



**A Selection of Prayers and Rituals that may be useful for
Home is a Holy Place**
(Last Updated 17.8.08)

Come to our houses Lord Jesus -
To the tables where we eat,
And the places where we argue,
And the rooms where we sleep,
Or lie awake
Wondering if our life is worthwhile.

Come to our houses
To broaden our hospitality
And deepen our conversation
And keep our souls company.

And come to this place
As week by week we meet,
And show us the cross we must carry
So that we may be shaped by your love.
Amen

Wild Goose Worship

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The cry 'Where is God?'  
Calls forth the echoing response, 'Everywhere is God'.

The more we can tune in to this echo,  
The more we will discover God's presence in the world  
Around us:

Not just in the beautiful,  
But in the mundane.  
In the jostle of the crowds,  
And the exuberance of our children.  
In the loneliness of the marginalised,  
And the silent aching of those who grieve.  
In the passionate embrace  
And in the passionate debate.  
In the storm clouds  
As well as in the sunsets.  
Every place  
Is sacred space,  
Because everywhere  
Is where God IS.

*Margaret Silf. The Gift of Prayer: Embracing the Sacred in the Everyday. Bluebridge 2004.*

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Thank you, Lord, for each person in our family (*name family members*).
We thank you for our home, and for all the persons who are a part of our life together.
(*Each family member might mention something for which to be thankful.*)
Loving God, you have made us a family so that we can learn about your love for us.
Thank you for the times we are able to laugh and cry together,
for giving us time to talk and listen to one another,
and for all the ways we know we are loved.
We ask pardon for the times we have hurt one another.
Help us to be a sign to others of your unconditional love for us.
Please give your special protection and love
to those who feel alone, especially children.
Help us to remember that we are all family
and to share our blessings with others.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.
From Faith & Fest in Family. Catholic Diocese of Omaha

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O Lord, bless this household;  
Grant us health and peacefulness,  
Fun and friendship,  
a warm and welcoming spirit,  
and a gentleness that quickly forgives,  
now and always.  
*Angela Ashwin*

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Lord Jesus, help us to be more loving in our homes.
Make us thoughtful for others and help us to think of kind things to do.
Keep us from grumbling and ill-temper and help us to be cheerful when things go wrong and
our plans are upset.
May we learn to love and understand each other and think of others before ourselves.
Graham Salmon

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Lord God,  
You are Father and Mother to us;  
Our life begins in you.  
You chose to make your home among us.  
You sent your Son to be one with us,  
And your Spirit to be with us for ever.  
Bless this home,  
And your people who live here.  
Be here today,  
As you were yesterday.  
Be here tomorrow.  
Be our shelter,  
Our walls to protect us.  
Be our windows;  
Let us see the world through you.  
Be our warmth,  
To share with all who come in  
And all who go forth.

*Paul Leingang*

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An Opening Prayer

All praise and thanks are yours, Heavenly Father:
you have created families in your image
and have chosen us to be followers
of Jesus your Son.

Look with mercy on all here present and those we live at home with.
Help us to see and give thanks for the formidable energy with which you have graced your
domestic church.
Help us to work together in harmony
and to grow in love by all we do.

Loving Father,
we ask this grace in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen.

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### **Vine and Branches Parish Focal Point**

Create a general focal point on the theme of family. This artwork should be left for some weeks, while the Home is a Holy Place programme is taking place in the parish. Using fabric or paper create a vine and branches design, with each of its branches representing a named household within the congregation. If you have time, family members could write their name on a leaf growing from their family branch. Add to the vine the text, "I am the vine, you the branches"

Alternatively, using the "Living stones" theme, create a cairn of pebbles, each marked with a named household.

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A Closing Prayer Ritual

1. Sit quietly for a few moments, relaxing, opening yourselves to whatever God might choose to bring to your mind and heart in this time of prayer.
2. Recall the first prayer you ever learned; remember some of the words if you can. Picture yourself saying that prayer: the setting, the time of day, the people present, and any other surrounding details. Enter the memory fully.
3. Recall too the fervour and devotion that you had as a child when you prayed this particular prayer. Tap into those feelings for a few moments.
4. Ask God for the grace to recapture that attitude of your childhood prayer, though now in an adult way. Say together:

Loving God,
we come to you like children before a caring parent.
We open our hands to whatever you have for us today.
We kneel (or sit) with confidence, for you hold us in your presence,
you listen to our fumbling words,
you even hear the movement of our hearts without words.
Renew in us
the simple faith of a child,
a sense of wonder at all creation,

an attitude of gratitude for all that is,
a peaceful spirit in times of trouble,
a joyful heart in times of goodness.
Make your spirit to pray in us
as we raise our hearts and minds to you. Amen.

