

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH • PORTLAND, OREGON

OCIA 2026–2027

Participant Handbook

*One page for every Tuesday, thirty sessions and eight Prayer Nights,
September 8, 2026 to May 25, 2027*

*“For in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through Him and for Him. He is
before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”*

Colossians 1:16–17 (RSV-2CE)

Welcome

OCIA has one goal: that you come to know Jesus Christ. It is not a class you pass: it is an invitation to become His disciple, inside the Church He Himself founded. You are welcome here whether you are certain, curious, or came because someone asked you to. This handbook gives you one page for every Tuesday of the year: what the night is about, one line to carry, an invitation to pray during the week, one small thing to try, and the questions your table will talk over. Nothing here is an assignment. Everything here is an invitation.

The year has a shape. The Church has always brought adults to Christ in stages, and we follow them: a season of awakening (September to November), when nothing is presupposed and honest questions get real answers; a season of friendship (late November to early February), when we come to know the One Who called us; His family, His Church, His seven ways of touching a life; a season of purification (Lent), when what we have learned goes to work on the heart; and a season of union and mission (Easter to Pentecost), when we learn to live inside what we have received.

How Tuesdays work

5:30	Dinner together in the hall.
6:00	We begin, an opening prayer, a brief word from anyone who has seen God act in their life this week, then Fr. Timothy's presentation and your questions.
7:00	Tables. Thirty minutes with your table leader over the questions on that night's page. At the same time Fr. Timothy is at his desk in the hall: anyone may come and talk with him for five minutes about anything.
7:30	End of evening: we finish on time.

Daily Mass on Tuesdays is at noon, and you are always welcome. From October 6, the first Tuesday of every month is a Prayer Night: open to the whole parish, and part of OCIA: it takes the place of that week's session. Eight of them across the year, on how to pray. Their pages are in this handbook where they fall in the calendar.

What you are being asked

- An open and curious heart.
- Sunday Mass each week: the 10:00 a.m. Come early if you can.
- Tuesday evenings, 6:00 to 7:30, dinner at 5:30, and the first-Tuesday Prayer Nights.
- Something to take notes with: notebook, journal, laptop, however you like to work. Highly recommended.
- Have a Bible at home; the RSV Second Catholic Edition is ideal. You don't need to bring it.
- Across the year, as you are able: Prayer Primer (Fr. Thomas Dubay), Discernment of Spirits (Fr. Timothy Gallagher), Be Healed (Dr. Bob Schuchts), Interior Freedom (Fr. Jacques Philippe), the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and Fr. John Riccardo's Rescue Project at rescueproject.us.
- Healing Saturdays: before Easter, a longer one-to-one time with Fr. Timothy on a Saturday at 1:30, a Whole Life Confession if you are already baptized, or extended prayer and conversation if you are preparing for Baptism. One person per Saturday, from 09/19. Book your own Saturday on Fr. Timothy's calendar (scan the code at the end of this page, or go to calendar.app.google/tEdwnT7tr1UFNgvW8); claim one early.
- After Pentecost, our summer small groups: your table keeps meeting through the summer, in one another's homes, once a week, for food, prayer, fellowship and discussion. It is simply what we do here.

Hallow, your complimentary subscription

Every OCIA participant receives a complimentary Hallow subscription once your name and email address are on the roster. If you would rather pay for your own, you are more than welcome. We ask that anyone who is not yet a fully initiated Catholic have access to the free subscriptions first, and then we will see what is left for the rest. To activate: go to hallow.com/redeem in a web browser, enter the parish code, then sign in to the app using that same login. A plain free account will not unlock the library. Scan the code to join St. Patrick's parish page in Hallow, where the parish challenges live. Each page of this handbook carries one invitation to pray in Hallow that week, with its own code that opens it: something that opens up what we talked about, never a task to complete.



Our parish page in Hallow
[Tap to open](#)

Healing Saturdays booking page: calendar.app.google/tEdwnT7tr1UFNgvw8. Pick a Saturday, enter your name, email and phone, answer one question (are you already baptized?), and it is yours; you will get a confirmation and a reminder.



Book a Healing Saturday
[Tap to book](https://calendar.app.google/tEdwnT7tr1UFNgvw8)

The Year at a Glance

Every Tuesday, in order. Session numbers are in the left column; Prayer Nights are marked. Dates of the rites and Saturdays follow.

Period I: Awakening • Sessions 1–9 • 09/08–11/17

09/08/26	Session 1	Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?
09/15/26	Session 2	What Is Real, and Can I Know It?
09/22/26	Session 3	Who Is God? The Nature of God
09/29/26	Session 4	What Is a Human Being? The Image and the Ache
10/06/26	Prayer Night 1	What Prayer Actually Is: God Is Already Speaking
10/13/26	Session 5	Why Is Everything Broken?
10/20/26	Session 6	The Unseen War
10/27/26	Session 7	Has God Spoken?
11/03/26	Prayer Night 2	Vocal Prayer That Comes Alive
11/10/26	Session 8	Who Is Jesus? The Rescue
11/17/26	Session 9	The Response

Period II: Friendship • Sessions 10–18 • 11/24–02/09

11/24/26	Session 10	The Company of the Rescued: The Saints
12/01/26	Prayer Night 3	Meditation: God's Word as Conversation
12/08/26	Session 11	The Church: Bride and Body
12/15/26	Session 12	How Grace Reaches Us: The Sacramental Economy
12/22/26	Session 13	Baptism: Death and Birth
12/29/26	Session 14	The Eucharist: Source and Summit
01/05/27	Prayer Night 4	Contemplation and the Universal Call
01/12/27	Session 15	The Holy Mass: Entering the Sacrifice
01/19/27	Session 16	Confirmation: Power from on High
01/26/27	Session 17	Love Given Away: Marriage & Holy Orders
02/02/27	Prayer Night 5	Ask Like a Child: Petition and Intercession
02/09/27	Session 18	The Sacraments of Healing: Confession & Anointing

Period III: Purification • Sessions 19–23 • 02/16–03/23

02/16/27	Session 19	The Cross & Redemptive Suffering
02/23/27	Session 20	Inner Healing I: Our Story, Wounds and the Father's Love
03/02/27	Prayer Night 6	The Desert: Dryness, Distraction and Fidelity
03/09/27	Session 21	Inner Healing II: Healing and Forgiveness
03/16/27	Session 22	The Four Last Things
03/23/27	Session 23	The Triduum: What to Expect

Period IV: Union and Mission • Sessions 24–30 • 03/30–05/25

03/30/27	Session 24	Triduum Testimonies
04/06/27	Prayer Night 7	Praying Always: An Ordinary Day Made Prayer
04/13/27	Session 25	Mystagogy: What Did We Receive?
04/20/27	Session 26	Freedom: Morality as New Life
04/27/27	Session 27	The Integrated Heart: Chastity & the Moral Life
05/04/27	Prayer Night 8	The Fire Within: Union with God
05/11/27	Session 28	Who Is the Holy Spirit? Gifts & Charisms
05/18/27	Session 29	Sent: Christian Service & Mission

The rites, the Saturdays, the retreats

Sat 10/17/26	Mini-pilgrimage 1: Mount Angel Abbey and St. Mary's Church in Mount Angel, Oregon, with a German lunch in town. Rosary at 11:30 and the noon Mass here at St. Patrick's, then we drive south for the afternoon.
Sun 11/22/26	Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and, in the same celebration, the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates: here at St. Patrick's, at our 10:00 a.m. Mass, on the Solemnity of Christ the King (date tentative). Weekly dismissals of the catechumens after the homily begin the following Sunday.
Sat 01/16/27	Mini-pilgrimage 2: St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Portland.
Wed 02/10/27	Ash Wednesday; Lent begins.
Sun 02/14/27	First Sunday of Lent. Rite of Sending at our 10:00 Mass; that afternoon, the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion with the Archbishop (Archdiocese of Portland; venue and hour to be announced).
Sun 02/28 • 03/07 • 03/14/27	The three Scrutinies, at Sunday Mass, for the elect.
Tue 03/09 • Tue 03/16/27	Presentation of the Creed (Session 21) and of the Lord's Prayer (Session 22) to the elect, in a brief celebration of the word at the start of the session.
Sat 03/27/27	Holy Saturday Retreat, 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. At noon, the Preparation Rites for the elect: they recite the Creed that was handed to them in Lent, and receive the Ephphetha, the opening of ears and mouth. Then the Easter Vigil that night: Baptism, Confirmation and first Holy Communion for the elect; Profession of Faith, Reception into full communion and Confirmation for the candidates.
Sun 03/28/27	Easter Sunday. Divine Mercy Sunday follows on 04/04.
Sat 05/08/27	Mini-pilgrimage 3: The Grotto (National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother), in Mary's month. Rosary at 11:30 and the noon Mass here, then the Grotto for the afternoon: the outdoor Stations of the Cross, the Chapel of Mary, the Grotto itself and the upper gardens.
Tue 05/11 • Fri 05/14 • Sat 05/15/27	Pentecost Retreat, three gatherings; the Holy Spirit Novena runs 05/07 to 05/15.
Sun 05/16/27	Pentecost Sunday: the close of the Easter season.
Healing Saturdays, 1:30 p.m.	From 09/19 through Lent: one person each Saturday with Fr. Timothy, a Whole Life Confession (already baptized) or extended prayer and conversation (preparing for Baptism). Book your own Saturday at calendar.app.google/tEdwnT7tr1UFNgvw8 (the code is on the Welcome page). Not offered 10/10, 10/17, 11/28, 12/26, 01/09, 01/16, 02/13.

Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?

Why is there something rather than nothing?

Tonight

The most basic question anyone can ask is why there is something rather than nothing, and not a little something: an observable universe ninety-three billion light-years across, filled with hundreds of billions of galaxies, and filled at every scale with things that did not have to be interesting and are anyway. We walked four forks in the road. There is something rather than nothing. That something is ordered rather than chaotic: the same spiral turning up in a sunflower head, a seashell, a hurricane, and the arms of a galaxy. That order cannot be explained by physics alone, because physics cannot account for its own beginning... So something must stand outside the system to explain the system at all; St. Thomas Aquinas calls it the Unmoved Mover, the First Cause that is Itself uncaused. And that "something outside" turns out not to be an impersonal principle but a Mind: One Who knows and wills. Which means the universe was not merely caused. It was willed. Catholics name that Source God: not a being among beings, not the biggest thing in the universe, but Being itself, the One Who told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He created out of nothing, which means nothing had to be, and that you are being given existence right now. Gratitude, then, is the only logical response to a gift we did not earn.

