

Inviting Catholics Home Ministry Team Members

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Inviting Catholics Home Web Page

www.stbrendans.net/ich



Session 1: Sign In

Name

Email

Cell #

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Session 1: Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Inviting Catholics Home sessions here at St Brendan. We invite you to join in our process of reflection on your relationship with Jesus and His Church. We believe that God meets each of us wherever we are on our faith journeys and we are here to support you along the way.

These sessions are designed BY Catholics FOR Catholics. Our Inviting Catholics Home ministry members are re-verts, converts and Catholics who have never left our faith. We realize that some alienated Catholics may have serious or even traumatic issues in their past that are painful to discuss. Others may have been wounded during their church experiences along the way and others have simply stopped practicing the faith of their childhood; yet now, something is calling them back – an inner voice that desires a new understanding of what it means to be Catholic.

Throughout these sessions, we invite you to share your thoughts and reflections as you feel comfortable doing so. The initial questionnaire will help us to better understand your faith journey needs for the sessions going forward. The reflection question sheet is meant to help you to contemplate and assess your spiritual life more deeply. During our time together, we strive to provide a confidential and caring atmosphere, through mutual respect, listening, and open, honest dialogue for all participants.

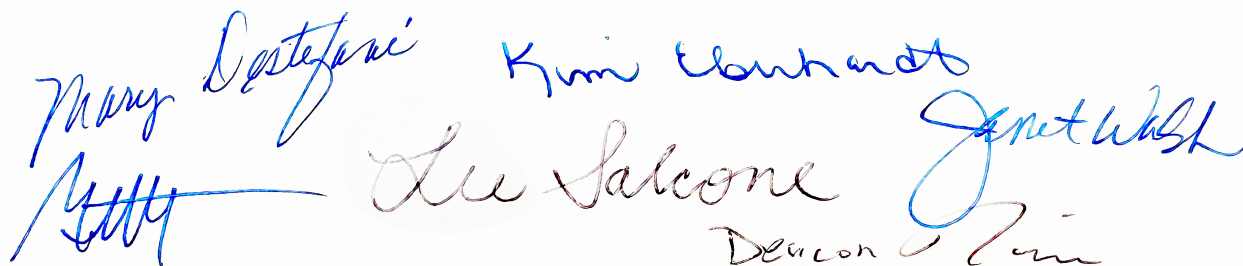
We might not have all the answers for all questions, nor can we undo all hurt that has occurred your past experiences, but our hope is that these sessions will be enlightening and helpful. Please let us know at any time if there are topics not being covered that you wish to explore more.

If you have a particular issue that needs a more private healing atmosphere, we are happy to assist you in scheduling a meeting with a team member, Deacon Jim, a spiritual counselor, or a priest. Or, perhaps we can assist you in finding other resources that may be helpful.

Our hope is that these sessions help you to "Come Home" and back to the Church – but, we understand that everything happens in God's time. If you decide you are not ready after the sessions conclude to fully return, please "go in peace." Our OCIA program at St Brendan will offer sessions beginning in February, 2026, which will be open to all (not just new Catholics) who desire a more in-depth learning program.

Above all, our primary hope is that, through this reconnection with the Church and by taking these first steps back into your faith, you will gain an increased awareness of God's deep and unending love for you.

Yours in Christ,



Session 1: Questionnaire

1. I am here because:

2. My hopes/expectations for attending these sessions are:

3. Some fears/apprehensions I have are:

4. Some positive/negative experiences about God/the Church/being Catholic I've had are:

5. Questions/issues I would like answered the most about the Catholic Faith are:

6. A memory of the Church I embrace is:

In order to understand your background better, please check any of the following that apply:

_____ Born and raised in the Catholic Faith

_____ Convert to the Faith

_____ Catholic School educated

_____ Religious instruction program (CCD/PSR)

_____ No formal Catholic religious instruction

7. How did you hear about these sessions? Any other comments you'd like to share?

Session 1: Quiet Reflection Sheet

Presently, who is God to me?

