

THIRD MODE OF PRAYER

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Second Part: 14 Sundry Exercises of of Thanksgiving

FIVE EXERCISES TO THANK OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Introductory Note:

These exercises to thank our brothers and sisters, in truth, will prepare us to sincerely thank God the source of all good.

Exercise (1) Thanking Those Present close to us now

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down. Awareness and/or breathing exercises.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Remember

- ✓ Look at those present here and now.
- ✓ Remember the many acts of kindness, love, affection, help, appreciation, signs of friendship, etc., they sowed you in the past.

Fantasy

- ✓ Close your eyes, relive again those happy moments when they made you the object of their love. Enjoy those moments now...
- ✓ Move yourself to feelings of gratefulness towards them.
- ✓ In your fantasy go to them and thank them with sincerity and love.

Thanksgiving:

- ✓ Open your eyes now. Look at your benefactors present here.
- ✓ Go round and meet them. Express as warmly as you can, your thankfulness to them. Tell them the things you are grateful for.

Shared Group-Prayer:

- ✓ Ask the participants to thank God for those present, for the love and affection they found in the group.

- ✓ Request them to pray, in silence or aloud, for one another.
- ✓ End the Group Prayer with a hymn of thanksgiving.

Closure:

- ✓ Invite the participants to share their feelings and insights
- ✓ Offer the group your comments and observations.

Exercise (2) Thanking People Not Present

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down. Awareness and/or breathing exercises.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played on tape.

Remember:

- ✓ Close your eyes. Recall to mind some people who have been kind to you: neighbors, relations, friends, at home, in the school, etc.
- ✓ Remember some of the good things they did for you.

Fantasize.

- ✓ Imagine that those happy moments are taking place now.
- ✓ Enjoy them again.
- ✓ Make yourself **feel ‘thankful’** to them for all they did.
- ✓ In your fantasy, meet them, thank them, and tell them how grateful you are.
- ✓ With eyes still closed, pray to God for them. Ask God to bless them for all they did to you

Thanksgiving:

- ✓ Open your eyes. Take paper and pen.
- ✓ Write down the following items.
 - The names of the persons you feel especially thankful to.
 - The things you would like to thank them for.
 - Guess the time when you are likely to meet them and be able to thank them
Make it a point to meet them.

Shared Group Prayer:

- ✓ Request the participants to thank God aloud for the people they feel especially grateful
- ✓ End the group prayer with a hymn

Closure

- ✓ Invite the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ You may offer the group your comments and observations.

Exercise (3) Thanking People Through Letter Writing.

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down. Awareness and/or breathing exercises may help.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Remembering:

- ✓ Close your eyes. Call to mind some people who loved you, who had been kind and good to you, but now are far away yet, can reach them by letter.
- ✓ Remember the kindness, love, affection and care they showed you.

Fantasize

- ✓ In fantasy, relive as vividly as you can those happy moments of friendship and intimacy. Enjoy them.
- ✓ In your fantasy thank them as warmly as you can, speak to them, hug them, kiss them...
- ✓ With eyes closed, pray and thank God for them.

Thanksgiving:

- ✓ Open your eyes. Take paper and pen. Write down:
 - The names of the persons now far away from you to whom you feel especially grateful.
 - The good deeds they did for you.
 - Pick the names of any two you feel especially indebted to.
 - Write "A Thanksgiving Letter" to them.
- ✓ Ask the participants to take those letters home and after a couple of days to read them. If they feel like, they may post them.
- ✓ **Shared Group Prayer:**
- ✓ If they are willing, they may read the letters they wrote to their benefactors.
- ✓ Ask the participants to thank God for all the persons who in the past have shown them love and affection.
- ✓ Ask the group to pray for them.
- ✓ End the group prayer with a hymn.

Closure

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ The moderator may offer his remarks and observations.

Exercise (4) Thanking People we cannot Reach any more

Note: *This exercise may be helpful to wind up some 'unfinished business' and to defuse 'guilt feelings' arising from our not having expressed gratefulness to some one of our loved ones who are dead now or permanently separated from us.*

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down: Awareness and/or breathing exercises.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung played.

Remember

- ✓ Close your eyes. Call to mind people who are already dead or gone away for good. People which you will never meet again. People who loved you and did good to you; such as your parents, grandparents, relations, brothers and sisters or friends.

Fantasize:

- ✓ Call to mind, as vividly as you can, their love, affection and concern.
- ✓ Remember particular instances when they did show such goodness to you.

- ✓ Relive those instances; drink in their love and affection towards you
- ✓ Allow yourself to feel grateful to those people. Be drawn towards them. Foster feelings of gratefulness and thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving.