"Existence is a gift... and Someone is giving it to me right now."

An invitation to pray this week

The whole parish is praying How to Pray this month. Your invitation is one session of it: the first, Intro and Our Father, twenty-two minutes. Alex, who founded Hallow, tells how prayer changed his life; then Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in The Chosen, leads the prayer Jesus taught. Pray it once this week, slowly, and let the Our Father be your first prayer of the year. Find it in the Hallow app or from our parish page; your complimentary subscription unlocks it once your name and email are on the roster.



Scan to open in Hallow
[Tap to open in Hallow](#)

Take it into your life

Once this week, stop. Outdoors if you can, at night if you can. Look at one thing that exists, a tree, a star, your own hand, and let it land that it did not have to be there at all. Then say thank you, out loud, to the One Who is giving it.

For the table

1. What brought you here: what made you walk into this room on a Tuesday night?
2. What are you hoping for from this year?
3. What stood out to you tonight: a word, an image, something you did not expect?
4. What is the one question you carried in with you? This is the room for it.

Next Tuesday, 09/15: What Is Real, and Can I Know It? Can I trust my own mind?

What Is Real, and Can I Know It?

Can I trust my own mind?

Tonight

Tonight we ask whether the mind that asked last week's question can be trusted. Skepticism undoes itself: "truth is unknowable" claims to be a known truth. Reality answers back: it is intelligible, mathematics keeps turning out to fit, and science presupposes an order it cannot explain. A word-like universe is best explained by a Mind: Logos, Someone speaking. That is not a proof in the sciences' sense, but one of the "converging and convincing arguments" the Church means by the ways of knowing God (CCC 31). Truth, goodness and beauty are real features of being, not private preferences. Reason does reach the one personal God, known "with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason" (CCC 36), and then it stops: His own inner life, and His plan of loving goodness, reach us only because He chose to reveal them (CCC 50). Which leaves the turn: if the Source is a Mind, Who is He?

"A universe that can be read is a universe Someone has spoken."

An invitation to pray this week

One session this week: Mere Christianity, session 1, in the Hallow app. C. S. Lewis takes the moral law as a clue about the universe, the same move we made tonight with the order of things; about twelve minutes, with Fr. Gregory Pine thinking out loud over Bear Grylls's reading. It is an argument offered rather than a doctrine handed down, which is exactly why it rewards a slow listen. One session is enough.



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Take it into your life

Once this week, catch yourself trusting your own mind: following an argument, reading a face across a room, expecting a door to be where you left it. Notice that you assume reality will make sense, and that it does. Then say it to God in your own words: if You're the One speaking, help me to hear what You're saying to me.

For the table

1. When have you changed your mind about something that mattered, and what actually changed it?
2. Where are you most confident that you can know the truth, and where least?
3. Does a universe we can describe and predict feel to you like a clue, or like a coincidence?
4. What would change for you if the order behind everything turned out to be Someone rather than something?

Next Tuesday, 09/22: Who Is God? The Nature of God. What do we actually mean when we say the word God?

Who Is God? The Nature of God

What do we actually mean when we say the word God?

Tonight

We begin by clearing the images: not an old man in the sky, not a force, not a bigger being among beings. God is not one being among beings: He alone IS, “the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end” (CCC 213). Everything else receives its existence from Him; He is Being itself, and the world is not God. At the bush He gives Moses His name: “I AM WHO I AM.” The attributes, eternal, unchanging, simple, all-powerful, all-knowing, carry an honest limit: “concerning God, we cannot grasp what He is, but only what He is not” (CCC 43). He is also nearer to you than you are to yourself. And He is not cold: God’s very being is love, an eternal exchange between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons, revealed by Jesus and not deduced by us; and He has destined us to share in it (CCC 221).

“God is not the biggest thing there is; He is the reason there is anything at all.”

An invitation to pray this week

Tonight we cleared away the pictures of God that were never true. Your invitation is five minutes without any picture at all: Intro, session 1, Sitting in Silence with God, in the Hallow app. It asks nothing of you but five quiet minutes. Sit, breathe, and let Him be larger than anything you could imagine.



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Take it into your life

This week, notice the picture of God you actually carry: the face you imagine when you pray, and the one you imagine after you have failed. Ask where it came from: a parent, a teacher, a film, a bad year. Then name one thing in that picture that is not Him, and let it go.

For the table

1. What picture of God did you grow up with, and who gave it to you?
2. Which word said about God tonight is hardest for you to believe, and which is easiest?
3. Where have you wanted God to be a force rather than a Person, or a Person rather than a force?
4. If He is closer to you than you are to yourself, what would change about how you pray this week?

Next Tuesday, 09/29: What Is a Human Being? The Image and the Ache. What is a human being, and why is nothing here ever enough?

What Is a Human Being? The Image and the Ache

What is a human being, and why is nothing here ever enough?

Tonight

Once a month we open with a witness from someone in this room, and tonight it opens the question: what is a human being? Made in the image of God: intellect, freedom, the capacity to love (CCC 355–361). One person, body and soul, whose union forms a single nature (CCC 365), not a ghost in a machine; when Scripture says “spirit and soul and body” it is not naming three parts. Made for communion: with God, with others, with creation, with yourself: the four harmonies of the original justice our first parents were given (CCC 374–377), which the Fall broke and grace restores. Then the ache: a desire nothing finite satisfies. St. Augustine says it plainly: our heart is restless until it rests in You. Real hungers have real food, so the ache is a homing signal and not a defect. Which is why pleasure, power, achievement and romance keep almost working.

“The ache is not a defect. It is a homing signal.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: Healing Wounds, session 1, Our Baptismal Identity (Chosen and Beloved), with Dr. Bob Schuchts and Sr. Miriam James, in the Hallow app. It prays what we said tonight: you were made for communion, and the ache in you is not a defect. Pray it once this week and notice what surfaces.



Scan to open in Hallow
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Take it into your life

This week, when you reach for the thing you always reach for, the screen, the fridge, the second drink, the old comfort, stop just before it and name what you are actually hungry for. No scolding. Say it to God in one sentence: this is what I am really after. Then let the hunger stay hungry for ten minutes.

For the table

1. When have you felt most fully yourself, and what were you doing?
2. What is the thing you have most wanted, and what happened when you got it?
3. Where does the restlessness show up in an ordinary week for you?
4. Which of the four, God, others, creation, yourself, feels most out of joint in your life right now?

Next Tuesday, 10/06, is our first Prayer Night, What Prayer Actually Is: God Is Already Speaking, open to the whole parish, and it takes the place of that week's session. Our next session is 10/13: Why Is Everything Broken? If we were made for all that, what happened?

What Prayer Actually Is: God Is Already Speaking

What is prayer actually, and what would it take for me to begin?

Tonight

Tonight opens a series with one plain aim, said out loud at the start: that by May everyone here is praying daily, in whatever form they will actually keep. So we clear the ground first. Prayer is not a technique we master but a relationship we are invited into: “Prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours” (CCC 2560). Which means God is already speaking, and the desire to pray is prayer already beginning; Fr. Thomas Dubay’s starting point is that if you want to want it, you have started. We name the four obstacles out loud, I don’t have time, I don’t feel anything, I don’t know what to say, I’m not holy enough, and then make the one decision that matters: a time, a place, and a number of minutes. Five is a real answer. The sentence we will repeat all year, the best prayer is the one that you will actually pray, is about the prayer you bring to the Mass, not a substitute for it; the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (CCC 1324). We end in the church with ten minutes of guided silence together.

“The best prayer is the one that you will actually pray.”

An invitation to pray this week

Tonight you named a time, a place and a number of minutes. This week, keep them; that is the whole invitation. If you would like something to hold the time, Intro, session 1, Sitting in Silence with God, in the Hallow app, is five minutes and asks nothing else of you.



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Take it into your life

Between now and next Tuesday, notice the wanting. The desire to pray is already prayer beginning, so when the thought of God crosses your mind in the car or at the sink, do not file it as a failure to pray. Say something, even one sentence. Then ask which of the four obstacles is really yours, and say that to God too.

Try this week

Tonight you named a time, a place and a number of minutes. Keep them this week, and we will ask one another how it went at every Prayer Night; in May you will be looking back at what you chose in October. If five minutes is what you will actually keep, five minutes is a real answer. Try picking the time before you leave the parking lot.

Next Tuesday, 10/13, Session 5, Why Is Everything Broken? • Next Prayer Night, 11/03, Vocal Prayer That Comes Alive

Why Is Everything Broken?

If we were made for all that, why is everything broken?

Tonight

The evidence is everywhere: war, addiction, betrayal, death; and inside, my divided heart. Genesis 3 uses figurative language but affirms a real event at the beginning of our history (CCC 390): not a story about fruit, but the serpent's lie against the Father, and trust let die (CCC 397). Original sin is a real deprivation of the holiness and justice our first parents lost, "a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed', a state and not an act" (CCC 404), which is why it is not a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants (CCC 405), and why the Church baptizes infants (CCC 403). What remains is concupiscence, an inclination to evil in a nature "weakened and inclined to evil" that summons us to battle (CCC 405): not itself sin, but the reason for Romans 7. Dr. Bob Schuchts maps the shape of a wound, event, wound, lie, vow, fruit, a pastoral description, never inherited guilt. Is anyone coming for us? And the right words for what we find inside are never "a part of me I cannot fix." They are "a part of me that is hurt, and I cannot heal it on my own." A person is not a problem to be fixed; a person is a son or daughter to be loved.

"Wounded is not the same as destroyed, and no one climbs out alone."

An invitation to pray this week

One session of The Rescue Project with Fr. John Riccardo, free in the Hallow app: the session on our captivity, about a third of the way into the series. It tells tonight's story in his voice, in under twenty minutes. Pray it once, and when it names the wound, do not argue with it; just let it be named.