1. Who taught me about God?

2. How did these teachers influence my conception of God?

3. How do I envision God? (Check any of the following that apply):

_____ Cop in the sky

_____ CPA who keeps track of my sins

_____ Judge

_____ Mother

_____ Puppet Master (God pulls the strings)

_____ Old man with a beard

_____ Voice deep inside me

_____ Loving parent

_____ The Tester! (God only gives me what I can handle)

_____ Other (Explain)_____

4. Has my concept(s) of God changed over time? (Explain)

5. How long has it been since I last talked (prayed) to God? Do I believe God hears me?

Session 1: God's Gift of Prayer

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a form of communication, a conversation with God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit, involving praise, thanks, and petition. Prayer is raising one's mind and heart to God.

Origins of the Word

The word "pray" originates from the Latin word *precari*, meaning "to ask earnestly" or "to beg." The word entered English in the early 13th century from the Old French *preier*, which carried the same meaning. Biblically, the New Testament uses the Greek word *proseuché* for prayer, which can be understood as a "wish or vow brought before God" and prayer has been a central practice for believers from the early church onwards.

Talking to God

Prayer doesn't start with us, it starts with God. God starts our prayer by being with us, loving us and inviting us to stay in touch. When we pray to God, we are reminded that He is with us. Prayer is about being in relationship with God. Through prayer, we say "yes" to God's invitation to stay in touch. God gives us the choice to respond to His love or to ignore it through our silence. Scripture teaches us that we should pray to God, and that we should pray often! People talk about "being in God's presence". When we pray, it reminds us that He is with us. The more we feel God's presence, the more positive changes occur in the way we act, talk and think. Whether reciting a well-known prayer such as the *Lord's Prayer* or having an short conversation with Him at any moment, prayer reminds us that God is with us always.

Adoration

Prayers of adoration or worship are when we praise the greatness of God and acknowledge our dependence on Him in all things. The Mass and liturgies of the Church are full of prayers of adoration, such as the *Gloria* (or *Glory to God*) and *The Act of Faith*.

Expiation or Contrition

In prayers of expiation or contrition, we acknowledge our sinfulness and ask God for His forgiveness and mercy, as is appropriate during Reconciliation/Confession. The *Confiteor* or *Penitential Rite* at the beginning of Mass, the *Agnus Dei* (or *Lamb of God*) before Communion and *Act of Contrition* are prayers of expiation during the Mass.

Thanksgiving

Perhaps the most neglected type of prayer is that of thanksgiving. Saying Grace before meals is a good example of a prayer of thanksgiving, but try to carve out time throughout the day to thank God for all the good things that happen to us and to others. If you only have time to stop for a quick moment, call to mind God's presence and express your gratitude instantly saying something like, "God, Thank you for this beautiful day"... that's a prayer. And God delights in it!

Session 1: God's Gift of Prayer

Supplication or Petition

Prayers of petition are the most common and familiar to us. In these prayers, we ask God for things we want, both spiritually and physically. Our prayers of petition should always include a statement of our willingness to accept God's Will, whether He directly answers our prayer or not. The *Our Father*, though it embodies all types of prayers, is a good example of a prayer of petition. Jesus gave us this prayer as an example of how to pray. The words, "Thy will be done" in it acknowledges that God's plans for us is more important than what we desire for ourselves. God knows what is best for us. Always place your trust in Him and keep that in mind, especially during prayers of petition.

Praying to the Saints

Praying with the help of the saints is referred as Intercessory Prayer. Intercessory Prayers are NOT prayers that worship saints. Instead, like asking a friend to pray for or with us, Intercessory Prayer are asking the saints to intercede on our or another's behalf through prayer. The saints are in Heaven, and we are not, so asking for their help to take our prayers to God makes good sense. Also, this type of prayer is referenced in Scripture: in Revelation 8:3-4, it says that angels offer up the prayers of the saints. Other passages referenced are the apostles asking for prayers from fellow saints (Ephesians 6:18-20, 2 Thessalonians 3:1) and the biblical depiction of figures like Moses and Samuel interceding for the people of Israel after their deaths (Jeremiah 15:1).

