, pointing to her Son Jesus, can respond to the fears of his disciples who ask, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (Jn 14:5). Mary points to the "narrow door" and she urges us to enter through this door (ref. Lk 13:24). [Furthermore], This book helps us to hear the voice of Jesus which assures his disciples whose mind are closed" (Mk 6,52): "Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid!" (Mk 6:30). Our generation is sometimes a "faithless generation" (Mk 9:19). People do not understand the signs of the times and are afraid of questioning Jesus (ref. Mk 9:13). I am certain that the book *Pray, pray, pray* and the wonderful cover (which I hope will not be changed because of its universal enchantment created by the image of Mary) will help many, even unbelievers, to discover that the Bible is the Word of God, the Eucharist is the Bread of the Church, charity is the bond of perfection, even when, because of the weakness of our faith, we have "big quarrels" which cause separations between those, who like Paul and Barnabas, are unable to live in communion with each other in a community and, while continuing to be Church and aspiring to sanctity, sail to their respective shores (ref. Acts 15:36-41).

"The Catholic Church encourages the school of perfection, advises everyone to rise higher, and comes to the aid of man and woman [a like], regardless of what sufferings they may have in both of body and soul. In each person the Word becomes flesh and the flesh becomes the Word" (see Juitton, Limpu, Desclee de Brouwer, 1991).

Every page of *Pray, pray, pray* acts as an antidote, allowing a certain relaxation of the tension which can arise from the relationships in our lives. Singing together with Mary, we will surely come closer to Jesus, even though the worse part which each of us possesses has us "only the capacity to do evil" (ref. Rm 7:21) so that "the good thing I want to do I never do" (Rm 7:19).

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PREFACE

I gladly accept the invitation to write the preface for this collection of prayers entitled *Pray, pray, pray*. It is a help offered to those who, called by the maternal invitation of Mary, Mother of the Church, wish to complete their participation in the liturgical prayer of the Church, with the search for continuous prayer which, when said at particular times of the day, will then touch all expressions of Christian life. It is an unpretentious book: it will be loved and welcomed by those simple and humble souls who feel that they are beginners in a life of prayer. In this way, they are sure that, by living the mystery of the relationship with the Father in the secrecy of the inner room, or with other brothers and sisters in prayer groups, they can benefit from the revelation and knowledge of the Son from which the wise and learned of this world are excluded. In this book, one finds no aid for liturgical prayer (the Mass and the Sacraments) but precious help towards popular devotion, the expression of the Christian soul which was the root of culture and tradition, widely experienced by our Christian people before ill-omened winds of secularization attempted to shake the foundations of Christian thoughts and actions.

These prayers can be used by everyone, by a cardinal, a bishop, a priest, a fashionable theologian or lay person who has not forgotten how he learnt to pray on his mother's lap when she taught him to say the Hail Mary, the Our Father, the Angel of God, not forgetting the faithful departed with the "Eternal Rest". The Second Vatican Council did not discourage the pious exercises of popular Christian devotion, which are, on the contrary, intended to be in harmony with the ecclesiastical liturgy. The pastoral Note on liturgical Renewal in Italy by the Episcopal Commission for the Liturgy echoes this idea. In this document we also read that "the expressions of devotion and faith of popular tradition are the object of a rediscovery everywhere today and this is certainly a providential fact... they express an ardour of faith, a passion of love, an acceptance of dependence, a clinging to religious traditions which alone constitute authentic values and fertile possibilities of evangelization... We

are now faced with a whole field of work: that of harmonizing liturgy and popular devotion, inspiring the latter by the former and giving life to the former by the latter without exclusivism and preclusion, but also without merging or confusing the two forms of devotion; Christian people will always need both, and we must leave all the roads which lead to the heart of man open to God” (pastoral note, No. 18).

These prayers take us back to the pure natural Christian environment of which the director Ermanno Olmi gave us an unforgettable example some years ago in his film *The Tree of Wooden Shoes*: a sequence of rural images, in which the earth, plants and animals appear to share in genuine expressions of the faith of humanity and the Christian family from within their being.