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Take it into your life

Once this week, when something breaks, your patience, a conversation, a promise you made to yourself, do not explain it away and do not pile on. Name it plainly to God: this is a part of me that is hurt, and I cannot heal it on my own. Then leave it in front of Him for one full minute without adding anything to it.

For the table

1. Where do you see the brokenness more clearly: in the world, or in yourself?
2. What has the word sin meant to you until tonight?
3. Tell the table about a time you tried to climb out of something under your own power.
4. If the damage is real but bounded, what does that change about how you look at yourself?

Next Tuesday, 10/20: The Unseen War. Who else is in this story?

The Unseen War

Who else is in this story?

Tonight

Reality includes pure spirits: what angels are, what they do, your guardian (CCC 328–336). The devil is real and really defeated: a fallen creature, never God's equal (CCC 391–395). The battle is real and it is fought in the heart: temptation, accusation, deception. “The whole of man's history has been the story of dour combat with the powers of evil” (Gaudium et Spes 37, at CCC 409), and the weapon is custody of the heart (CCC 2849). St. Ignatius's rules on consolation and desolation sit under the Church's own distinction between trial and temptation, and between being tempted and consenting (CCC 2847). Never change course in desolation. Bring a temptation into the light and it loses its grip. Any form of exorcism belongs to the Church (CCC 1673). Two errors to avoid: denial and fascination. None of what we are given for the fight is ours: prayer above all, and a victory already won at the Cross (CCC 2853).

“Sober, not frightened: the war is real, and the victory is already won.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session of Spiritual Warfare with Fr. Vincent Lampert, a working exorcist, in the Hallow app: the first. It is the sober version of tonight, no fascination and no fear. Listen once, then pray the St. Michael prayer aloud before you sleep.



Scan to open in Hallow
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Take it into your life

This week, when the fog rolls in, the vague unease, the itch to check something, the thought that you do not really belong here, name it once, out loud, and keep the plan you already made. If one temptation has a real hold on you, say it out loud to someone who can carry it: a confessor if you are baptized, or Fr. Timothy if your Baptism is still ahead of you. Nothing loosens a grip faster than light.

For the table

1. Before tonight, what did you think the Church taught about the devil?
2. Where does discouragement usually find you: what time of day, what circumstance?
3. Tell the table about a decision you made while you were low. How did it turn out?
4. What would sober rather than fascinated look like in your own life this month?

Next Tuesday, 10/27: Has God Spoken? If God is personal, has He said anything?

Has God Spoken?

If God is personal, has He said anything?

Tonight

If God is personal, permanent silence would be strange. He has not been silent. But revelation is not owed: “through an utterly free decision, God has revealed Himself and given Himself to man” (CCC 50). He reveals by deeds and words woven together in history. The covenant arc is a courtship, our first parents, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Israel, David, the prophets, “again and again You offered a covenant to man,” each carrying the promise further toward all the nations (CCC 54–64). Israel stands out: one God Who commands justice, prophets, hope against evidence. Scripture is a library whose writers were “true authors” and whose author is God (CCC 105–106), teaching “firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures” (CCC 107): never a book we are left alone with (CCC 108). Jeremiah promises a covenant written on hearts: the arc points at a Person.

“The whole story has been a courtship, and it is pointing at a Person.”

An invitation to pray this week

Tonight was about God speaking. This week, once, open Daily Mass Readings in the Hallow app, free, and listen to the Gospel the whole Church is hearing that day. Then sit for one minute with a single line of it. That is the entire invitation.



Scan to open in Hallow
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Take it into your life

This week, give the day's Mass readings four minutes: the same Scripture the whole Church is hearing. Before you start, say one sentence: You have something to say to me today. Then read slowly enough to be spoken to. If a line stops you, stay on that line and let the rest of it wait.

For the table

1. Has God ever seemed silent to you? What was that like?
2. What is your history with the Bible: a book you grew up with, avoided, or argued with?
3. If God speaks in deeds as well as words, where might He already have been speaking in your life?
4. What have you always wanted to ask about the Bible and never had a place to ask?

Next Tuesday, 11/03, is our second Prayer Night, Vocal Prayer That Comes Alive, open to the whole parish, and it takes the place of that week's session. Our next session is 11/10: Who Is Jesus? The Rescue. All the promises converge on one figure: Who is He?

Vocal Prayer That Comes Alive

Why words at all, and can prayers I did not write ever become mine?

Tonight

Why words at all? Because you are body and spirit: “we are body and spirit, and we experience the need to translate our feelings externally” (CCC 2702). God gave us a Church full of words for people who have none of their own. So rote is not the lesser tier. The Our Father is the school of all prayer, taken one phrase at a time, slowly, until it becomes yours. We look at the Rosary as vocal prayer that becomes meditative, and at how to pray it without treating it as a race. We introduce the Liturgy of the Hours simply: joining the prayer the whole Church is already praying. And we take the fear out of distraction: Dubay’s counsel is to return gently, as often as needed; the returning is the prayer. Then we pray one decade together, one phrase per bead, with silence between.

“Distraction is not failure. The returning is the prayer.”

An invitation to pray this week

One Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, free in the Hallow app, before bed, once this week. Ten minutes of words the whole Church is praying at the same hour. Let them be yours by meaning them.



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Take it into your life

Pray the Our Father once this week the way we prayed the decade: one phrase, then a breath of silence, then the next phrase. Notice which line you hurry past. That is usually the one with something in it for you. And when you drift, do not go hunting the distraction down; come back gently and keep going.

Try this week

Keep your time, your place, your minutes, and add one memorized prayer to them, prayed slowly. The Our Father, a Hail Mary, the Morning Offering, a single decade: any of them will do. Say the words as though you meant them rather than as though you were finishing them. We will ask how it went on 12/01.

Next Tuesday, 11/10: Session 8, Who Is Jesus? The Rescue • Next Prayer Night, 12/01: Meditation: God’s Word as Conversation

Who Is Jesus? The Rescue

Who is Jesus, and what did He come to do?

Tonight

Tonight the year arrives at its question. The historical bedrock: He existed and was crucified under Pontius Pilate; even non-Christian sources say so; the burial and the appearances reach us in a creed St. Paul says he “received,” fixed by A.D. 56 (CCC 639). His claim rules out “great teacher”: He forgives sins; “before Abraham was, I AM.” The Incarnation is not God in general but the Son, the Second Person, Who “assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it” (CCC 461); “true God and true man” (CCC 464). The Cross is no Father punishing a Son but one gift from both sides: the Father “handed His Son over to sinners in order to reconcile us with Himself,” and the Son “in freedom and love offered His life to His Father” (CCC 614). Then the empty tomb, the appearances, frightened people who died for what they saw. Sins forgiven, death defeated, adoption opened.

“If this is true, neutrality is not one of the options.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: The Rescue Project, session 9, Defeated Not Yet Destroyed, Fr. John Riccardo naming the three things Jesus' death and resurrection actually changed. Eighteen minutes, free, in the Hallow app. Pray it once this week, and then say His name out loud, on purpose, at least once a day.



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Take it into your life

This week, say His name out loud once a day, Jesus, and then finish one sentence in your own words: Who You are to me is... Stop there, even if the sentence will not finish. And if you are carrying something you think disqualifies you, bring that to Him too. There is no one He did not suffer for.

For the table

1. Who was Jesus to you before tonight: a teacher, a figure in a story, someone you kept at a distance?
2. Which is harder for you to accept: that He claimed to be God, or that He rose?
3. What in your life would sins forgiven, death defeated, adoption opened actually touch?
4. If neutrality is off the table, what is the next honest step for you?

Next Tuesday, 11/17: The Response. What does saying yes actually ask of me?

The Response

What does saying yes actually ask of me?

Tonight

Faith is not a feeling and not a blind leap: a personal entrusting of yourself to God and, inseparably, a free assent to everything He has revealed (CCC 150); believed on His authority, never “a blind impulse of the mind” (CCC 156). Conversion is metanoia: a change of mind and direction: grace initiates, freedom answers; nobody drifts into discipleship. Tonight we count the cost out loud and name the obstacles: doubts, family, moral situations, fear; and how the Church walks with each. Then Sunday. At the Rite of Acceptance you will be asked what you seek from the Church, answering in your own words; your sponsors and this assembly will answer for you; and you will be claimed for Christ and signed with His cross. Baptized candidates: you are received the same morning, in the same celebration, with the Rite of Welcoming. The invitation: say yes to what God has already begun in you; He moves first (CCC 153), and the yes is genuinely yours (CCC 160).

“He moves first, and the yes is genuinely yours.”

An invitation to pray this week

Day 1 of the Surrender Novena with Jonathan Roumie, ten minutes, in the Hallow app. Just the first day. Its refrain is the whole of tonight in one line: O Jesus, I surrender myself to You; take care of everything. If it carries you toward Sunday morning, the other days are there.



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Take it into your life

Before Sunday, write one sentence: what you ask of the Church. Not a paragraph and not a performance: the true sentence, in your own words. Say it once out loud, in the car or at the sink, so your own voice has heard it. If it will not come, tell God that, and bring the unfinished sentence anyway.

For the table

1. What do you seek from the Church? Try the sentence out loud here first.
2. What has this year already asked of you?
3. Who in your life is watching this decision, and how is that sitting with you?
4. Where are you still unsure, and can you name it here rather than carry it alone?

Sunday 11/22, here at St. Patrick's, at the 10:00 Mass, on the Solemnity of Christ the King: the Rite of Acceptance for the unbaptized and, in the same celebration, the Rite of Welcoming for the baptized candidates. Then Tuesday 11/24, The Company of the Rescued: The Saints. Who else is in this family?

The Company of the Rescued: The Saints

Who are the saints, and what do they have to do with a life like mine?

Tonight

Sunday's Rite of Acceptance made catechumens of those preparing for Baptism; the baptized among you were welcomed in the same celebration. Either way, what you joined is not an idea. It is a family spanning heaven and earth. A saint is not plaster perfection; a saint is a rescued sinner, fully transformed. Four portraits tonight: St. Peter the Apostle, St. Augustine the convert-intellect, St. Teresa of Ávila the mystic, and a modern, St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, canonized in 2025. They "do not cease to intercede with the Father for us" (CCC 956), and we honor them: a veneration that "differs essentially from the adoration" owed to God alone (CCC 971, 2132). We also begin looking for your Confirmation saint. Holiness is the point of everything else this year; the saints are the evidence that the Rescue works. And hear this plainly: the saint version of you is the real you. Sin, brokenness and everything Satan offers are the strange things, the deviation; being holy is being normal. In Christ "the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty" (CCC 1701). Grace does not replace you; it gives you back.

