9 Days of Devotion

To Jesus and Neighbor

A GUIDE FOR DEEPER PRAYER

Catholic Charities- Social Concerns
“the eucharist commits us to the poor.”

CCC #1397
“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’ (Lumen Gentium). In the Eucharistic Liturgy and our prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, we encounter God’s presence in personal and profound ways. But the Eucharist is also social, as Pope Benedict XVI reminds us in Deus Caritas Est: ‘A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.’ The Eucharist, celebrated as a community, teaches us about human dignity, calls us to right relationship with God, ourselves, and others. As the Body of Christ, it sends us on mission to help transform our communities, neighborhoods, and world. Church teaching, rooted in both Scripture and Tradition, emphasizes both the personal and social natures of the Eucharist. This guide highlights the writings of Popes St. Paul VI, St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis about the social nature of the Eucharist. Their words challenge and move us to encounter Christ in the Eucharist in ways both personal and social.”

-Sacraments and Social Mission; Living the Gospel, Being Disciples.

At this moment in the U.S. Catholic Church, Catholics are preparing ourselves for the upcoming National Eucharistic Congress which will take place in July 2024 in Indianapolis.

As the Church lives this year of parish renewal, we are asked to foster greater devotion to our Eucharistic Lord.

This guide for prayer is written for the people of God; for individuals, families or parishes to be drawn in to a greater love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and then to contemplate how the Lord sends us out to share in his mission of mercy to the hurting, the broken, the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized.

The structure for each day of prayer consists of a theme drawn from the USCCB’s resource guide, “Sacraments and Social Mission; Living the Gospel, Being Disciples.” Included is a scripture verse relevant to that theme, while each day’s “Observation” is a reflection from this same document. As you read, you will see how each theme is applied in the life of a holy person or Saint, and close with a prayer given to us by the USCCB, “May the Sacraments Move US to Love and Serve.”

Let us pray that this renewed love of our Lord Jesus in the Eucharist calls us forth to greater love for our neighbor, that our love may be shown through our actions, and that we may respond to the call to serve our communities.
Day 1:
We experience the Eucharist as a community.

**Scripture**

John 13: 34-35

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**Observation**

The Eucharist draws each of us closer to Christ as individuals, but also as a community. As Catholics, we never really worship alone. At the Eucharistic Liturgy, we gather with the young and old, the rich and poor, as well as millions around the world and the saints in heaven, to celebrate Christ’s sacrifice. This powerful reality, reminds us, in the words of Pope St. John Paul II: “A truly Eucharistic community cannot be closed in upon itself.” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia); rather, the Eucharist challenges us to recognize our place within a community and the human family.

**Application**

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of the bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet too, even with a crust, where there is companionship. We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.”- Servant of God, Dorothy Day

How is the Lord calling me to build a community of love and belonging as a result of participation in the Eucharist?

**Prayer:**

Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities:
your love for all people,
your presence in the community,
your call to justice and peace.
May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family.
Christ Jesus,
Help us to imitate your example:
healing the sick,
welcoming the stranger,
assisting the poor and vulnerable.
May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate.
Holy Spirit,
Make visible to our eyes what is invisible:
your call to your people,
your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace.
May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world.
Amen.

-USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
Love ONE Another

John 13:34
Day 2:
The Eucharist awakens us to our own dignity and to that of others.

**SCRIPTURE**

James 2:1-2

“Show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, ‘Sit here, please,’ while you say to the poor one, ‘Stand there,’ or ‘Sit at my feet,’ have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?”

**OBSERVATION**

The Eucharist is a sign of our incomparable dignity as human persons. This dignity, given to all equally, regardless of our social or economic status or where we come from (Jas 2:1-9), causes us to recognize ‘what value each person, our brother or sister, has in God’s eyes, if Christ offers Himself equally to each one...If our Eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person,” Pope John Paul II writes (Dominicae Cenae).

**APPLICATION**

“The Catholic Church deplores a double slavery – that of the mind and that of the body. She endeavors to free us of both. I was a poor slave boy, but the priests of the Church did not disdain me. It was through the influence of one of them that I became what I am tonight. I must now give praise to that son of the Emerald Isle, Father Peter McGirr, pastor of St. Peter’s Church in Quincy, who promised me that I would be educated and who kept his word. It was the priests of the Church who taught me to pray and to forgive my persecutors... In this Church we do not have to fight for our rights because we are black. She had colored saints – Augustine, Benedict the Moor, Monica. The Church is broad and liberal. She is the Church for our people.”
– Venerable Augustus Tolton

How does my participation in Sunday Mass help me to recognize the dignity of “the other”?
Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace.