Composed by Mary Jo Pedersen, Thomas Greisen & Ronald Wasikowski, published in More Than Meets the Eye: Finding God in the Creases and Folds of family Life.

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## **Darkness and Light**

Materials needed - large candle, small pebbles, small tea lights, soft music

Have a centre table with a large candle and enough tea lights for everyone. Give out stones to represent the burdens we carry. With appropriate music playing invite people to consider privately and name in their heart to God whatever burden they are carrying in their life/family and to lay it down around the candle. Invite them then to think of what is the most joyful and hopeful aspect of their family life and to light a candle for this.

You could also use the baptismal symbolism of a **bowl of water** and invite people to dip their hands in it and if they wish, refresh themselves with water.

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Anointing

Materials needed - some aromatherapy oils in small bowls, tissues, soft music.

Get people to think of all the uses their hands are put to in the course of the day, the range of services our hands provide to others and to ourselves.

Invite people at the small groups around the tables to anoint each others' hands in turn, murmuring quietly a little prayer such as....

"May God bless you for all the service you give to others by the use of your hands. May you be assured of His loving and abiding presence in your life."

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## **A Rite of dismissal**

**Priest** The Lord be with you.

**Everyone** And also with you.

**Priest** God is love. Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him. Take to your home the love of God.

**Everyone** The love that is self-giving service.

**Priest** Take to your place of work the love of God.

**Everyone** The love that both gives and receives.

**Priest** Take to your neighbourhood the love of God.

**Everyone** The love that alone brings security and peace.

**Priest** Take to your friends the love of God.

**Everyone** The love that knows no limits.

**Priest** Take to your leisure time the love of God.

**Everyone** The love that takes many shapes.

**Priest** And so may Almighty God bless you, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Everyone** Amen.

**Priest** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**Everyone** Thanks be to God.

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Prayers for hurting families

We pray for children separated from one parent and cut off from grandparents;
For children damaged by emotional abuse;
For parents who see their children for only part of the week;
For families who face their problems without hope;
For husbands and wives who no longer find joy in each other;
For parents disappointed in their children
For elderly parents, left alone and forgotten;
For adult children who are carers, resenting the burden they carry;
For families who face shame and disablement; illness and death;
We hold each of them before you, O Lord, for your healing love.

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### **A Ritual for A Gathering of Families**

*Before gathering, each family represented is asked to think of a symbol that best represents their gifts to the larger family of families. For example, an apron might symbolize the family that loves to bring food; a drawing of a door might represent the family that welcomes the larger family to their home for big celebrations.*

*Leader:* Gathering can be difficult for many families. Because we come from such different backgrounds, it is easy to forget that all of us have different needs.

*Reader:* Today let us take a moment to focus on our differences and be grateful for our diversity.

The Acts of the Apostles reminds us how to live (2:42-47):

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favour with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

*Leader:* In silence we pause to ask God for the courage to let go of a resentment, hurt or fear that lives inside us. (pause)

Having asked God for the faith to let go, I now invite you each in turn to name your symbol and to tell the rest of us how your family treasure is a gift to the rest of us.

*When everyone has finished:*

*Leader:* Please respond: **We thank you, O loving God**, after each prayer.

That our earth might be treasured for all the gifts it offers us of food, clean water and shelter.

*All:* We thank you, O loving God.

*Leader:* That our families, especially those who cannot be present today, might grow in faith, harmony and peace.

*All:* We thank you, O loving God.

*Leader:* That God might heal our divisions and help us be a light in a very dark world.

*All:* We thank you, O loving God.

*Adapted from Rituals for Home and Parish: Healing and Celebrating our Families by Gaynell Bordes Cronin and Jack Rathschmidt*

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A Candle Ritual

Leader

A reading from the Gospel according to St John:

God is love. Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them.