"A saint is not plaster perfection: a saint is a rescued sinner, fully transformed."

An invitation to pray this week

One day: Saints in 7 Days, Day 1, on St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, in the Hallow app. He was twenty-four, ordinary and joyful, and canonized in 2025. Pray it once this week and ask him to help you find the saint whose name you will carry.



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Take it into your life

Sometime this week, ask one saint for something specific: out loud, by name, the way you would ask a friend in the next room. Then find out one thing about that person's actual life: how they died, what they were afraid of, what they loved. Bring the name to the table next week, even if you are not sure yet.

For the table

1. When you hear the word saint, whose face comes to mind first, and why that one?
2. Sunday's rite, or the one still coming: what was it like to be named and claimed in front of a room full of people?
3. Is there someone in your own family or past who showed you what holiness looks like without ever using the word?
4. "A rescued sinner, fully transformed" (which half of that is harder to believe about yourself?)

Next Tuesday, 12/01, is our third Prayer Night: Meditation: God's Word as Conversation, open to the whole parish. Does God still speak, and can I learn to listen? Session 11, The Church: Bride and Body, follows on 12/08.

Meditation: God's Word as Conversation

Does God still speak in Scripture: to me, now?

Tonight

Advent's gift is that God speaks now, in Scripture, to you: not only to people long dead. So tonight we learn lectio divina, in four movements: read, meditate, pray, contemplate (CCC 2654), taught simply enough to do here in the room. Dubay's caution runs underneath all of it. Meditation is a means, not the goal, and a method is only a guide (CCC 2707); we are not studying a text, we are meeting a Person. We talk honestly about what to do when nothing happens, and what to do when something does. And we help you choose your material: the Sunday Gospel, a Psalm, or the Advent readings. One passage, not a program. Then we pray lectio together on the Annunciation, Lk 1:26–38, with real silence in it.

"We are not studying a text; we are meeting a Person."

An invitation to pray this week

One session: How to Pray, session 2, Lectio Divina, with Jeff Cavins and Fr. Mike Schmitz, twenty-one minutes, in the Hallow app. Then, once this week, do it yourself with Sunday's Gospel: read slowly, stop where you stop, say what rises, and be quiet.



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Take it into your life

Take one sentence from Sunday's Gospel into the week: the one that snagged you, not the one you think you should have chosen. Put it in a pocket or on the lock screen. Say it once in the morning and once at the sink. Advent is four weeks long, and one sentence is enough to be changed by.

Try this week

Ten minutes daily with this Sunday's Gospel, through Advent, at the time and place you chose. Read it slowly, stop where you stop, say whatever rises, and then be quiet for a while. Nothing has to happen. If nothing does, you have still spent ten minutes with the Person Who is speaking. We will ask how it went on 01/05.

Next Tuesday, 12/08, Session 11, The Church: Bride and Body • Next Prayer Night, 01/05, Contemplation and the Universal Call

The Church: Bride and Body

Why a Church at all: why not just Jesus and me?

Tonight

The parish kept the Immaculate Conception at noon today; one of us opens by telling their story. Then the question: why organized religion at all? Because the Rescue is corporate: God saves a people, not isolated souls. The Catechism's images, People of God, Body of Christ, Bride, Temple of the Holy Spirit (CCC 781–801), and the pastoral pictures that follow, Mother and field hospital: each corrects a distortion. The four marks: one, holy, catholic, apostolic. The Lord made Simon alone the rock and gave him the keys (CCC 881); the Pope remains “the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity” of the Church (CCC 882), the line of bishops is how that office reaches us, and infallibility is narrow, engaged only when a doctrine of faith or morals is proclaimed “by a definitive act” (CCC 891). Then the scandal objection: treasure in earthen vessels. And the feast: Mary, the icon of what the Church is.

“God does not save isolated souls. He saves a people, and He is making you one of them.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session of Advent Pray25 from our parish page, whichever day you open it this week. The whole parish is praying the same words on the same days; that is the Body of Christ in practice, and you are part of it.



Our parish page
[Tap to open](#)

Take it into your life

This week, look for the Church in one concrete face: whoever taught you to pray, whoever brought you here, the parishioner you have never met. Say a word to them. Then, once, pray for the parish itself by name: this building, these people, the ones who come at 10:00 on Sunday and the ones who have stopped coming.

For the table

1. What did you believe about organized religion before tonight, and where did that come from?
2. For those accepted or welcomed at the door on 11/22, what has stayed with you from that morning?
3. Which image lands hardest for you: People of God, Body, Bride, Temple, Mother, field hospital? Why that one?
4. Has the Church ever wounded you, or someone you love? What would you want said about that here?

Next Tuesday, 12/15: How Grace Reaches Us: The Sacramental Economy. How does God's life actually reach a person made of flesh? We meet in the church itself and walk it.

How Grace Reaches Us: The Sacramental Economy

How does God's life actually reach a person made of flesh?

Tonight

Tonight we meet in the church, not the hall, and walk it: font, ambo, altar, tabernacle, confessional, sanctuary lamp, the vessels and vestments in the sacristy; the same church where the catechumens were signed with the cross and the candidates welcomed on 11/22. The principle underneath: the Son Who took flesh keeps using matter; water, oil, bread, touch, words. A sacrament is an efficacious sign; it does what it says (CCC 1127–1131). The grace is Christ's, not the minister's: it acts “independently of the personal holiness of the minister” (CCC 1128). That is the liberating half. The other half is in the same sentence: “the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them.” Valid is not the same as fruitful. The seven, mapped onto the arc of a life: birth, food, healing, maturity, mission, love, death. Liturgy is heaven touching earth. Over six sessions the friendship gets concrete.

“The Son Who took flesh keeps using matter: water, oil, bread, touch, words.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: A Biblical Walk Through the Mass, session 1, with Dr. Edward Sri, in the Hallow app. It shows why the Mass is built the way it is, which is tonight's point in miniature: God reaches us through water, oil, bread and words. Listen once before Sunday.



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Take it into your life

This week, notice one ordinary material thing that carries more than itself: a meal someone cooked for you, a hand on your shoulder, a ring, a photograph. Stop long enough to say out loud what it carries. Then at Mass on Sunday, watch the water, the oil, the bread, the hands. The same God is at work in both, and He has never dealt with us any other way.

For the table

1. Which object in the church tonight surprised you, or had you never really noticed?
2. Where in your life has something physical carried something spiritual: a meal, a ring, a letter, a touch?
3. “Valid is not the same as fruitful.” What do you think disposes a person to receive well?
4. If matter matters this much to God, what does that say about your own body?

Next Tuesday, 12/22: Baptism: Death and Birth. What does the water actually do, and what does it not do?

Baptism: Death and Birth

What does the water actually do, and what does it not do?

Tonight

Three days from Christmas, and the door: Baptism plunges a person into Christ's death and resurrection (Rom 6:3–4). What it does: every sin forgiven, original and personal; adoption as sons and daughters; the indwelling Spirit; an indelible mark (CCC 1263, 1265, 1272). What it does not do: concupiscence, the inclination to sin, remains, and “cannot harm those who do not consent” (CCC 1264). You will still be tempted; that is not a sign it did not work. Identity before activity: beloved son, beloved daughter; where the father-wound begins to heal. Why infants (CCC 1250); why only once: the seal (CCC 1272); baptism of desire and of blood, because “God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but He Himself is not bound by His sacraments” (CCC 1257). For children who die unbaptized the Church entrusts them to God's mercy and lets us hope (CCC 1261): not pronouncing, not pretending. A neophyte tells us about the font.

“Identity comes before activity: beloved son, beloved daughter, before you have done anything at all.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session, and you may have prayed it before: Healing Wounds, session 1, Our Baptismal Identity (Chosen and Beloved), in the Hallow app. Pray it this week as someone about to be baptized, or as someone who already has been. Baptism is the day the words chosen and beloved became a fact about you.



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Take it into your life

Find out when and where you were baptized, if you were, and who stood up for you: ask someone in your family if you can. If you are preparing for Baptism, write 03/27 somewhere you will see it every day. Then once this week, say your own name out loud and put “beloved son” or “beloved daughter” after it, and notice what rises.

For the table

1. What did you think Baptism was before tonight: a naming, a tradition, a beginning?
2. “You will still be tempted; that is not a sign it did not work.” Where have you read a struggle as evidence of failure?
3. Who in your life has stood up for you the way a godparent is meant to?
4. If you could hear “beloved son” or “beloved daughter” said over you and believe it, what would change this week?

Next Tuesday, 12/29: The Eucharist: Source and Summit. We meet in Christmas week: what did He mean by “This IS my body”?

The Eucharist: Source and Summit

What did He mean by “This IS my body”?

Tonight

Christmas week, and we are glad you came. In His own words: “This IS my body”; and John 6, where He let them walk away. Transubstantiation, plainly: what a thing is versus how it appears. From the earliest centuries the Fathers “strongly affirmed the faith of the Church in the efficacy of the Word of Christ” (CCC 1375); the Eucharistic miracles are signposts, not proofs. Sacrifice, meal, Presence, “at the same time, and inseparably” (CCC 1382): three aspects of one mystery (CCC 1356–1401). Communion gives union with Christ, venial sin forgiven, charity increased, glory pledged (CCC 1391–1396). Who may receive: “the Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins; that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation” (CCC 1395); “anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion” (CCC 1385). For those not yet baptized or not yet received, the hunger itself is the preparation. And it has a date.

“He let them walk away rather than soften it. That tells you how literally He meant it.”

An invitation to pray this week

One day: Day 1 of the Eucharistic Novena with Archbishop Paul Coakley, free in the Hallow app. It is short enough to pray in the pew before Mass on Sunday. The ache you named in September has food.



