



# St. Francis of Assisi Parish: Generations of Faith

## A Year on Prayer: Connecting to God in Traditional and Unique Ways

Recent documents from the U. S. Bishops challenge all members of the Church to embrace the practice of lifelong learning of the faith. At every age, there is something to be learned and experienced on an individual's journey of faith. Generations of Faith offers a unique experience for all members of our faith community to learn and grow together in relationship with Jesus and His Church. In this sixth season of Generations of Faith our community will devote time to a study of prayer. It is our goal that all participants will connect with God in new ways as they become more aware of prayer as an expression of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

April 2010

### Prayer Devotions of the Church

- † Liturgy of the Hours
- † Lectio Divina
- † The Prayer Labyrinth
- † Adoration & Benediction
- † Divine Mercy

For our final Preparation Session of the season, as we complete our study on Prayer, we will end with a look at some of the traditional Prayer Devotions of the Church. Each one is covered in a short article in this newsletter. Prayer devotions are part of the tradition of the Catholic Church since they offer unique ways for the faithful to grow in deeper relationship with God. All devotions are oriented toward our Trinitarian God who calls us always to himself. †

### GoFEvents

Attend one or all of the Devotional Opportunities on the weekend of April 25:

**Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading):** A group Lectio will be offered after the 8am mass in the Pine Room facilitated by Deacon Bill Brawner.

A continental breakfast will be served.

**Walk the Prayer Labyrinth:** After the 10:30 mass and until 2pm in the Parish Social Center, parishioners will have an opportunity to walk the labyrinth in prayerful silence. Light snacks will be available in the Pine Room for those who are waiting.

**Evening Vespers, Adoration & Benediction:** From 5:30pm to 6:30pm in the church, join fellow parishioners for traditional evening prayer from the Church's Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist, and end with Benediction.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students will be hosting the event. †

### Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours is the Catholic Church's cycle of daily prayer of praise and intercession, which began in ancient times. This practice fulfills Jesus' command to pray without ceasing. Sometimes called the Divine Office (Sacred Duty) priests and some religious are obligated to pray at stated times of the day. The Catechism of the

Catholic Church (#1175) teaches that the Liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole people of God with encouragement to the laity to consider praying part of it, like vespers.

Are you interested in hearing how the Liturgy of the Hours is prayed? If you're looking for a good resource to begin this practice check out this website: [Divineoffice.org/liturgy-of-the-hours-page-guide/](http://Divineoffice.org/liturgy-of-the-hours-page-guide/). Then click on the tab "Morning Prayer". Click "Listen to podcast." †

### Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a devotional practice that involves reading and meditating upon Scripture. People use this practice as a way to deepen their relationship with God as they open themselves to hearing his voice in the sacred Word.

The skill of Lectio involves 4 stages: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *contemplatio* (contemplation), and *oratio* (prayer). Daily practice of this devotion, allows the Holy Spirit to work within and transform one's life. The Lectio Divina postcard in your

home kit offers information on these steps.

The following website provides information on how to order a children's publication of daily Catholic readings with a reflection to help your child know Jesus better—[www.livingfaith.com](http://www.livingfaith.com). †

### The Prayer Labyrinth

*Labyrinth* is a Greek word that means path. It is a single, circular path embedded on a floor, or the ground that leads to a center and back out again, returning the same way. One can't get lost in a labyrinth. In this way it differs from a maze, which offers many path choices and can easily lose someone.

"What is special about the labyrinth is that it places the walker in the present moment. The gentle movement of putting one foot in front of the other enables the walker to become aware of what is happening in life right here and now, in this particular moment." In this way the labyrinth becomes a metaphor for life's journey. (From The Labyrinth Experience by Lorraine Villemaire, SSJ)

Walking the labyrinth can be used as a contemplative prayer exercise, which involves relaxing, receiving by being aware of words or feelings that surface in you, and returning by walking out. Once finished, the walker can then ponder the experience by selecting a word or feeling that surfaced and attempt to integrate it in to their daily life. Come on the 25<sup>th</sup> to try out the experience!

Check out [www.LabyrinthExperience.com](http://www.LabyrinthExperience.com) for more information. †

### Adoration: A Eucharistic Devotion

Pope John Paul II in his 1980 Holy Thursday letter to the bishops on the *Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist* states, "The Church and the world have great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease." (Dominicae Cenae Section 1-3)

St. Francis offers Eucharistic Adoration on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday following the 8 am mass until 10pm. Anyone is welcomed to spend time with Jesus. This devotion is made possible by faithful adorers who commit to an hour visit with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament at the same time each week. The parish would love to extend the days of Adoration but needs more Adorers to do this. If you are interested, please contact Pam Letendre at 323-7416. †

### The Divine Mercy Chaplet

In 1931 Jesus appeared repeatedly to Sister Maria Faustina, a Polish nun in the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Jesus instructed her to paint an image according to this vision and to place upon it the phrase "Jesus, I trust in you". Then he told her that

he wanted there to be a Feast of Mercy, which would take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Easter. Jesus taught her the chaplet of Divine Mercy, a prayer said while using rosary beads, promising special graces to those who say it. He wanted people to trust in his mercy. (Divine Mercy Chaplet and Novena pamphlet in homekit. The Rosary CD from the Mary Foundation received in your Oct. homekit also includes the Chaplet.)

Sister Faustina devoted her life to following the directions of Jesus, thus instituting this new devotion. For this she is known as the Missionary of Divine Mercy. She died at the age of 33 and in 2000 was canonized a Saint. †

### Prayer in Scripture

Holy Scripture offers many exhortations to pray:

- † Romans 8:26
- † Colossians 1:9-12
- † Ephesians 6:18a
- † 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18
- † Philippians 4:6
- † 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- † 1 Timothy 2:8

"In whatever way we pray, prayer is a communion with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

*From the Association for Catechumenal Ministry  
"Types of Prayer"*