May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family.

Christ Jesus, Help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable.

May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate.

Holy Spirit, Make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace.

May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world. Amen.

-USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
Day 3:
The Eucharist unifies and heals divisions.

**SCRIPTURE**

Romans 12:4-5
“For as in one body, we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”

**OBSERVATION**

“St. Paul taught that the celebration of the Eucharist is insincere if there are divisions within the community based on class (1 Corinthians 11), status, or privilege (Romans 12), or if there are factions within the community (1 Corinthians 1). Partaking in the Sacrament as equals in the Body of Christ challenges us to unity as one family.”
“It has to be love, love that overcomes fear, that shares and makes sure that nobody is hungry, that unites us when we learn about each other, when we share our gifts, when we believe in each other, when we take time to listen to each other, and to share our stories, our arts, our customs, our traditions, when we break bread together.”

How do I contribute to polarization in American society? What practical steps can I take to heal those divisions within my own community?
Loving Father, open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world. Amen.

- USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
Day 4
The Eucharist Sensitizes us to those who suffer.

SCRIPTURE  Mark 2:15-17

“And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. And the scribes and the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners’.”

OBSERVATION  “As we meditate on the Eucharist, we experience Christ’s love for us- and for others. In the depth of prayer, we become so moved and sensitized to his love for those who suffer, that the words of St. Augustine become a reality for us: ‘The pain of one, even the smallest member, is the pain of all’ (Sermo Denis). When we receive the Eucharist but ‘turn a blind eye to the poor and suffering, or consent to various forms of division, contempt and inequality, the Eucharist is received unworthily’ (Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia).”

APPLICATION  St. Mother Theresa

“The Jesus who becomes bread to satisfy our hunger also becomes that naked person, that homeless and lonely and unwanted person, that leper or drunkard or drug addict or prostitute, so that we can satisfy His hunger to be loved by us through the love we show them. Bringing the presence of Jesus to people suffering like this makes us contemplatives living right in the heart of the world.”

PRAYER  USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve

Loving Father, open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world. Amen.
“YOU SAY YOU LOVE THE POOR... NAME THEM.”

Bring to mind the names and faces of those in your life who are materially poor. If you can’t think of any, consider how you can restructure your life to make intimacy with the poor a reality.
Day 5:
The Eucharist moves us and inspires us to respond.
“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothed you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ and the King will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mind, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me no food, I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” Matthew 25: 31-46
APPLICATION

BLESSED PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

“Jesus comes to me every morning in Holy Communion; I repay Him, in my very small way, by visiting the poor. The house may be sordid, but I am going to Christ.”

PRAYER

Loving Father, open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world. Amen.

- USCC: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve

How does receiving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament change your daily activities? What connection do you make between the Eucharist and the poor?
Day 5 Notes
Day 6: 
Eucharist-inspired love allows us to live out our Christian vocation.

SCRIPTURE
“So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, ‘Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.’” - John 13: 12-15

OBSERVATION
“St. John Paul II writes that our ability to go and do likewise in imitation of Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet is the ‘criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged’ (Mane Nobiscum Domine). ‘Eucharistic worship,’ he says, is the expression of ‘the love that springs up within us from the Eucharist’- that love which is ‘the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation.’ (Domenicae Cenae). Pope Francis reminds us: ‘It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation’; therefore, ‘the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation’ (Laudato Si).”
APPLICATION

“The shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger...I still don’t want to abandon my flock when wolves are making random attacks.”

How does the Eucharist give me strength to fulfill my vocation?

PRAYER

Loving Father, open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world.

Amen.

- USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
Day 7: The Eucharist challenges us to recognize and confront structures of sin.