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Take it into your life

Once this week, come and sit in front of the tabernacle for ten minutes. Leave the book at home. Name the one hunger you would most like fed, out loud, or under your breath, and then stay there without asking for anything else. If the church is locked, sit in the parking lot and do it anyway.

For the table

1. John 6 cost Him disciples. Why do you think He did not explain it away?
2. What were you taught, or what did you assume, about what Communion is?
3. Where in your life are you actually hungry right now? Name it as plainly as you can.
4. For those who receive: what has it become over the years? For those who do not yet: what do you imagine it will be?

Next Tuesday, 01/05, is our fourth Prayer Night: Contemplation and the Universal Call, open to the whole parish. Is that kind of prayer really meant for someone like me? Session 15, The Holy Mass: Entering the Sacrifice, follows on 01/12.

Contemplation and the Universal Call

Is contemplation for people like me?

Tonight

The Church's teaching comes first tonight: every baptized person is called to the fullness of Christian life and to ever more intimate union with Christ (CCC 2013–2014; LG 40). Fire Within builds on that: contemplation is not for specialists, and Dubay argues it is the normal development of a prayer life that keeps going. We walk St. Teresa of Avila's interior castle in five minutes: prayer has stages, and you are somewhere in them. St. John of the Cross names the transition, when meditation goes dry and simple presence becomes possible, and gives three signs that God is drawing you deeper, so people can recognize it rather than panic, and so no one diagnoses himself alone.

Contemplation is infused: God's gift, never a technique we achieve. What we can do is remove obstacles and stay faithful. Then fifteen minutes of simple loving attention to the Lord.

"Contemplation is God's gift, never a technique we achieve."

An invitation to pray this week

No app this week. Once, set a timer for fifteen minutes, sit where you pray, and keep a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus with few words and no effort to empty your mind. When thoughts come, turn back to Him. The timer holds the time so you do not have to.

Take it into your life

Once this week, notice whether prayer has quietly gotten simpler: fewer words, less to think about, more wanting to just be there. That is not decline. Notice the opposite too: whether it has gone flat and cold. Either way, write down what you noticed and bring it to Fr. Timothy or to someone who prays. No one sorts this out alone.

Try this week

Keep your daily time, and once this week, extend one of those sessions to fifteen minutes of silence: a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus (CCC 2715), few words, and no effort to empty your mind. When thoughts come, turn back to Him. Set a timer so you are not watching the clock. We will ask how it went on 02/02.

Next Tuesday, 01/12, Session 15, The Holy Mass: Entering the Sacrifice • Next Prayer Night, 02/02, Ask Like a Child: Petition and Intercession

The Holy Mass: Entering the Sacrifice

What is actually happening at Mass, and how do I pray it instead of watch it?

Tonight

A new year, and one of us opens by telling their story. Then the Mass. Calvary is not repeated at the altar; it is made present: re-presented (CCC 1366–1367). We walk it: Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, presentation of the gifts, Eucharistic Prayer, Communion, and the Sending. Two great parts that “form one single act of worship” (CCC 1346). We ask why each piece is what it is, and why posture, silence and the responses are prayer your body makes. Then the turn: how to pray the Mass rather than attend it; interior participation, offering yourself when the gifts are carried up. Sunday is love's rhythm before it is ever a rule. It is also a rule: the faithful “are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason ... or dispensed by their own pastor” (CCC 2181).

“The obligation is not the reason to come; it is the Church making sure love keeps its appointment.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: A Biblical Walk Through the Mass, session 2, with Dr. Edward Sri, in the Hallow app. Then on Sunday, bring your own offering to the paten: a week, a worry, a person. Say it silently as the gifts pass.



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Take it into your life

This Sunday, choose one moment and stay wide awake for it: the procession with the gifts. When the bread and wine go up, put something of your own on the paten: a week, a worry, a person, the thing you cannot fix. Say it silently as it passes. Then watch what is done with it.

For the table

1. What part of the Mass have you never understood, and been slightly embarrassed to ask about?
2. When have you gone somewhere out of obligation and been glad afterward that you went?
3. “Pray the Mass rather than attend it.” What would have to change for you on a Sunday morning?
4. What would you like to hand over at the offertory this week?

Next Tuesday, 01/19: Confirmation: Power from on High. Who is the Holy Spirit, and what does He do in an ordinary person?

Confirmation: Power from on High

Who is the Holy Spirit, and what does He do in an ordinary person?

Tonight

Pentecost, personalized: the same Spirit Who filled the upper room, given to you (CCC 1302). Confirmation seals, strengthens, completes baptismal grace, and deputizes for public witness. The seven gifts, wisdom to fear of the Lord, are not given tonight for the first time: they come with baptismal grace (CCC 1266), and Confirmation “increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us” (CCC 1303). The sign is chrism on the forehead, given with the laying on of the hand, and the words “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1300). The minister is ordinarily the bishop (CCC 1313), and, by the Church's own law, the priest who baptizes an adult, or who receives someone already baptized into full communion, so that initiation is completed in one celebration (CCC 1312). Not graduation but sending: Confirmation is the sacrament most ordered to mission. Saint names and sponsors settle tonight; we also walk the Vigil sequence.

“The seven gifts are not a diploma; they are a Person.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: How to Pray, session 9, Come, Holy Spirit, in the Hallow app. It is the prayer the Church will make over you at the Vigil, prayed slowly now. Once this week is enough.



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Take it into your life

Name one place in your life where you have no power of your own: a conversation you keep avoiding, a habit, a person you cannot reach. Once a day this week, ask the Holy Spirit for exactly that, by name, in one sentence. Then do the smallest next thing in front of you and see whether the room moves.

For the table

1. Which of the seven gifts do you most want, and which one do you least understand?
2. Looking back, where can you already see the Spirit at work in your life?
3. Who are you considering as your saint and your sponsor, and what drew you to them?
4. Sending, not graduation: what do you think you are being sent to do?

Next Tuesday, 01/26: Love Given Away: Marriage & Holy Orders. What is love for, once it stops being about me?

Love Given Away: Marriage & Holy Orders

What is love for, once it stops being about me?

Tonight

One category on purpose: the sacraments at the service of communion, love that exists to be given away (CCC 1534). Marriage from the beginning: Genesis 2, raised by Christ; free, total, faithful, fruitful. God's design for sexuality; the family as an image of the Trinity and of Christ-and-Church. Holy Orders in three degrees, one sacrament: bishop and priest share Christ's own priesthood, acting in persona Christi Capitis (CCC 1554, 1563); the deacon is ordained "not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry" (CCC 1569), configured to the Christ Who made Himself servant of all. Celibacy is spousal, not anti-marriage. Both answer Session 4's ache for self-gift. A declaration of nullity is the Church finding "that the marriage never existed" (CCC 1629), not a Catholic divorce: a consummated sacramental marriage "can never be dissolved" (CCC 1640). Where a situation is irregular, the Catechism asks "attentive solicitude, so that they do not consider themselves separated from the Church" (CCC 1651).

"The ache is for self-gift, and here are its two sacramental forms."

An invitation to pray this week

One day: Day 1 of the Marriage Novena with Rachel and Jason Bulman, in the Hallow app. Pray it for your own marriage if you have one, and for the marriages that raised you if you do not: your parents, your neighbors, the couple three pews ahead.



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Take it into your life

Ask one married couple you respect, your parents, your neighbors, the couple three pews ahead, what carried them through their hardest year. Listen without offering anything back. And if your own situation is complicated, come and talk with Fr. Timothy this week, at his desk during table time or on a Saturday; no one's case is decided in a group.

For the table

1. What did you learn about love from the household you grew up in, for good or for ill?
2. "Love that exists to be given away." Where have you seen that up close?
3. What have you heard about annulments, and what would you like cleared up?
4. Celibacy, or a lifelong marriage: which is harder for you to imagine, and why?

Next Tuesday, 02/02, is our fifth Prayer Night: Ask Like a Child: Petition and Intercession, open to the whole parish. What do we do with the prayers that seem to go unanswered? Session 18, The Sacraments of Healing: Confession & Anointing, follows on 02/09; Shrove Tuesday, the night before Lent begins.

Ask Like a Child: Petition and Intercession

Is it childish to ask God for things, and what about the times He does not answer?

Tonight

We meet on the Presentation of the Lord, and Simeon sets the tone: he waited his whole life and was not disappointed; prayer and patience together. Then the night's argument. Jesus commands us to ask, repeatedly and shamelessly, "Ask, and it will be given you" (Lk 11:9), and He tells us about a widow who would not stop knocking (Lk 18:1-8). Petition is not spiritual immaturity. We face the honest problem of unanswered prayer, and what the saints actually say about it, without platitudes. Then intercession, which belongs to the common priesthood of the baptized: Christ is the one intercessor with the Father (CCC 2634), and in Him you are given a share in His own prayer for the people you love. We finish with the most feared and most fruitful skill in the series: praying aloud, briefly, in pairs.

"Ask, and it will be given you" (Lk 11:9)."

An invitation to pray this week

One small thing: pray for one intention that someone else has posted on our parish page in the Hallow app. When you tap to pray for it, they are told someone did. That is intercession in its plainest form.



Our parish page
[Tap to open](#)

Take it into your life

Ask for something specific this week: not a general blessing, an actual thing, named out loud. And then, once, pray out loud with another person: your spouse, a friend, whoever is in the car with you. Twenty seconds is plenty. It is the most feared skill in this series and the one that changes the most rooms.

Try this week

Name three people and pray for them daily, by name, for a month. Put the names where you will see them: on the mirror, the phone, the dashboard. Christ is the one intercessor with the Father; when you pray for these three, you are praying inside His prayer for them. Keep your time, your place, your minutes.

Next Tuesday, 02/09, Session 18, The Sacraments of Healing: Confession & Anointing • Next Prayer Night, 03/02, The Desert: Dryness, Distraction and Fidelity

The Sacraments of Healing: Confession & Anointing

Where do I take the things I cannot undo?