Ways of Praying

Meditative, contemplative and reflective praying are different ways to pray. Prayer can be simply concentrating on thoughts about God or resting quietly in His presence (ie: Adoration). The Rosary is another way to pray which helps us reflect on the mysteries of Jesus' life and to pray to Him through Mary's intercession. It can help to calm your mind and body. Prayer is essential for your life of faith. Like breath to the human body, prayers makes the spirit live. Without it, our faith dies. With it, our faith grows in spirit and in our lives.

Prayer is a Gift of God

Scripture says, "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom. 8:26-27) and St Paul tells us that this is because of our weakness. For this reason, the Holy Spirit supplies for our lack and moves in our hearts, interceding for us, mysteriously and even mystically, in spite of ourselves. God listens and is present with us through our prayers. Prayer is a gift God gives generously to everyone, without consideration of our worthiness. If we choose not to pray, we are turning our backs on God, cutting Him off from conversation. Like any gift, prayer must be received. *"Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God"* (CCC, 2725).

Session 1: God's Gift of Prayer

Prayer: God's Search for Intimacy with Us

Why does God give the gift of prayer? Because He loves us and He looks for intimacy with us. It may seem strange, but God, who is all-sufficient, all-powerful and all-knowing, wishes to draw close, to communicate and speak with us – to seek our response and hear our prayers. It may seem unbelievable, but it is true. By praying, we fulfill the deep desire we have as human beings to know God. After all, we are made in His image. Something in our most inner being thirsts for intimacy with God. That thirst is described in the Psalms:

"Oh God, you are my God, for you I long. For you my soul is thirsting. Like dry weary land without water.... so my soul longs for you, my God."

Something in us cannot be satisfied unless we are drawn near to God.

"Our Hearts are restless, until they rest in you. By praying, we rest in God." –St. Augustine

The Church, in her formal prayers, often humbly acknowledges that prayer is God's gift and asks God to give and strengthen that gift within us. At the beginning of her daily prayers in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the Church prays these verses of the Psalms:

"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise."

"O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me."

"O God, come and assist me; help me that I may approach you."

Such simple, truthful words! In prayer, God comes and helps us; God invites us into the divine presence where we can open our lips and our hearts. God welcomes our slightest work or cry, our smallest effort. Delighting to give us the gift of prayer, God wishes that we come near to share our hearts and minds, our very life, with the One who loves us.

The following are some suggestions for prayer...

Be yourself – pray what is in you, when, where and how you want.

Be in your heart – prayer is more felt than thought...start where you are.

Be clear – use fewer words and single thoughts.

Be flexible – pray in a way that seems right to you.

Be intentional – prayer requires a decision, find ways to remind yourself to pray.

Be aware – pay attention to what is being offered to you each day.

Be receptive – listen for God's response and accept His love.

Be thankful – make an effort to give thanks for the goodness God brings to you.

Be Honest – express real, genuine thoughts and feelings; seek truth.

Be patient – the answer will come... God's "no" always has a "yes" buried in it.

Be caring – remember others in your prayers with love, hope and forgiveness.

Be trusting – there is value in opening up in prayer; healing can happen!

Session 1: Catholics & Prayer

How do you like to pray?

Catholics are encouraged to pray frequently – not only when they are in church but at other times as well: at home or out walking or in a favorite quiet place. Prayer is sometimes referred to as “wasting time with God.” It’s a bit like a friendship. If you asked friends why they spend time together, they would probably say, “We just like being together.” It’s the same with prayer. At its heart, prayer is a relationship – our relationship with God.

What do you talk to your closest friends about?