- ✓ Now, in your imagination meet them and tell them ‘**Thank you**’. Don’t be in a hurry. Keep telling them ‘Thank You.’
- ✓ Kiss them, hug them, etc. Keep expressing your thankfulness to them.
- ✓ With your eyes closed, thank God for them and for their kindness.
- ✓ Ask God to bless them, to reward them for all they did to you.

Shared Group Prayer:

- ✓ Open your eyes.
- ✓ Ask the participants to thank God aloud for those people who gone from our sight are still so alive in your hearts.
- ✓ Request them to pray for those people and their happiness.
- ✓ Group members may feel free to ask the participants to pray for their loved ones whom God took away from them.
- ✓ End the group prayer by singing a hymn

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their findings and feelings.
- ✓ The moderator may offer his remarks and observations.

Exercise (5) Thanking People we Never Thought of Thanking.

Note: *Through this awareness exercise we try to create in the participants a feeling of gratefulness for people whom we have taken for granted in the past and to whom we never thought of thanking*

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down: Awareness and/or breathing exercises.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Remembering.

- ✓ Close your eyes. Remember the countless people who, day in and day out, kept ministering to our needs and wants: servants, house workers, drivers, postmen, bus conductors, municipal workers, watchmen, coolies, cooks etc.

Fantasy

- ✓ Imagine what would happen, and what life would be if one day all these people disappeared from the world! Would we be able to live happy and meaningful lives without them?
- ✓ Recall the many services and kindness you received from them. It has been an interrupted flow of service and love.
- ✓ Be aware of how many services we receive from them in a single day. Their doings and comings: the milkman, the bread man, the newspaper boy, the cook, the bus driver, etc.
- ✓ **Have we ever felt grateful to them? Have we ever said ”Thank you” to them?**

- ✓ In your imagination keep meeting those people and say to one and all. “**Thank you**’, “**Thank you!**”

Thanksgiving:

- ✓ Ask God to help you to feel thankful to them.
- ✓ Give thanks to God for them.
- ✓ Pray to God for them and their loved ones.
- ✓ Open your eyes. Take paper and pen. Write down:
 - The names of people to whom from today, you will show special gratefulness, e.g. domestic servants, watchman, cooks, peons, etc.
 - How will you show your gratefulness to them?

Shared Group Prayer:

- ✓ Ask the participants to thank God aloud for the countless humble people who served them from their birth till today.
- ✓ Request the participants to pray for them and for their well being and that of their families.
- ✓ End the group prayer by singing a hymn.

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ The moderator may offer his remarks and observations.

SIX EXERCISES OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD

Introductory Note: Here below you will find six Thanksgiving prayer exercises addressed to Our Heavenly Father

We hope that having gone through some of exercises of thanksgiving to our brothers and sisters- **whom can see** – we shall will be able in a more meaningful way, to thank God - **whom we cannot see** –

Exercise (1) Thanking God for the Gift of Our Bodies.

Procedure

- ✓ Quiet down. Awareness and/or breathing exercises may help.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Thanksgiving

You may choose any of the two methods suggested below: Either fantasy or reality

Fantasy:

- ✓ Imagine you become, one at a time, the different parts of your body: for instance, you are your hands, your feet, your mouth, your eyes, your ears, your brain, your heart, et

- ✓ Once you personify that particular part of your body, thank God for what you are, for what you have done, for what you can do, and for what you will do.
- ✓ Take for instance your hands: Thank God for all the good you did, the kindness shown to others, helping, caressing, the affection you gave, the services you rendered to others, the good works you did, the things you wrote, etc.
- ✓ Next, take another part of your body, for instance your heart. Personify that part and thank God for all he has allowed you to do being that part e.g. The warmth and love shown to people, for reaching out to others, etc.
- ✓ And so on, with the brains, the tongue etc.
- ✓ You can also personify your senses: hearing, sight, and smell, taste, etc, and do the same with them.
- ✓ You can personify your faculties memory, intelligence, imagination, will, freedom, love, locomotion, etc.

Through Reality:

- ✓ Do not personify anything. Be yourself.
- ✓ Think the wondrous gift every part of your body is, and give thanks to God for one part after the other.
- ✓ Remember the good things you did with that part and thank God for the good accomplished.
- ✓ Feel glad and grateful for them all.

Shared Group Prayer

- ✓ Encourage the participants to thank God aloud and spontaneously for the gifts of their bodies.
- ✓ Close down the Group prayer with a hymn of thanksgiving.

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ You may offer your own comments and observations.

Exercise (2) Thanking God for External Gifts

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down : Awareness / breathing exercises.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Thanksgiving. God gives Himself to you through His Gifts.