Tonight

Shrove Tuesday by design: the mercy that will carry us through Lent, taught the night before it begins. Jesus forgave and healed everywhere He went, and did not stop when He ascended (Jn 20:22–23). Only God forgives sins; He “gives this power to men to exercise in His name” (CCC 1441). Confession, walked through: examination, contrition, confession, absolution, penance. What is confessed: “all mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious” (CCC 1456). Mortal sin needs grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent together (CCC 1857): usually fewer than fear suggests. The seal is absolute. Why tell a priest? Because you are a body. Then Anointing of the Sick: “not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death” (CCC 1514); serious illness, a serious operation, or the frailty of age (CCC 1514–1515), and it may be repeated. Not for every ache; the Christian's last sacrament is Viaticum (CCC 1524–1525).

“Embodied sin needs embodied absolution: the words are said out loud, and you hear them.”

An invitation to pray this week

One chaplet: the Divine Mercy Chaplet, free in the Hallow app, about ten minutes. Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday. Pray it once this week for the person you find hardest to forgive, yourself included.



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Take it into your life

Between now and Ash Wednesday, take twenty quiet minutes and write down what you would say if there were no consequences. Not a list for anyone else: just the truth, in your own handwriting. Then carry it into Lent. If something on that page frightens you, that is exactly the thing to bring to Fr. Timothy's desk on a Tuesday, or to a Saturday at 1:30.

For the table

1. What do you expect to feel walking into a confessional, and where did that expectation come from?
2. Who has forgiven you in a way you did not expect? What did it change?
3. “Usually fewer things than fear suggests.” What has fear been telling you about your own past?
4. Where in your life, or your family's, do you most want healing this Lent?

Tomorrow, Ash Wednesday 02/10, Lent begins. Sunday 02/14, the First Sunday of Lent, is the Rite of Sending at our 10:00 Mass and, that afternoon, the Rite of Election with the Archbishop (venue and hour to be announced): those preparing for Baptism become the elect. Then next Tuesday, 02/16: Session 19, The Cross & Redemptive Suffering. What is God doing with my pain?

The Cross & Redemptive Suffering

If God is good, what is He doing with my suffering?

Tonight

Lent's first week, and we start where Lent starts: forty days in the desert, where God gets our attention. The problem of pain returns from Session 5, and the Catechism gives no quick answer. It says that God is in no way the cause of moral evil (CCC 311), that He permits it out of respect for the freedom He gave, and that He draws good out of it. Then the answer stops being an argument and becomes a Person: the Son freely offering Himself on the Cross out of love for the Father and for us; never the Father punishing the Son. Which is why pain offered becomes a share in the Rescue (Col 1:24): His sacrifice is unique and complete, and what is "lacking" is our participation in it, never its sufficiency. In our suffering He seeks the broken and tender places. We close with the Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens, for the elect only.

"He did not explain our suffering; He entered it and made it a doorway."

An invitation to pray this week

One Stations of the Cross with Bishop Barron, free in the Hallow app. Pray it once this week, on the day your own suffering feels heaviest, and let Him carry it beside you.



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Take it into your life

Before Sunday, choose one Lenten discipline and name what it is for. Not the thing that would be easiest to give up: the thing that has some grip on you. Write it inside the cover of your journal with today's date. When it is hard on Thursday, that is the discipline working, not failing. If you are not sure what to choose, come find Fr. Timothy at the desk during table time.

For the table

1. When you have suffered, did it feel more like a door or a wall? What made the difference?
2. Where did you first learn what to do with pain, and who taught you?
3. What changes if the Father was not punishing the Son on that Cross?
4. What are you considering for Lent this year, and why that one thing?

Next Tuesday, 02/23: Inner Healing I: Our Story, Wounds and the Father's Love. What has my story done to me, and what does the Father want to say into it?

Inner Healing I: Our Story, Wounds and the Father's Love

What has my story done to me, and what does the Father want to say into it?

Tonight

The first of two nights on healing begins with ground rules. Engage your own story with kindness and curiosity, without self-censorship, and hold four things steady while you do. Healing is grace and never technique. No healing is promised: “even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses” (CCC 1508). Confession is where sins are forgiven. And nothing you inherit from your family is a curse the Church asks you to break. Healing is a lifelong journey toward communion rather than a divine fixing: God restores identity, not just behavior. We trace how a wound works: event, wound, lie, vow, fruit. The seven deadly wounds and their signature lies are Dr. Schuchts's pastoral map, not a teaching of the Church. Then the Father's love, the truth that displaces the lie. A parish prayer team is here afterward to intercede: not deliverance ministry, and never a substitute for Confession or for professional care.

“God restores identity, not just behavior.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: Healing Wounds, session 2, The Ache of Our Hearts, with Dr. Bob Schuchts and Sr. Miriam James, in the Hallow app. It prays the wound we named tonight without rushing to close it. Pray it once, and bring whatever surfaces to your Saturday with Fr. Timothy, or to his desk on a Tuesday.



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Take it into your life

This week, catch the sentence. When something small goes wrong and your reaction is much larger than the thing, stop and ask what you just told yourself about yourself. Write that sentence down in your own words. Do not argue with it yet. Then read it back and ask the Father what He says instead, and wait long enough to hear an answer.

For the table

1. What is one good thing from your childhood you are still grateful for?
2. Where did you first learn what you are worth?
3. When a small thing sets you off, what do you think the size of the reaction is telling you?
4. What would it be like to be loved by God as a father, and not only believed in?

Next Tuesday, 03/02, is our sixth Prayer Night, open to the whole parish, The Desert: Dryness, Distraction and Fidelity: what do we do when prayer goes dry? Session 21, Inner Healing II, follows on 03/09, and opens with the Presentation of the Creed to the elect. The first two Scrutinies for the elect fall on Sundays 02/28 and 03/07.

The Desert: Dryness, Distraction and Fidelity

What do I do when prayer goes dry?

Tonight

Lent's honesty: the desert is where God leads His friends, not evidence that you have failed. So tonight we draw the lines carefully. The dark night is not simple tepidity; it is not ordinary suffering; and it is not depression, which is an illness and not a stage of prayer. Dubay and St. John of the Cross give real criteria rather than guesswork, and no one diagnoses himself alone. Then the rule that saves prayer lives: never abandon the practice during desolation. Fidelity outranks feeling (CCC 2731). We take consolation and desolation back up from Session 6 and apply them to the prayer chair. And the Creed becomes the prayer of the desert: the faith we profess when we cannot feel it. (The elect receive the Creed formally next Tuesday, 03/09, at the start of Session 21.) We pray it together, slowly, as an act of trust in the dark.

"Never abandon the practice during desolation. Fidelity outranks feeling."

An invitation to pray this week

One session of Lent Pray40 from our parish page, on the day this week when prayer feels driest. Not the day it feels good; the dry one. Fidelity on that day is the whole lesson of tonight.



Our parish page
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Take it into your life

On the day it feels pointless, go anyway, and notice what you do with the disappointment. Notice, too, whether what you are carrying is dryness in prayer or something heavier. If it is heavier, say so out loud to someone: Fr. Timothy at his desk during table time, a doctor, a friend. Nobody sorts this out alone.

Try this week

Keep the same time and the same place through Lent, especially on the days it feels pointless. Try not to shorten it on the empty days; that is the day fidelity counts for something. And pray the Creed once a day, slowly, whether or not you feel a word of it. We will ask how it went on 04/06.

Next Tuesday, 03/09, Session 21, Inner Healing II: Healing and Forgiveness • Next Prayer Night, 04/06, Praying Always: An Ordinary Day Made Prayer

Inner Healing II: Healing and Forgiveness

Can I forgive what I cannot forget?

Tonight

We begin with a rite: the Presentation of the Creed to the elect (OCIA 157–163), in its simplest form, a brief celebration of the word. The Church hands them the faith they will profess at the font; the rest of us stand as witnesses. (The rite places it in the week after the First Scrutiny; that Tuesday was a Prayer Night, so it moved one week.) Then the teaching. God does the healing; we make ourselves available. Cooperation, not technique. Then forgiveness, defined first by what it is not: not excusing, not forgetting, not necessarily reconciling. It is an act of the will, not a feeling: naming the debt, feeling it honestly, choosing release, blessing the debtor. It is not in our power to forget an offense; the Holy Spirit is the One Who turns the injury into compassion (CCC 2843). The center of the night is a guided prayer inviting Jesus into one memory: an invitation, never a technique. No one is promised an experience, and anyone may simply sit in the silence. One of our own gives their testimony. And we prepare for your Saturday with Fr. Timothy: how to examine a whole life. For the baptized among us that is sacramental Confession; for the elect, Baptism at the Vigil forgives every sin and every punishment for sin (CCC 1263), so their Saturday is silence, Scripture and prayer.

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, long before it is a feeling.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: Fr. Frankie Cicero's Confession Guide, free in the Hallow app, a gentle examination of conscience in a single sitting. If you are baptized, pray it before your Saturday with Fr. Timothy. If your Baptism is coming at Easter, pray it as a way of telling God your story; nothing you name is held against you.



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Take it into your life

This week, name one debt. Write the person's name, and underneath it what you are actually owed: the apology, the childhood, the money, the years. Then say out loud that you hand that debt to the Lord. You may feel nothing at all when you do it. Do it anyway. If the feeling changes later, that is His work and not yours.

For the table

1. Who taught you how to forgive, or how not to?
2. What is the difference, in your own experience, between forgiving someone and excusing them?
3. Is there a memory you would be willing to let Jesus stand inside? You do not have to say which.
4. What are you hoping for from Saturday, and what are you dreading?

Next Tuesday, 03/16: The Four Last Things. What happens when I die, and why is that a Lenten question? The third and last Scrutiny for the elect is this Sunday, 03/14.

The Four Last Things

What happens when I die?

Tonight

Tonight opens with the Presentation of the Lord's Prayer to the elect (OCIA 178–184), the week after the Third Scrutiny: the prayer of the children, given to those about to become children of God. Then Lent's honesty: you will die once, not many times. There is no reincarnation (CCC 1013), and that fact, rightly ordered, is freeing rather than frightening. Judgment comes twice. At the moment of death each of us meets Christ; at His return all the dead rise and the truth of every life is laid bare. The Judge is the One Who died for you: hope, not terror. Hell is real, chosen, never imposed, because love has to permit refusal. Purgatory is the final purification of those who die in God's grace and are already assured of heaven: not a second chance, and nothing like the punishment of the damned; this is why we pray for the dead (2 Macc 12:46). And heaven is not clouds and harps: the Beatific Vision, theosis, being made partakers of the divine nature, and the resurrection of the body.