These are all things you can and should tell God. Use your own words to say what you want, sincerely and honestly – thank God, compliment God, tell God you are sorry, or talk about your life. Sometimes that might even be grumbling to God or asking Him questions. An important aspect of prayer to keep in mind is: How would you feel if you had a friend who talked nonstop? We need to talk to God, but we also need to listen. You won’t hear Him speak words but you’ll “hear” with your heart. Or, God may send someone to you to speak a message He wanted you to hear or, present Scripture to you that gives you His response. Inspirations and the feeling that God is close are ways God might speak to you.

What are some thoughts that have come to you during prayer?

Repetitive Catholic prayers can help us focus our attention on God and still the mind. These formal prayers are also helpful if you don’t know what to say. Saying the words, “I love you” to show your feelings to those you care about is a universal example of repetition of word usage. Millions say these exact same words, because they express a feeling we all know and want to communicate. Catholics repeat certain prayers because they have found they are the best way to express certain thoughts to God. It’s like how we give greeting cards written by professional writers to others to express our own feelings to them. Also, when we pray out loud together, speaking to God all using the same words, it is such a beautiful expression of our connection as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Session 1: The Our Father (The Lord's Prayer)

This is the best known prayer of Christianity, probably because it is the prayer that Jesus taught us. (See Matthew 6:9-13.)

Our Father, who are in heaven: One of the greatest truths of our faith is that we are the adopted sons and daughters of God and so, we can call God "Father". Note that we do not pray "My Father" because we do not pray for ourselves alone, but as a members of the community of the Church, for the good of all.

Hallowed be thy name: This is not saying we make God holy by our prayer. Rather, we ask that God's name be made holy in us.

Thy kingdom come: We pray that God's kingdom will become present for us. We pray that the kingdom won by the death and Resurrection of Christ will fully come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: All that Jesus did and all that he taught was "the will of God." We pray that we may have help and strength to do God's will.

Give us this day our daily bread: Spiritually, Christ himself is our bread of life; He is our "food for the journey." We believe that God knows our needs, and we trust He will take care of us. "Daily bread" has both a literal and a spiritual meaning, stemming from the Greek word epi-ousios, which translates to "supersubstantial" or "super-essential". This refers to the necessary physical sustenance for daily life and the supernatural bread of the Eucharist—the Body of Christ—which is essential for spiritual life.

And forgive us our trespasses: We acknowledge that we are indeed sinners. But we also recognize God's great love and mercy. We believe that God truly forgives our sins.

As we forgive those who trespass against us: Jesus clearly laid down a condition for our forgiveness – namely, that we forgive our debtors. If we hope for forgiveness from God, we must be ready to forgive others.

And lead us not into temptation: Here we pray not out of fear that God will led us astray but, rather, to show our confidence that God can give us an escape from temptation and that God will not let us be tested beyond our strength (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

But deliver us from evil: We pray to be kept safe from the power of the Evil One, and all that he stands for. We pray that God will help us overcome evil in our lives.

Session 1: Catholic Prayers

The Sign of the Cross:

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

This prayer dates back to the second century, when Christians would trace the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads with their thumbs so that they could recognize each other during times of persecution. The present Sign of the Cross has been in use since the 13th century and is made by taking the right hand and touching it to your forehead, breast, left shoulder, and then right shoulder. The Sign of the Cross is accompanied by the verbal formula honoring the Trinity of persons in one Godhead and it serves as a reminder and recommitment of our baptism. It is the traditional way Catholics begin and end their prayers and is used to invoke God's power and authority. Performing the Sign of the Cross while reciting the phrase is a sacred act used to dedicate the day, prayer, or activity to God. The word "Amen" at the end means "so be it," signifying our acceptance and belief in the words just spoken immediately before it.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for our sinners now and at the hour of death. Amen

The Hail Mary begins with 2 biblical verses – translations of the words of the Archangel Gabriel in Luke 1:28 – and the words of Mary's cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:42: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." It concludes with a petition for intercession that acknowledges Mary as the Mother of our Savior. From prayer texts of the earliest centuries, the Hail Mary gradually became a popular prayer by the end of the 12th century, and its recitation was officially urged and encouraged.