- ✓ Look at the world around you. and at all created things.....
- ✓ See the countless things God has made for you.
- ✓ All of them are God's gifts, signs of God's love for you.
 - Food is God's love made eatable. Thank him for it!
 - Drink is God's love made drinkable. Thank him for it!
 - Air is God's love made breathable. Thank him for it!
 - Clothing is God's love warming you. Thank him for it!
 - Shelter is God's love protecting you. Thank him for it!
 - Home, Family is God's love caring for you. Thank him for it!
 - School, College, Education, etc. Thank him for it!

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|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| ➤ Society and friends | Thank Him for it! |
| ➤ Economic position | Thank him for it |
| ➤ Country | Thank him for it! |
| ➤ Jobs, occupations, hobbies | Thank him for it! |
| ➤ Games and entertainments, etc. | Thank him for it! |

Shared Group prayer:

- ✓ Encourage the participants to thank God aloud and spontaneously for all his gifts
- ✓ Ask them to thank God for the gifts we are to one another.
- ✓ End the prayer session with a hymn

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights
- ✓ Offer your comments and observations.

Exercise (3) Thanking God for Spiritual Gifts.

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down: Awareness/breathing exercises will help.
- ✓ Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played on tape.

Thanksgiving:

- ✓ Think of the Gift of Christ, the Son of God, given to us as our Savior and friend.
- ✓ Reflect on what Christ is and what has been to you and thank God the Father for Him.
- ✓ Keep thinking of all the blessings and gifts we received through our faith, Our Lady, the Saints, the Church, the Gospel, the coming of the Holy Spirit and thank God for all.
- ✓ Think of your call to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, an apostle, a child of God, and a member of God's family. Thank God for it.
- ✓ Think of the sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, Priesthood, and Marriage and what they mean to you. Thank God for them.
- ✓ Think of the pardon God has given you. All your sins, however great and numerous have been are forgiven. In spite of your sins God loves you all the same. Thank God for it.
- ✓ Think of your vocation to marriage or to the priesthood or religious life and all the graces that came along with it. Thank God for them.
- ✓ Think of the particular, personal and special graces God has bestowed on you.
- ✓ Thank God for them.

Closure"

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ You may offer your own comments and observations.

Exercise (4) Thanking God for Persons in Our Lives.

Procedure:

- Quiet down: Awareness/breathing exercise may help.

Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played on tape.

Thanksgiving:

Start thinking of the ‘persons’ who loved you, persons who helped you; persons who touched you deeply in your life – beginning with the inner circle of your home and widening out to encompass the whole world:

- Within your home: Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Grandparents, Servants etc. Thank God for them.
- Within your family: Uncles, Aunties, Cousins, and Relations. Thank God for them
- School: Teachers, Masters, Principals, Counselors, Schoolmates. Thank God for them.
- Neighborhood: Neighbors, friends, playmates. Thank God for them all.
- Office and Place of Work: Co-workers, colleagues, supervisors, Bosses. Thank God for them.
- The world at large: People you meet at Church, at shows and entertainments, social gatherings, sports and other events. Thank God for them.
- Accidental acquaintances: while traveling, studying, when hospitalized Thank for them.

Shared Group-Prayer:

- ✓ Ask the participants to thank God aloud and spontaneously for people in their lives.
- ✓ They may mention the names of some of those people.
- ✓ Ask the participants to pray and thank God for one another and for all the persons who influenced them deeply in their lives.
- ✓ End the prayer session with a hymn

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights
- ✓ Offer your own comments and observations.

Exercise (5) Thanking God for “Peak Experiences” in our Lives.

Procedure:

Quiet down: Awareness/breathing exercises may help.

Hymns of thanksgiving. Sung or played on tape.

Thanksgiving:

Explain to the participants what we mean by ‘peak experiences’.

Ask them to call to mind some of such ‘peak experiences’ in their lives.

They need not necessarily be religious peak experiences; they could be aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual, inter personal, joyous, or even painful experiences.

- ✓ Ask them to relive them as vividly as they can..
- ✓ When their hearts are sufficiently warmed up with feeling, ask them to turn to God and say a genuine: “Thank you”, Lord!
- ✓ It would be good to record in writing their “peak experiences”

Shared Group Prayer:

- ✓ The participants will be invited to freely share their peak experiences with the group and thank God aloud for them.
- ✓ The group members may join in thanksgiving to God with the person who shared his experience.
- ✓ Request the participants to thank God for one another.
- ✓ End the prayer session with a hymn.

Closure:

- ✓ Ask the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ Offer your own comments and observations.

Exercise (6) Thanking God for the Usefulness of our lives.

