

Praying the News: A Spiritual Work of Mercy



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Introduction

Getting the news used to be simple. You either read the newspaper, which was delivered to your front porch each morning, listened to the radio, or tuned into one of the broadcasts provided by the three available television networks.

Now, news comes to us in a myriad of ways. Yes, you can still read the newspaper, listen to the radio or watch television news but you can also sift through news sites on the Internet, receive headline emails, or get up-to-the-minute news alerts through various apps on your cell phone or tablet.

Sources of news have also expanded way beyond the three networks. Cable news networks broadcast 24 hours a day and international news outlets provide differing perspectives from everywhere in the world. There is even news available from every possible ideological point of view.

Intercessory Prayer

As people of faith, we have the joy of being able to pray for others. Together with prayer of blessing, adoration, petition, thanksgiving, and praise, intercession encourages us to come out of ourselves and pray to God on behalf of others. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that intercession is characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy and enables us to participate in Christ's own intercession (cf. 2635).

Sometimes we may feel insignificant when faced with the problems of the world and wonder what we can possibly do to help. Intercessory prayer is a concrete, direct way we can make a difference to those in psychological, physical, or spiritual need. Praying for others helps us to put our own troubles into perspective in order to consider the needs of others.

Using news coverage as a springboard to intercessory prayer can help us to be more aware of the world around us and give us the opportunity to bring the needs of our world to our loving and merciful God.



A Spiritual Work of Mercy

Praying for the living and the dead is one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy. Pope Francis, in his *Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year of Mercy*, encourages us to “enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples” (15).

Praying the news lets us put this spiritual work of mercy into practice in our lives, whether we engage in silent prayer alone or together with a group. Just like we do at the Eucharist during the Prayer of the Faithful, we join our hearts and voices to Christ's in praying for the needs of our world.

Guide to Praying the News

Opening Prayer:

Lord, I check the news every day, and every day I am shocked and saddened, but also inspired and encouraged.

As I take in the news today, dear Lord, inspire me to pray for those involved in the stories, those affected by the events, and all who announce and receive the news. Give me the gift of awareness and a sense of responsibility, especially toward the most vulnerable in our society and in our world.

Expand my heart, Lord, and give me a share of your love, that I may embrace all that is news today. Amen. -from [Live Christ! Give Christ! Prayers for the New Evangelization](#)



View or Read the News:

Next, experience the news in whatever format you choose. If praying with a group, viewing television news or online news videos works best. Any number of 24-hour news channels or online streaming sites would work. For more of an international perspective, try BBC News or Al Jazeera.

After viewing or reading the news, spend a few moments of quiet contemplation, letting your heart absorb the news stories you experienced.

Intercessory Prayer:

If you are alone, pray for the people involved in several news stories.

If you are in a group, the leader can invite participants to express their intercessory prayer out loud. Pray or sing a refrain after every two or three intercessions. (If you wish, you can sing a refrain such as “O, Lord, Hear My Prayer” by J. Berthier from Taizé; “Healer of our Every Ill” by Marty Haugen, or the simple, “We pray to the Lord/Lord, hear our prayer” chant.)

Whether praying alone or together, bring the intercession to a close by praying the Our Father together.

Closing Prayer: Prayer of Blessing Upon the World – Psalm 67 (RSV)

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us.

May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.