The theme which characterizes this collection of prayers is the presence of Mary, Queen of Peace, her repeated invitations to prayer, her teaching which leads “those who welcome her call” to transform their life into prayer. It certainly echoes that which the Holy Father John Paul II affirms in the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, N.65: “Our difficult era has a special need for prayer... in these years an increasing number of people, in movements and groups, ever more widespread, put prayer in the first place and seek the renewal of their spiritual life in prayer. This is a significant and consoling symptom, as from such an experience a real contribution has been made to the renewal of prayer among the faithful who have been helped to consider the Holy Spirit more as the one who gives rise to a deep yearning for holiness in the heart of man”. We hope that this small contribution may also constitute a small learning manual, which will be useful to those who wish to follow the Mother of the Church who, says to us for the sake of the renewal of the same Church: “Pray, pray, pray”.

Father Gianni Sgreva CP



Part one

Everyday prayers

- 12** Principal truths of the Christian faith
- 18** Prayers of the Christian faith
- 26** Morning prayers
- 31** Prayers to be said throughout the day
- 46** Evening prayers





Principal truths of the Christian faith

The ten commandments

“Master, what must I do to obtain eternal life?” Jesus replied to the young man who asked him this question by saying that there is “one alone who is good” (Mt 19:17), who is goodness itself, and the origin of everything that is good. He added, “If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments,” and proceeded to indicate the commandments which concern love of one’s neighbour: “You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honour your father and your mother” (ref. Mt 19:16-19). When the following question was put to Jesus: “Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?” (Mt 22:36), Jesus answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second one is similar to the first: love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also” (Mt 22:37-40).

- I** I am the Lord your God;
you shall not have other gods before me.
- II** You shall not take the name of the Lord your
God in vain.
- III** Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day.
- IV** Honour your father and your mother.
- V** You shall not kill.
- VI** You shall not commit adultery.
- VII** You shall not steal.
- VIII** You shall not bear false witness against your
neighbour.
- IX** You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife.
- X** You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods.

The seven sacraments of the Church

The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Jesus Christ, to sanctify us.

Baptism	Anointing of the sick
Confirmation	Holy Orders
The Holy Eucharist	Marriage
Reconciliation (<i>or Penance</i>)	

The precepts of the Church

You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

You shall confess your sins at least once a year and you shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.

You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation.

You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.

The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom	Knowledge
Understanding	Piety (<i>Reverence</i>)
Counsel (<i>Right judgement</i>)	Fear of the Lord (<i>Wonder and awe in God's presence</i>)
Fortitude (<i>Courage</i>)	

The three theological virtues

Faith

Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has revealed to us and that the Holy Church proposes for our belief because he is truth itself.

Hope

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Charity

Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. Charity is superior to all the virtues and "binds everything together in perfect harmony".

The four cardinal virtues

Prudence

Prudence disposes the practical reason to discern in every circumstance one's true good and to choose the right means for achieving it.

Justice

Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and one's neighbour what is due to them.

Fortitude

Fortitude ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of good.

Temperance

Temperance moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

(Sins against the Holy Spirit ref. CCC, 1864,1866)

Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss. This sin blocks the person's route to Christ and the sinner puts himself outside the range of God's forgiveness. In this sense, the sins against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven.

Despair of salvation.

Presumption of saving oneself without merit.

Contestation of known truth.

Envy of another's grace.

Obstinacy in sin.

Final impenitence.

The seven corporal works of mercy

Feeding the hungry.

Giving drink to the thirsty.

Clothing the naked.

Sheltering the homeless.

Visiting the sick.

Visiting the imprisoned.

Burying the dead.

The seven spiritual works of mercy

Counselling the doubtful.

Instructing the ignorant.

Admonishing sinners.

Comforting the afflicted.

Forgiving offences.

Bearing wrongs patiently.

Praying for the living and

the dead.