"The Judge is the One Who died for you."

An invitation to pray this week

One session: How to Pray, session 1, the Our Father, in the Hallow app. Pray it this week for someone who has died. Thy kingdom come is a prayer about the Four Last Things, and you have known how to say it all along.



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Take it into your life

Pray for one of your dead by name this week: the grandmother, the friend, the person you have not thought about in years. Once a night, out loud, ask God to bring them to Himself. Then look at next week's calendar and ask one question of it: if I met Christ on Thursday, would I want this week back the way I have planned it?

For the table

1. When did death first become real to you?
2. What were you taught about what happens afterward, and where did that come from?
3. Does meeting Christ as Judge frighten you or steady you? Be honest.
4. Who among your dead will you pray for this week?

Next Tuesday, 03/23: The Triduum: What to Expect. What actually happens across those three days, and where do I stand inside them? Palm Sunday is 03/21.

The Triduum: What to Expect

What actually happens across these three days, and where do I stand inside them?

Tonight

Holy Week. The Triduum is one liturgy in three movements across three days. Holy Thursday: the mandatum (the washing of feet), the institution of the Eucharist and of the ministerial priesthood, the altar of repose and the watching. Good Friday: with Holy Saturday, one of only two days in the year on which no Mass is celebrated; the Passion proclaimed, the great intercessions, the veneration of the Cross, and Communion from the Sacrament reserved the night before. Then the Vigil, in four parts: the fire and the Exsultet (the Easter Proclamation), the readings' sweep, the baptismal liturgy, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. For the elect it is one culminating celebration of three sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation and first Holy Communion (CCC 1233). The already-baptized candidates make their Profession of Faith, are received into full communion, and are confirmed at the same Mass. Logistics are settled tonight and practiced Saturday, including how Communion is received here.

“Three days, one liturgy, and this year you are inside it, not watching it.”

An invitation to pray this week

On Good Friday, 03/26, pray Day 1 of the Divine Mercy Novena with Jonathan Roumie, free in the Hallow app. Just the first day. If it carries you through the Octave to Divine Mercy Sunday, good; if only the first day, that is enough.



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Take it into your life

Before you leave tonight, open your calendar and clear what can be cleared on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Tell whoever needs telling that you will be at church. Then sometime on Friday, after the veneration of the Cross, stay and sit for five minutes with nothing to do and nothing to say. That silence is part of the liturgy, not a gap in it.

For the table

1. What are you most looking forward to, and what are you most nervous about?
2. Who is coming for you on Saturday night, and have you asked them yet?
3. What has this year cost you? Name one thing.
4. What do you want to say to God at the Vigil?

Saturday 03/27 is the Holy Saturday Retreat, 10:00 to 2:30, with the Preparation Rites for the elect at noon, the Recitation of the Creed and the Ephphetha, whose name means “be opened”, and the Easter Vigil that night. Then Tuesday, 03/30: Triduum Testimonies. What did God just do, and what do I do with the week after?

Triduum Testimonies

What did God just do, and what do I do with the week after?

Tonight

We are three days into the Easter Octave and tonight the newly initiated speak: the neophytes baptized at the Vigil, and those received into full communion. Table by table, the sharing is of what God did rather than of what we felt: because grace is not measured by how Saturday night landed. Then the team witnesses back, and tells you what we watched happen in you across the year. Mystagogy gets its name explained: fifty days of unpacking the mysteries you now carry, going from the sign to the thing signified (CCC 1075). And one warning, given in advance because it is easier to survive when it is expected: post-sacrament flatness is normal. We lay out the rest of the Easter season tonight, beginning with Divine Mercy Sunday, 04/04.

“Tell what God did, not what you felt.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: He Is Risen, session 1, with Fr. John Burns and Lauren Daigle, in the Hallow app. Pray it once this week, in the light of what happened to you on Saturday night.



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Take it into your life

One evening this week, tell one person outside this room what happened to you on Saturday night. Not the theology of it. What happened. Keep it to three minutes; you will be telling it for the rest of your life and this is the first draft. If you were received into full communion rather than baptized, tell that story: it is yours, and it is not a lesser one.

For the table

1. What is the one moment from the Vigil you keep coming back to?
2. What did you see on someone else's face that night?
3. What has been different since, and what has been exactly the same?
4. What are you afraid will fade, and what would help you keep it?

Next Tuesday, 04/06, is our seventh Prayer Night, open to the whole parish, Praying Always: An Ordinary Day Made Prayer: can a commute be prayer? Session 25, Mystagogy: What Did We Receive? follows on 04/13.

Praying Always: An Ordinary Day Made Prayer

How could an ordinary Tuesday become prayer?

Tonight

Easter keeps showing us the risen Christ in ordinary places: He turns up at breakfast on a beach. He is present in the mundane, not despite it. So tonight: “Pray constantly” (1 Thess 5:17), which the Fathers render “without ceasing” (CCC 2742). That is not a call for more minutes but for a different relationship to the minutes you already have. We meet Brother Lawrence and the practice of the presence of God: short aspirations threaded through a day. We learn the Ignatian Examen as a five-minute nightly habit, the most portable prayer in the tradition. And we take up work, commute, dishes, traffic and suffering as offering: the ordinary path of sanctification. Then we pray the Examen together, guided, start to finish.

“Not more minutes: a different relationship to the minutes you already have.”

An invitation to pray this week

One Daily Examen, free in the Hallow app, about ten minutes, at the end of one day this week. Where was He today, and where did I miss Him? That question, asked nightly, is how an ordinary day becomes prayer.



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Take it into your life

Pick three ordinary moments you cannot avoid, the commute, the sink, the last email of the day, and turn each one into a single sentence to God. Not a paragraph. A sentence. Then, once, offer something that actually costs you: the traffic, the aching back, the conversation you did not want. Say who you are offering it for.

Try this week

Pray the Examen nightly for the rest of the Easter season: five minutes, in bed if that is where it will actually happen. Give thanks, ask for light, walk back through the day, name one thing you are sorry for, and ask for tomorrow. Keep your morning time as well; the Examen is the day's other bookend. We will ask how it went on 05/04.

Next Tuesday, 04/13, Session 25, Mystagogy: What Did We Receive? • Next Prayer Night, 05/04, The Fire Within: Union with God

Mystagogy: What Did We Receive?

What did I actually receive, and what does it change on Monday?

Tonight

The old method, and the best one: now that you have tasted, look again. Mystagogy is catechesis from inside (CCC 1075). So we re-read the Vigil sign by sign: the water and the chrism, by which Christ Himself acted, and the fire, the white garment and the candle, which proclaim what He did (CCC 1262, 1265–1266). We name plainly which signs belonged to the baptisms and which to the reception into full communion: Baptism is given once for all and is never repeated (CCC 1271–1272). Then Monday morning. Living Eucharistically means letting Communion change an ordinary week. Baptismal identity in practice means living as the beloved on the days you do not feel beloved. And we build the sacramental rhythm that carries all of it, confession, daily Mass, adoration, sustainable rather than heroic. A neophyte from a previous year tells us how the first six months actually went.

“Now that you have tasted, look again.”

An invitation to pray this week

One day: Day 1 of 21 Days to Interior Freedom with Sr. Miriam James and Fr. John Burns, in the Hallow app. It asks one question that is tonight's question: what did you actually receive, and what does it free you for? One day is the invitation.



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Take it into your life

Pick the dullerest ten minutes of your Monday, the commute, the sink, the walk in from the car, and give them a name. At the start of them say once: Lord, I received You on Sunday; be here for this. Then do the ten minutes exactly as they are. Nothing has to feel different for something to have changed.

For the table

1. Which sign from the Vigil do you still remember in your body: the water, the oil, the fire, the light?
2. Where has an ordinary Monday been hardest since Easter?
3. What would a sustainable rhythm look like for you: not heroic, sustainable?
4. When you do not feel beloved, what do you usually reach for instead?

Next Tuesday, 04/20: Freedom: Morality as New Life. Why does the Church ask anything of me at all, and can a rule make me free?

Freedom: Morality as New Life

Now that grace has come, what does freedom look like, and how does the Church face the hard questions about life?

Tonight

Morality arrives now, after grace and on purpose: the moral life is what union with God looks like in action. Two freedoms, freedom for excellence and freedom from constraint, and only one can make you happy. The syllabus is the Beatitudes, because the moral life begins with the desire for happiness (CCC 1716–1724). Virtue is goodness become second nature, and grace is what makes it possible: our virtues are “purified and elevated by divine grace” (CCC 1810), and no one can merit the initial grace of conversion (CCC 2010). The commandments re-read as promises: the grammar of love, not a fence. What makes an act good or evil: object, intention, circumstances (CCC 1750–1756); some acts are wrong by their object, always, and others are prudential judgments on which faithful Catholics may differ. Conscience: what it is, why it binds, how it is formed (CCC 1776–1802). Then the hard questions, part one, in the Church’s own words: abortion, since human life “must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (CCC 2270); euthanasia, “morally unacceptable” (2277), and cooperation in suicide (2280–2283), while refusing over-zealous treatment can be legitimate (2278); IVF and the use of embryos (2274–2275, 2376–2377); the death penalty, “inadmissible” (2267); and war and legitimate defense (2263–2267, 2307–2317).

“The commandments are not a fence but the grammar of love.”

An invitation to pray this week

One session: The Science of Happiness, session 1, with Dr. Arthur Brooks, in the Hallow app. He is a social scientist rather than a preacher, which makes this a strange and useful confirmation of tonight: the freedom that makes people happy is freedom for something.



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Take it into your life

Pick one small good thing you already know to do and have been quietly not doing: the phone call, the apology, the earlier bedtime. Do it three times this week, on purpose. Notice on the third time whether it has become any easier. That is what virtue feels like from the inside: not a rule holding you, but a freedom you did not have on Monday.

For the table

1. When have you felt most free? What made it freedom rather than just choice?
2. What rule did you grow up with that turned out to be love, or turned out not to be?
3. Where does your conscience actually get formed day to day? Who and what is forming it?
4. What habit would you want to be second nature by this time next year?