Scripture

“Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, ‘It is written: ‘My house shall be a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of thieves.’ The blind and the lame approached him in the temple area, and he cured them.”- Matthew 21: 12-24

Observation

“The Risen Christ in the Eucharist acts as ‘a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled’ (St. John Paul II, Dies Domini). These structures include racism, violence, injustice, poverty, exploitation, and all other systemic degradation of human life or dignity. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, our ‘fraternal communion’ in the Eucharist leads to ‘a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness’ (Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis).”
“If we truly believe that Christ, in the Eucharist of our Church, is the living bread that feeds the world, and that, as a believing Christian who receives this Host, I am the instrument, then I should bring it to the world. I have the responsibility of being the leavening of society, of transforming such an ugly world. This, yes, would change the face of the country, to truly inject the life of Christ in our society, in our laws, in our politics, in all our relationships. Who is going to do this? You are!” - St. Oscar Romero

How does the Eucharist inspire me to flip the tables of oppression and compel in me an inner renewal that helps to transform the world?

Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world.
Amen.
- USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
DAY 8
The Eucharist prepares us for mission.
DAY 8

SCRIPTURE

“As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.’ So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?’ So they set out at once…” Luke 24: 28-33a

OBSERVATION

“In the face of the sin and injustice we see present in our communities and in our world, the Eucharist ‘plants a seed of living hope in our daily commitment to the work before us,’ challenging us to live ‘Eucharistic’ lives. It affirms our role as citizens and as men and women in various professions at different levels of society in ‘contributing with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan’ (Ecclesia de Eucharistia).”

APPLICATION

St. Katharine Drexel: "Ours is the Spirit of the Eucharist, the total Gift of Self."

What seeds of hope do I notice around me? Where can I plant seeds of hope in my family, community, and those I serve? How do I live a Eucharistic life with the gift of myself?
PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world.
Amen.

- USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed mercy on him.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’” Luke 10:29-35

The Eucharist propels us forth to transform the world.
“The Eucharist ‘increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today.’ Christ in the Eucharist calls us to build ‘A more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan’ (Ecclesia de Eucharistia). Filled with awe for all we have received in Christ’s self-gift, we respond with service and works of charity. We act to transform unjust structures, policies, and laws that degrade human life and dignity.”

“Observation:

“The Eucharist is the secret of my day. It gives strength and meaning to all my activities of service to the Church and to the whole world. . . . Let Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is he who is the true answer of life that you seek. He stays here with us: he is God with us. Seek him without tiring, welcome him without reserve, love him without interruption: today, tomorrow, forever.”

-Pope St. John Paul II

“Application:”
APPLICATION

Do I feel responsible for the world today? How does the Eucharist inspire me to work for justice, act with mercy, and live a life of discipleship today?

PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts to hidden realities: your love for all people, your presence in the community, your call to justice and peace. May the sacraments stir in us that same love for those with whom we worship and all members of our human family. Christ Jesus, help us to imitate your example: healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, assisting the poor and vulnerable. May the sacraments remind us of your love and self-giving, which we strive to imitate. Holy Spirit, make visible to our eyes what is invisible: your call to your people, your summons to live our faith daily as witnesses of justice and peace. May the sacraments move us to engage in love-inspired action that transforms us and the world.

Amen.

- USCCB: May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve
To explore further:

The sources used to create this prayer guide are included in the following list. Also included is more information that may be of interest for those looking for a more in depth study of the topics.

Scan here to see this prayer guide as a printable PDF with clickable links.

01  **Sacraments and Social Mission; Living the Gospel, Being Disciples**  
    From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

02  **National Eucharistic Congress**  
    More information on the 10th National Eucharistic Congress- the first in 83 years!

03  **The Holy Bible**  
    An online version from the USCCB for your reference

04  **May the Sacraments Move Us to Love and Serve**  
    A prayer from the USCCB

05  **Ecclesia de Eucharistia**  
    2003 Encyclical by Pope St. John Paul II, “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist.”
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<td><strong>Thea Bowman; In My Own Words</strong></td>
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Mane Nobiscum Domine

2004 Apostolic Letter from St. Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful for the Year of the Eucharist. “Stay with us, Lord”

Laudato Si

PDF of the 2015 Encyclical from Pope Francis, “to every person living on this planet,” on care for our common home. “Praise be to You”
Thank you for praying with us!

1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN 46202

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https://www.archindy.org/socialconcerns

*Special thanks to Reechele Brooks, who made this prayer guide possible.*