1 John 4.15

We pray for those who live in love, and we honour in them the presence of God.

After each sequence a candle is lit.

Reader

We give thanks for our individuality and distinctiveness. We pray for single people; for those who have never married; for those who live apart from their marriage partner; for those who are widowed, that all may be a sign that true love takes many shapes.

Leader

For where there is love

Everyone

There is God.

Reader

We give thanks for mutual attraction. We pray for those who are married; for those whose marriage has endured; for those preparing for and beginning their married life; for those making a new start in marriage; that there may be love in both the giving and the receiving.

Leader

For where there is love

Everyone

There is God.

Reader

We give thanks for the vocation to parenthood. We pray for parents; for the parents of toddlers and the parents of teenagers; for adoptive parents and those whose children have left the family home; for grandparents and foster parents, that in love they may give themselves in service.

Leader

For where there is love

Everyone

There is God.

Reader

We give thanks for the gift of children. We pray for children; for children growing to maturity; for the children of two families coming together; for children whose parents live apart; for children cared for by a parent alone; for children welcomed into an adoptive or foster family, that they may be held secure in love.

Leader

For where there is love

Everyone

There is God.

Reader

We give thanks for family relationships. We pray for families; for mixed race families and mixed faith families; for interchurch families and families with roots in different cultural traditions; for families facing particularly difficult challenges; for extended families, that love may have no limits.

Leader

For where there is love

Everyone

There is God.

Leader

And so we commend to you O God, the families of our communities, and the programme of celebrating the holiness with which you have graced them, that the witness of your kingdom among us may be ever more clearly proclaimed, for you are the Love from which every family takes its name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Everyone: Amen

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**Prayers for Marriage**

God our Father, you created us for love. In healthy marriage we witness a crucial sign of that love: love that endures, matures and persists; love expressed in spirit and in flesh; love that feeds the furnace of your creation. Bless all married people everywhere. Sustain them in this love. Lord in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus, who quieted the storm around and within your disciples, draw near to all couples enduring difficulties in their married life. Cleanse their hearts of frustration and resentment. Guide them as they re-solve and reconcile their life together. Grant them strength and courage to overcome fear and anxiety. May they experience your comfort, peace and healing and continue to find you in one another. Lord in your mercy

All: Hear our Prayer

Holy Spirit, embrace those who pour their energy into nourishing marriage with your gifts of wisdom, understanding, fortitude and good counsel. May their commitment inspire, enrich and sustain those they serve. May they always find good company and encouragement in their work. Lord in your mercy

All: Hear our Prayer.

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Reflection on Parenting

Many parents feel a sense of failure and do not realize that what they are doing in trying to bring up their children to be good, loving people they are doing exactly what God is asking of them of them.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. A homeless stranger and you welcomed me into your home. In spite of the enormous upset I caused to your life and household, you were actually delighted to share your home with me. Thank you.

I was naked and you clothed me. I was born completely naked into this world and you wrapped me in sheets and blankets and clothes and more clothes. And you washed and ironed and folded those clothes hundreds and hundreds of times year after year. And you've never stopped clothing me, often going without things for yourself. Thank you.

I was hungry and thirsty and you gave me food and drink. Day after day, year after year you planned meals and shopped and cooked for me. You cleaned up the mess and washed and dried dishes only to start again the next day. Thank you.

I was sick. Sick with teething and wind, with bouts of flu and temperatures, sometimes with serious and worrying conditions. And you comforted me and lost your sleep and were anxious and suffered with me. Sometimes you had to stay off work, which was awkward for you. You were tender and caring and full of compassion. I knew how unconditional your love was when I was at my most helpless.

I was in prison. In the prison of my own immaturity, resisting limits, acting up, throwing tantrums. And you didn't just visit me - you came and stayed with me, tying yourself up for years for my sake, so you could lead me out into freedom and maturity and an enjoyment of the wonders of life.

You have done so much for me over and over again, even when you were bored or exhausted, ill or hurt, or when you were struggling yourself and life was hard for you. "Who else would love me like this, so selflessly and with such self-sacrifice?" Thank you.

And Jesus said "Whatsoever you do to the least among you, that you do unto me."

Adapted from a Family Caring Trust Parenting Programme - by Michael and Terri Quinn

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