***Note** The purpose of this prayer exercise is not so much to thank God for small, particular events of one's life - this might be done elsewhere – but to thank God for the experience, the tone, the quality of our life in general, namely, for the goals we aimed at, for the meaning we found in life, for our successes and failures, our strivings, for the good done to others, for the usefulness of our living.*

Procedure:

- ✓ Quiet down: Awareness/breathing exercises may help.
- ✓ Singing of thanksgiving. Sung or played.

Thanksgiving :

Fantasy:

- Imagine that you are a river.
- The river – your river - has a source and keeps following its course. It passes through varied terrains; open countryside, valleys, plains, forests, meadows, fruitful fields, barren stretches, populated areas, deserts, etc.
- Imagine that, from high above the sky, you enjoy an aerial view of the course of the river of your life. See where it moved in the past, where and how it moves now, and what it does, what it feels, etc.
- Pause and take your time viewing the course of your life.
- Give thanks to God for the lovely landscapes in your life, the restful moments you enjoyed, the cool spots, the clear crystal waters sparkling with fish, for the joys you gave people around, for the crops you help grow, for the freshness and fragrance you scatter all around, for your failures and sins too, for your joys and sorrows, etc. - ***God knows how too turn good even from sin!...***
- Do not hurry up. Take your time.
- Give thanks to God for all the good he has accomplished through you and still he is accomplishing today.
- Thank him also for all the good he will surely accomplish through you in the days to come.
- Thank God for **the 'extraordinary river' you are.**

Share Group Prayer.

- Tell the participants they are free to share their fantasies with the group.
- ✓ To thank God aloud for the wonderful rivers they are, for the persons they are.

- ✓ Encourage the participants to join in thanksgiving with the person doing the sharing.
- ✓ End the prayer session with a hymn.

Closure:

- ✓ Request the participants to share their feelings and insights.
- ✓ You may offer your observations and comments.

THREE EXERCISES

Thanking God with The Scriptures and Sacred Hymns

Introductory Note:

- ❖ *In this third set of exercises of the ‘Prayer of thanksgiving’, we thank God with texts from the Holy Scriptures as well as with the lyrics of noted religious hymns.*
- ❖ *Make the sentiments expressed in those texts and hymns your own.*

Exercise (1) Reciting and Singing Thanksgiving Psalms of

Psalm 100	A Hymn of Thanksgiving
Psalm 105	People of God, Thank the Lord!
Psalm 106	Thank the Lord for His Goodness.
Psalm 107	Thank God for His Love is Eternal.
Psalm 111	I’ll Thank The Lord .
Psalm 118	A Prayer of Thanks for Victory
Psalm 136	A Hymn of Thanksgiving.
Psalm 138	A Prayer of Thanksgiving.
Psalm 145	A Thanksgiving Hymn.

Exercise (2) Bible Texts for Prayer and Thanksgiving.

2 Kings 22/50	“ Therefore, I’ll give thanks to thee....”
Ecclus. 47/9 “	In all his works (David) gave thanks....”
Ecclus. 51/15-17	“I’ll Praise God’s name with thanksgiving...”
Is. 12/1	“I will give thanks to Thee, Our Lord....”
Is. 63/7	I’ll remember the tender mercies of the Lord...”
Lk. 17/12-16	“The Ten Lepers. Only one came to thank.”
1. Tim. 1/12	“I give Him Thanks who has strengthened me...”
Eph. 5/20	“Giving thanks always for all things..”

Col. 3/15-17	“Be thankful...”
Col. 4/2	“Watching in Prayer with thanksgiving....”
1. These. 5/18	“In all things give thanks....”
Eph. 1/3-4	“Blessed be the Father and the God
Eph. 5/19-20	“Always give thanks to God for
Col. 3/16-17	“Sing...pray with thanksgiving in your hearts....”
Rev. 7/9-12	“Praise, wisdom, glory and thanks belong

Exercise (3) Meditating, Reciting and Singing Thanksgiving Hymns.

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| ➤ “What Thanks Can I render Thee”? | ➤ “Song of Thanks” |
| ➤ “O Give Thanks To the Lord” | ➤ “Thank You, Thank You, Jesus” |
| ➤ “Thank You Lord” | ➤ “Father, We Thank You” |
| ➤ “I Will Sing” | ➤ “From My Heart Breaks Forth” |
| ➤ “It Is Good To Give Thanks” | ➤ “It is Good To Give Thanks” |
| ➤ “Thank You, Father” | ➤ “My Soul Give Thanks To The” |
| ➤ “Thank You God” | ➤ “I Will Thank the Lord” |
| ➤ We Really Want To Thank You Lord | ➤ “God’s Inexhaustible Love” |

