

## My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.

**Prayer of Confession:** “Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and Your faithfulness!” Yet because of the sin in our hearts, we have strayed far from you. We have disobeyed Your commandments, we have trusted our own judgement, and we wonder why we feel distant from You. We have worshipped idols of silver and gold—really idols of self and comfort. These have no power, these have no soul, these have no life. “Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.” Forgive us, gracious God, for not loving You as we ought, for not obeying You as we were taught, and for not trusting that our forgiveness has been bought. Amen.

### My Prayers this Week:

#### Family Time:

Take a few minutes to try to write down as many words as you can that you think describe God. It could be names for God, or words that say how God acts. In a very famous prayer, a man named St. Francis from a town called Assisi listed lots of words to describe God! After you have made your list compare it to the Prayer of St. Francis to see if he thought of any you didn't, or if you thought of any he didn't! Francis uses words like holy, wonderful, strong, great, good, true, love, wisdom, humility, endurance, rest, peace, joy, gladness, justice, beauty, gentle, protector, guardian, defender, courage, heaven, life, and savior! Now try to write a prayer using *your* words, where you tell God that this is who you believe He really is. Telling God that we believe in Him, and what we believe *about* Him is a great way to give God praise through prayer!

### MONDAY 1.30.23

### Leviticus 11:44-45

We began our sermon series on the prayers of the saints with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi that begins “Make me an instrument of your peace.” This week, we focus on a second prayer of St. Francis that follows in the tradition of the Psalms in proclaiming the many attributes of God. Nearly every line of this prayer begins with the words, “You are ....” Praying statements such as these should not be interpreted as telling God what God already knows, but as statements of faith—telling God, in prayer, what we truly believe to be true about God in the depths of our hearts. Thus, the prayer begins with the absolute affirmation that “You are holy, Lord, the only God.” God’s description of Himself as holy was among the earliest aspects of God’s self-revelation to the Israelites, as today’s reading from the Law of Moses in Leviticus demonstrates. The Israelites were to set themselves apart from the rest of the world in terms of their moral and ethical conduct—in other words, to be holy—for no other reason than that the God who was entering into covenant with them was, Himself, holy. The command “Therefore be holy, because I am holy” echoes throughout both the Old and New Testaments, and is the foundation of Judeo-Christian guidelines for ethical living.

- What does it mean to you to be holy, because God is holy?

### TUESDAY 1.31.23

### Genesis 14:17-24

A few lines later, St. Francis’ prayer proclaims “You are the Most High.” The practice of referring to God as “the Most High” is ancient—far more ancient than the days of Moses, when God revealed Himself as holy and made a covenant with Israel, as we saw yesterday. Today’s reading from Genesis takes us back another five or six hundred years, to the time of God’s interactions with Abraham. In Abraham’s day, people believed in many gods, but in today’s reading, Abraham meets a king named Melchizedek who, Genesis says, was a “priest of God Most High.” Most likely, Melchizedek worshiped this “El Shaddai” (“God Most High” in Hebrew) as the chief god in a pantheon of gods, but Abraham, in his response to one of the other kings in attendance, claims allegiance to “the LORD, God Most High” - “Yahweh, El Shaddai.” Abraham thus demonstrates his close relationship with God, using the name of God that He would not reveal again to Moses until many years later! The language of God as “El Shaddai,” “Most High,” persevered long after God revealed that He is the *only* God, and that there are no other gods, as a way of affirming faith in God’s authority over all of heaven and earth. There is no one, and nothing, above God. Thus, “You are the Most High”!

- What are you tempted to treat as “higher than God”?

### WEDNESDAY 2.1.23

### 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

King David’s prayer in today’s reading from 1 Chronicles is a prototype of the kind of prayer of praise that we are looking at this week in the prayer of St. Francis, in which the attributes of God are affirmed before God. Just as Francis proclaims, “You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth,” David proclaimed, “everything in heaven and earth is yours; yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.” Although after 200 years of democracy in America, our familiarity with the concept of kingdoms and kingship has diminished, the Judeo-Christian faith was born and grew in periods of time in which monarchy was the common form of government. It should not, then, be surprising that language of God’s ultimate Kingship, over even earthly kings, should be common in both biblical and liturgical writings. While we may no longer subscribe to worldviews in which other human beings are elevated in importance and value while other human beings are diminished and subservient to them, as was true in most historic monarchies, the language and meaning of Kingship still applies to God’s relationship with us today. God *is* above us, and we *are* (or should be) subservient to Him. Truly, “You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth.”

- Does language of God as King disturb you? Why?

### THURSDAY 2.2.23

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Among the many attributes of God exalted in St. Francis’ prayer is the Wisdom of God—in fact, Francis says, “You *are* wisdom.” The concept of wisdom as a divine attribute that humans should strive to attain is very ancient—in fact, we could read the entire Old Testament book of Proverbs to follow its argument that true wisdom finds its basis in “the fear of the LORD.” There, wisdom is described as being present with God as the organizing force of Creation itself, “the craftsman at God’s side” (see Proverbs 8:22-31). Later, when Paul wrote today’s passage to the church in Corinth, people were labeling his message of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ “foolishness,” which is the direct opposite of “wisdom.” For Paul, though, who as an educated Jewish man was fully aware of wisdom as a prime attribute of God, God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ was wise beyond any conceivable standard of human wisdom. The message of Christianity, Paul insists, may appear foolish to Jews and Greeks alike who are looking for God or truth in other places, but actually reveals the depths of God’s inner wisdom. Christ, the wisdom of God incarnate, provides the only means of reconciliation with God. The God who is Wisdom saves us by His Wisdom.

- What makes a choice “wise” to you? Does God have a role?