The Little Doxology

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

A doxology is a prayer of praise and gratitude to God. This traditional Catholic doxology is what is known as the "Glory be." The Greater Doxology is the Gloria recited at Mass.

Session 1: Song Lyrics

"Hosea Song" (Come back To Me)

*Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart
Trees do bend though straight and tall
So must we to others' call*

REFRAIN:
*Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives*

*The wilderness will lead you
To the place where I will speak
Integrity and justice
With tenderness
You shall know.
(REFRAIN)*

*Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart
(REFRAIN 2X)*

*Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart
(REFRAIN 2X)*

"Eye Has Not Seen"

REFRAIN:
*Eye has not seen, ear has not heard
what God has ready for those who love him;
Spirit of love, come, give us the mind of Jesus,
teach us the wisdom of God.*

*When pain and sorrow weigh us down,
be near to us, O Lord,
forgive the weakness of our faith,
and bear us up within your peaceful word.
(REFRAIN)*

*Our lives are but a single breath,
we flower and we fade,
yet all our days are in your hands,
so we return in love what love has made.
(REFRAIN)*

*To those who see with eyes of faith,
the Lord is ever near,
reflected in the faces
of all the poor and lowly of the world.
(REFRAIN)*

*We sing a mystery from the past
in halls where saints have trod,
yet ever new the music rings
to Jesus, Living Song of God.
(REFRAIN)*

The Seeker's Prayer

*My God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot
know for certain where it will end, and the
fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you. And I hope I have
that desire in all that I am doing. I hope
that I will never do anything apart from
that desire.*

*And I know that if I do this you will lead
me by the right road, though I may know
nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust
you always and everywhere though I may
seem to be lost in the shadow of death.
I will not fear because you are ever with
me and you will never leave me to face
my perils alone.*

~ Thomas Merton

INVITING
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CATHOLIC RESOURCES

TV & RADIO

etwn.com (EWTN Catholic Television & Radio Network)

CatholicTV.com

stgabrielradio.com (AM 820)

ONLINE RESOURCES

stbrendans.net (parish website)

Formed.org (Free for parishioners)

catholic.com (Catholic Answers)

catholicscomehome.org

uscbb.org (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

w2.vatican.va (Vatican website)

morningoffering.com (Sign up to receive emailed daily readings)

APPS

Confession (A Roman Catholic App)

Laudate (Catholic resources)

Hallow (Catholic prayer and meditation app)

CATHOLIC NEWS

The Catholic Times Newspaper (columbuscatholic.org)

ncregister.com (National Catholic Register)

thecatholicworldreport.com

catholicnews.com

BOOKS

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

"Rediscovering Catholicism" - Matthew Kelly, dynamiccatholic.com

"Rome Sweet Home" - Scott Hahn, stpaulcenter.com

"What Catholics Really Believe" - Karl Keating

"Why be Catholic?" - Patrik Madrid

"I'm Not Being Fed" - Jeff Cavins

Writings by current/past Popes & writings by the saints including:

St Ignatius, St Thomas Aquinas, St Augustine, St Francis de Sales,

St Teresa of Avila, St Thomas More Newman, Mother Teresa, and

St Therese of Lisieux (The Little Flower)

CD/DVD/VIDEOS

Lighthouse Catholic Media (CDs/books)

"The Mass Explained" by Fr Larry Richards

Word on Fire – videos done by Bishop Robert Barron

formed.org – "Symbolon" and "Catholicism"

Ascension Press – Fr Mike Schmitz (short videos on Catholic topics)

Also: Richard Rohr, Fr John Ricardo, Matthew Kelly, Mother Angelica

STORES

Generations Religious Gifts 1095 Dublin Rd, Columbus, OH

The Catholic Company www.catholiccompany.com

Inviting Catholics Home webpage:



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