

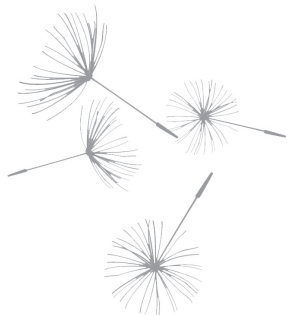
*Prayers
&
Reflections*

FOR CATHOLIC TEACHERS

2019

compiled by
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garratt
PUBLISHING





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Introduction

In our Catholic schools, we bear witness to the importance of prayer as part of our faith tradition. It is part of the culture and character of our education system, which has at its heart the message of the Good News. It is the glue and grace of our community; it identifies and holds us together.

We must clear a space psychologically as well as physically, so that we are attuned and receptive to what the Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister, calls 'the prayerful pause point'. This means that this slice of time, whether three minutes or thirty, is one of calm and receptivity – a graced gathering where the clamour of the classroom recedes.

We need to create a sacred space, even in a crowded room. This is done when we deliberately turn from any intrusions into this prayerful moment; when we honour this time with stillness, silence and surrender. We can slow our breathing, restrain our bodily restlessness and enter another time zone – an eternal one, which does not have us clock watching or posturing, where we can be our true selves before the Creator.

As we gather as a staff, it is essential that we reverence this prayerful time. It is a time for the soul. We surrender ourselves briefly, letting go of the improvised urgencies and deadlines and issues that consume us as we do our best for those we teach and reach. Here, we let God – and good – in as we listen to uplifting words; words that may inspire or reorient us or words that give us encouragement to keep on when challenges and obstacles assail us. We confirm our relationship with God as individuals, and his blessing over the staff as a whole. As the unknown philosopher said, "Prayer gives us a faith lift!"

When a staff prays together they are co-creating a spiritual experience with God. It is a dialogue, not a monologue. And

no matter how old or traditional the prayer, it can always be refreshed in the light of new insights and interpretations and the heartfelt desire of those who pray. In coming together to pray, we identify as a worshipping community of people whose intentions for good move beyond the temporal to the transcendent.

Prayer becomes a unifying force, the common ground of connection, the currency of a charism of togetherness.

This prayer book reflects the Christian liturgical year with its seasons of joy and sorrow as we follow the experience of Jesus of Nazareth. It offers prayers, insights and reflections to do with faith, teaching and simply being human. There are also Scripture excerpts or passages, and the odd quotation which may well be a starting point for spontaneous prayer or wider staff consideration. And we must remember that prayer is more than simply a collection of written words. It starts, always, with the intention in the heart.

Our praying together as a staff community confers on us the special grace of belonging. It affirms us in our vocation of witness in the hope-filled education of those many young Australians who will become the Church of the future.

May this prayer book be a useful resource, helping staff to feel confident and comfortable with leading prayer in various venues that are transformed, albeit briefly, into sacred spaces of the heart.

Ann Rennie

January 28 – February 3
3rd Week of Ordinary Time
Sunday Reading: Luke 1:1–4, 4:14–21

Monday

28 January 2019



(AUSTRALIA DAY 26.1)

Australia Day – a secular feast day celebrating our unity as a people. We might come from different lands and have strange accents, traditions and belief systems, but we have much to share as we live together in this ancient land.

It is also a day for prayerful reflection. We acknowledge the custodianship of the First Peoples and recognise that 26 January speaks of injustice, dispossession and sorrow. Australia Day should give us all pause to reflect on the need for truth-telling about our history – the good and the bad. We also share the diverse stories of all who have come to our shores in waves of migration and settlement.

We pray that the year ahead will be rich with possibility as we teach, encourage and witness to the young Australians in our classrooms across the country.

Ann Rennie

Tuesday

29 January 2019



How wonderful it is
that nobody need wait
a single moment
before starting to
improve the world.

Anne Frank

Let us not wait. Our time starts now.

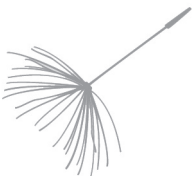


Wednesday
30 January 2019

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



Thursday

31 January 2019



For many of us, childhood memories of religious formation are suffused with a sense of simple trust. Our parents, grandparents and teachers told us that God created us, loves us and takes care of us.

It's good to remember that those who taught us knew, as we do now, of suffering, pain and shadows. These experiences may have raised questions, but in the end, they also brought the answers of trust and faith they shared with us.

Lord, in this New Year, give me the grace to live in response to the simple truth of your love and care for me.

Amy Welborn
Book of Days

Friday

1 February 2019



(The Presentation of the Lord 2.2)

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Loving God,

*Help us to appreciate the present moment
To be able to say 'It is wonderful to be here'*

Knowing that wherever we are

You are there with us

In surprising and beautiful ways.

Help us to have the freedom

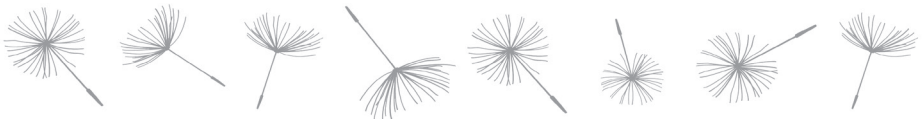
To move on with you in faith

Not knowing what you may have in store for us

But trusting in your companionship. Amen.

Michael McGirr

All I have is yours: Forty days to freedom



February 4 – February 10
4th Week of Ordinary Time
Sunday Reading: Luke 4:21–30

Monday

4 February 2019



Part of our spiritual maturity as a nation in the 21st 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.

*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
revere and respect others' faiths, creeds and traditions
while we live our own journey to God.*

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Ann Rennie

Tuesday

5 February 2019



Australian Holiness

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 and Be Glad

Wednesday
6 February 2019



WAITANGI DAY, NEW ZEALAND

The Sign of the Cross (NZ Maori Language)

*Ki te ingoa o te Matua,
o te Tamaiti,
o te Wairua Tapu.
Āmene*

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19–20

Jesus was a wonderful teacher. And such a teacher! His impact has been felt by millions and millions of people, for over 20 centuries. Scholars around the world still study his teachings, which empower us to be creative and to grow strong in his love. His words have shaped our lives, directed our thoughts and actions, inflamed our souls and warmed our hearts. His lessons of love and compassion will continue to shape the future of the world through the actions of the countless students who love him and follow him faithfully.

Lisa Freemantle
For Teachers

Thursday
7 February 2019



For my yoke is easy and my burden light.

Matthew 11:30

To live the Christian life, day and day out, often seems so hard. The struggle to be faithful, to grow in holiness, to advance in giving and forgiving, can indeed be a heavy task. The good news that Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden light seems almost absurd. We don't take our Christian vocation lightly, nor do we always find it easy!

Could it be that, in the name of faith we have taken on yokes and burdens that were never meant for us? Are we caught up in the endless dilemma of wanting to do everything, do it right and do it all the time? Are we trying to earn salvation, just in case God's grace isn't enough? No wonder we are weary!

The Lord of Good News invites us to lay down these self-made yokes and anxiety-ridden burdens.

"Come to me," he says, "and I will give you rest."

Nancy F Summers
With Grateful Hearts

Friday

8 February 2019



*The most precious gift
we can offer others
is our presence.
When mindfulness
embraces those
we love, they will
bloom like flowers.*

Thich Nhat Hanh