Next Tuesday, 04/27: The Integrated Heart: Chastity & the Moral Life. What is chastity actually for, and is integration possible for someone like me?

The Integrated Heart: Chastity & the Moral Life

What is chastity for, and how does the Church face the hard questions about love and the body?

Tonight

Sexuality is a glory: wounded, and restorable. So chastity is not repression but integration, the successful ordering of desire toward self-gift, in every state of life. Chastity is “a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort” (CCC 2345), and self-mastery is “a long and exacting work” never acquired once for all (2342); willpower on its own is not enough, and that is what grace is for. The paths are concrete: confession, accountability, custody of the eyes, the long game of habit. Then the hard questions, part two, in the Catechism's own words. Contraception, and why every marriage act stays open to life, including the Church's yes to periodic continence (2366–2370). Cohabitation and “free union” (2390–2391). Pornography (2354). Homosexuality: the Church distinguishes the inclination, not itself a sin, from the acts, and asks that persons be met “with respect, compassion, and sensitivity” (2357–2359). Divorce and remarriage (2382–2386): a Catholic who is divorced and civilly remarried “cannot receive Eucharistic communion” while the first bond stands, yet remains a member of the Church who is asked to keep coming (1650–1651); a declaration of nullity finds that no bond ever existed (1629). The body and gender: the body is God's gift and shares in the dignity of the image of God (364, 369; Dignitas Infinita 55–60). Respect, compassion and sensitivity is the rule for every hard question.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Mt 5:8)

An invitation to pray this week

One session: Healing Wounds, session 7, Overcoming Shame, with Dr. Bob Schuchts and Sr. Miriam James, in the Hallow app. Shame is where most of tonight's wounds live. Pray it once, and if it opens something, bring it to Confession or to Fr. Timothy's desk.



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Take it into your life

Find the hour when you are most likely to reach for something, for most of us it is late in the evening, and decide now where the phone will be during it. Not forever; this week. Then tell one person you trust that you decided it. Accountability is not surveillance. It is the ordinary way adults keep the promises they make to themselves.

For the table

1. What did you absorb about the body and desire growing up, and where did it come from?
2. Have you ever met someone whose desires and whose life seemed to be of one piece? What was that like?
3. What makes chastity a hard word to say out loud?
4. What would help most this year: confession, accountability, or a different shape to your day?

Next Tuesday, 05/04, is our eighth and last Prayer Night, open to the whole parish, The Fire Within: Union with God: what has all this praying been for? Session 28, Who Is the Holy Spirit? Gifts & Charisms, follows on 05/11 and opens the Pentecost Retreat.

The Fire Within: Union with God

What has all of this been for?

Tonight

Toward Pentecost we ask what all of this has been for. Prayer is not self-improvement: it is transforming union, God conforming us more and more to Christ Jesus (CCC 2745); we remain creatures, and union with God is by grace and love, never absorption into Him. St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross describe the summit, and Dubay builds his book on the claim that it is meant for ordinary people. The Church says it plainly: all are called to the perfection of charity and to ever more intimate union with Christ, even though the extraordinary signs are given only to some (CCC 2013–2014). We take the lifetime view: prayer grows the way a marriage grows, through seasons, not in a straight line. What sustains it is spiritual direction, Confession, adoration and a rule of life. Then we take out what we wrote in October and renew it, revise it, or write it again.

“Prayer is not self-improvement: it is God conforming us more and more to Christ Jesus.”

An invitation to pray this week

On Friday 05/07, pray Day 1 of the Holy Spirit Novena with Chika Anyanwu, in the Hallow app. Just the first day; the rest run to Saturday 05/15, the eve of Pentecost, if you want them. Then carry what you renewed tonight into the Pentecost Retreat on 05/11, 05/14 and 05/15.



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Take it into your life

Name the one thing that will keep this going after the enthusiasm of May wears off, and put a date on it this week: a Confession, an hour before the Blessed Sacrament, a first conversation about spiritual direction, a Sunday you will not miss. One appointment, on one calendar. Prayer lives are sustained by scheduled things and by people who know you.

Try this week

Write the rule you will actually keep, time, place, minutes, and carry it into the Pentecost Retreat on Tuesday 05/11, Friday 05/14 and Saturday 05/15. Keep what you wrote tonight. This is the eighth night of the series, not the last night of your prayer.

Next Tuesday, 05/11: Session 28, Who Is the Holy Spirit? Gifts & Charisms, and the opening evening of the Pentecost Retreat (05/11, 05/14, 05/15) • This was the eighth and last of the Prayer Nights; the Holy Spirit Novena runs 05/07–05/15.

Who Is the Holy Spirit? Gifts & Charisms

Who is the Holy Spirit, and what is He doing in me?

Tonight

The forgotten Person. The Spirit is God: Who He is, not what He is (CCC 685–686). His fingerprints are everywhere: creation, the prophets, Mary, Pentecost, your own Baptism and Confirmation. Then the vocabulary, sorted. The seven gifts make us “docile in readily obeying divine inspirations” (CCC 1830–1831). The twelve fruits are “the first fruits of eternal glory” (1832). The charisms are given for the building up of the Church and are never exempt from being “referred and submitted to the Church's shepherds” (799–801). Stirring into flame: the grace of your Baptism and Confirmation is really given. We do not release it by technique; we cooperate with God, Who “brings to completion in us what He has begun” (CCC 2001). Expectancy without presumption: He is a Person to be received and adored, not a power to be used. One of our own gives their testimony. Tonight is Night 1 of the Pentecost Retreat.

“Rekindle the gift of God that is within you.” (2 Tim 1:6)“

An invitation to pray this week

The Holy Spirit Novena with Chika Anyanwu began Friday 05/07 in the Hallow app and ends Saturday 05/15, the eve of Pentecost. Your invitation is one day of it: today's. If you have not started, start with today's day, not the first. The Spirit was never confined to a sequence.



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Take it into your life

Once a day between now and Saturday, say His name and ask Him for one thing: courage for a conversation, patience with one particular person, the words for your own story. Then go into the day and let Him answer as He chooses. On Saturday night, look back and notice what you have that you did not have on Tuesday.

For the table

1. Before tonight, what did the word Spirit call up for you?
2. Where this year did something happen that you cannot really account for on your own?
3. What do you want from the retreat, and what makes you nervous about it?
4. Which of the seven gifts would you most want to be given?

Friday evening 05/14 and all day Saturday 05/15 are the rest of the Pentecost Retreat, and Pentecost Sunday is 05/16, the close of the Easter season. Then Tuesday, 05/18: Sent: Christian Service & Mission. Pentecost happened; now what?

Sent: Christian Service & Mission

Pentecost happened. Now what?

Tonight

Pentecost happened. The rescued become rescuers: “The Church on earth is by her nature missionary” (CCC 850), and she “exists in order to evangelize” (Pope St. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 14). The works of mercy, seven corporal and seven spiritual, are “charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities” (CCC 2447); and underneath them, the poor are “the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church” (CCC 2448). Catholic Social Teaching in one sweep, dignity, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and first, the defense of life from conception to natural death: direct abortion and direct euthanasia are always wrong by their object (CCC 2271, 2277), and the death penalty the Church now teaches is “inadmissible” (CCC 2267). Then witness, friendship, and your own story, which this year has trained you to tell. Your state of life is your mission address, and the sign-up sheets are out.

“Ite, missa est: the Mass's last words are its point. You are the sending.”

An invitation to pray this week

One teaching: Life in the Church, Week 2, Dr. Andrew Swafford on Catholic Social Teaching, in the Hallow app. It is the short version of tonight's first half. Then do one hidden act of service before Sunday and tell no one.



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Take it into your life

Do not leave tonight without writing your name on one sheet: one ministry, one month, one hour; the smallest real thing. Then do the other half before Sunday: notice the one person in your week who is carrying something, and ask them about it. Mission is not a program you join. It is the person in front of you.

For the table

1. Who first showed you the faith, and what did they actually do?
2. Where in your ordinary week are you already among people who are not here?
3. Which work of mercy comes naturally to you, and which one would cost you something?
4. What keeps you from telling your own story?

Next Tuesday, 05/25: A Rule of Life: Living the Catholic Faith. How do I keep all of this when the Tuesdays stop?

A Rule of Life: Living the Catholic Faith

How do I keep all of this when the Tuesdays stop?

Tonight

The capstone: the whole year distilled into something you can actually live; a personal rule. The anchors are daily prayer, which you have been practicing since October, Sunday Mass and the holy days of obligation, Scripture, regular confession, community, and service. All of it rests on the Church's own five precepts, which guarantee "the indispensable minimum" (CCC 2041–2043). Rules serve love, so: start small, review it seasonally, and expect to fail and restart; realism is a virtue here. Wounds can become scars, and scars can become witness, while concupiscence and the "frailties inherent in life" remain for us to wrestle with by grace (CCC 1264). Then what comes next: parish life, the neophyte year, and our summer small groups. Your table keeps meeting through the summer, in one another's homes, once a week, for food, prayer, fellowship and discussion. It is simply what we do here, and you will love it. Each of you is invited to write your rule tonight, and then we bless you and send you.

"Rules serve love: start small, expect to fail, and restart."

An invitation to pray this week

Tonight you wrote a rule. Your invitation is Day 1 of the Family Rule of Life challenge in the Hallow app, with the printable workbook at hallow.com/ruleoflife. One day, this week, with whoever lives in your house. Let what you wrote tonight survive the summer.



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Take it into your life

Before Sunday, put the first anchor into the calendar where you will actually see it: the time and the place for daily prayer, and Sunday Mass at 10:00. One line, not six. Then tell one person in your household what you wrote, and ask them to ask you about it in July. A rule kept entirely alone is a rule you will quietly drop.

For the table

1. What from this year do you most want to keep?
2. What is the one practice you would rebuild a week around?
3. When something like this has failed before, what actually happened, and what would make restarting easier now?
4. Who will you be sitting with in this parish a year from now?

There is no session next Tuesday; the year closes tonight. What comes next is parish life: Sunday Mass at 10:00, the neophyte year, and your summer small group: the table you have been sitting at since September, now meeting in one another's homes. The door stays open, and so does the desk in the hall.