

Nine Days for Life

Meditations on the Eucharist and Life in Preparation for Corpus Christi

The following nine short prayers are designed to be prayed for nine days in preparation for the celebration of Corpus Christi, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

They may be prayed in Church before the Blessed Sacrament. They may be prayed at home by families at the end of a long day of study and work. They may be prayed by individuals in the quiet of their room.

*May these prayers, inspired by the readings provided by the Church for the Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist and the words of our Holy Father in his encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae*, draw us more deeply into the mystery of Christ, whose life, death and resurrection is a proclamation of the Gospel of Life.*

Day One

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:26-27

Jesus said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."

Silent prayer

Reflection

The crowds were thrilled by the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and they kept following Jesus, hoping for more of this marvelous entertainment. But the real miracle was not feeding five thousand with a couple loaves and fishes. The real miracle was meeting all the needs of every man and woman who would ever put his or her faith in him, through the food which is his body and blood. From the moment we stirred in the womb, God gave us a share in his life. In the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, we find eternal life. Through these days, let us pray to the Son of Man, that feeding on his Body and Blood we may intercede for the little baby in the first moments of life and for all who have been forgotten or tossed away.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On each child just conceived
For their safety and health
For nine months of growth
That an angel may protect them
For peace and for hope

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.

For you alone who formed us in our mother's womb,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Two

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:32-33

Jesus said to the crowd, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Reflection

Each time we are hungry, we look for bread. Bread we buy with our pay, bread we are given at a friend's table, bread we take down from the cabinet to make that late night snack. But the bread that truly matters cannot be taken. It can only be given from the altar of the cross, by him in whom we are healed and saved from sin. For when we eat his body, we are filled with his life. And when we walk to the altar today to receive that bread which is communion, may we intercede for all those whom God calls even now from their mother's womb to receive his life. Those little ones who, God willing, will make their first Communion in a half dozen years and receive from him who first gave them life in the womb, the bread that gives them life forever.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On all new fathers,

On fathers who are alone,
On fathers unemployed,
On fathers addicted,
On fathers who are abusive,
On young fathers who are afraid,
On fathers who've run away,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's womb,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Three

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:35

Jesus said to the crowd, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Reflection

Imagine never being hungry ever again. No hunger of the stomach. No more hunger of the heart. No more hunger of the soul. Only in Jesus, in eating his Body and drinking his Blood, can we find such food. Let us pray today for all mothers and fathers of little babies, still in the womb. May they be nourished with the Body and Blood of Jesus, so that the

little life within them may share in the gift that removes all hunger and meets every human need.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On all new mothers,
On mothers who are alone,
On mothers unemployed,
On mothers addicted,
On mothers who are abusive,
On young mothers who are afraid,
On mothers who are in pain,

Prayer

God our loving Father,.
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Four

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:47-50

Jesus said to the crowds, "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in

the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die."

Reflection

People have always wanted to live for ever. They seek the fountain of youth and spend billions of dollars to still look young. Even our ancestors who grumbled in the desert, received bread from heaven so they could live a few more years. But they died, nonetheless. Whoever eats the Bread which is the Body of Christ, however, will live forever. May we eat that bread as food for the journeys God calls us to make through the deserts of this world, that we might arrive in the heavenly Jerusalem to live with him forever.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On those who defend life,
On those who love the child in the womb,
On those who pray for the unborn child,
On all who work to change unjust laws,
On all who live the Gospel of Life,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Five

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:41-51

Jesus said to the crowds, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

Reflection

At the beginning of a benediction with the Blessed Sacrament we sing, "You have given us bread from heaven!" That bread is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary's womb. That gift is the Christ, whose Body and Blood are our eternal salvation. So too, from the womb of a mother, the gift of new life is given to us each day. Little lives whom we should consecrate to Christ and entrust to his care. And some day may they receive with us the bread of heaven and rejoice in the flesh given for the life of the world.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On Congressmen who work for life,
On our President,
On the members of the House,
On the members of the Senate,
On all too little to vote or persuade,
On all who work for life,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,

and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Six

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:41-51

Jesus said to the Jews who were present: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

Reflection

Sometimes bread looks like it's living, but it's really not. The yeast which causes a loaf to rise gives it all the appearance of life. But life is a gift only from God. Only God can cause the life to stir deep within a mother's womb. And only God can give us the bread which is eternal life, his flesh for the life of the world.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On doctors of life and of truth,
On residents who love the little child,
On doctors who gaze on life's mysteries,
On physicians who see into the womb,
On surgeons who heal the unborn child,
On all who defend the child in the womb,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Seven

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:53

Jesus said to the Jews who were present: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you."

Reflection

The man who has died, appears to be dead. But if he has eaten and drunk of the Body and Blood of Christ, he is not really dead, but merely awaits the day when Christ will raise him up to eternal life. Only God is the arbiter of life and death. Our poor human attempts to affect God's plans for life and death seem almost comical. For we are so little, so liminal, so weak. And God is so great, so infinite, so strong. It is he who creates the baby in the womb, and welcomes home to eternity the faithful servant who has been joined to his only Son in Holy Communion.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On nurses who love little babies,
On nursing students,
On those who first hear the heartbeat,
On those who first feel a kick,
On nurses who cradle the newborn,
On nurses who foster the unborn,
On all who protect defenseless life,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Eight

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:54

Jesus said to the Jews who were present: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.

Reflection

On that last day we will stand before the Lord in glory and be judged.
And all who have eaten the flesh of the Son of man will be raised up to eternal life. For that last day is not unlike the first day we spent in our

mother's womb. It is a day when God reaches down into our human condition and brings light from darkness, eternal life from eternal death. Good and gentle Jesus, who will raise us up on the last day, look upon the little child in his mother's womb and protect that life you have planted. Nourish him for many days with your body and blood and raise him up on the last day.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On judges who struggle with justice,
On lawyers who seek to speak truth,
On judges who love life,
On the judges of our Supreme Court,
On those who argue before them,
On the unborn child who rests in their hands,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Nine

God, come to my assistance.

--Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

--As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Gospel

John 6:58

Jesus said to the Jews who were present: "This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Reflection

We honor those who have gone before us, and we pray for them. We tell their stories and we commend them to God. But no matter the stories or the memories, they have died, and they rest in the hands of God. But the little child in the womb is very much alive. Not just the subject of conjecture or stories, this child's heart beats and her hands grasp, just like us. Let us pray in these days of preparation for Corpus Christi, that the Lord will protect that little life so that some day this child might stand with us at the altar of God and eat the Bread that will let her live forever, with Jesus, through whom she was made and to whom we pray for her this day.

Litany

Please respond: **Lord, have mercy.**

On all victims of abortion,
On the woman
whose memories cause her to cry,
On those whose pain nags and holds on,
On the unborn who rest with God,
On all who seek mercy,
On all who seek peace,
On all who seek healing, and mercy
and perfect peace,

Prayer

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage

to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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