

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

LIVING THE EUCHARIST



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*Delegate of the International Director of the
Apostleship of Prayer*

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*"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God,
your spiritual worship."
(Romans 12:1)*

The Apostleship of Prayer offers us a simple, profound way of life, rooted in our Baptism and in the Eucharist, and united with the heart of Jesus Christ.

What is this way of life?

Very simply, it means offering yourself and every day of your life to God. That's all.

How do I offer myself?

As you begin your day, you make a prayer of offering from your heart. This can be in your own words or by means of a standard Daily Offering prayer. With this prayer you offer your day to God and ask that every moment be united to the perfect offering of Jesus that is celebrated in the Mass. You begin your day by saying and praying that you will do everything in him and with him. With this daily practice, your own life, along with the lives of millions of other people making the same offering, is taken into Jesus' heart.

How will offering myself to God change things for me?

The Daily Offering prayer is mainly a *desire*, an act of the will. You are simply saying that you want your day to be his. You sincerely ask for the grace to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than by your own self-centered tendencies. Since we are always susceptible to our weaknesses, we cannot guarantee the results. Yet through this prayer of offering we can consciously express our *desire* to unite our lives with Jesus' life, to place our hearts into his heart. This offering is an expression of your desire to be generous and to lead a saintly life.

How does God receive my offering?

Gladly! He warmly welcomes into his loving heart the sincere offering of your life. Despite your limitations, your life, when united to Christ in this way, plays a role in the salvation of all people. Jesus associates you with his own work of redemption, as you ask him for the grace to live according to the attitude of his heart, offering yourself for the world with him.

Why do we call this way of life “living the Eucharist”?

We call this “living the Eucharist” because it unites us to Jesus’ way of life, which was always Eucharistic. He lived giving his life to others. He was completely unselfish. His death was the fullest expression of his giving of himself to us, for us. He represented this self-giving in the words and gestures of the Last Supper: “Take this all of you, and eat it: this is my body, which will be given up for you” (Luke 22:19). Then he invited us to do as he does: “Do this in memory of me.” Do what? Make in each Eucharist an offering of our own lives for others. Each time you offer your life to God for others you express Eucharistic spiritually.

Won’t this be difficult for us?

Not only difficult, but impossible. Yet miraculously possible in the same way that a piece of bread and a sip of wine can become God’s living presence for us. Living the Eucharist is a gift. It is the gift of the Father who gave us his Son. It is the gift of the Son who brings us consolation, courage, and light. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit who transforms the bread and wine into Christ and the community into the body of Christ, sending us out to transform the world into his likeness. Your daily offering prayer is a humble plea asking for this gift. To offer your life united to Jesus in the Mass is to ask the Holy Spirit to unite your life to his, so you may be transformed into Christ for others. In this way, you learn to live your whole life as Eucharist. The Mass will begin for you in the morning when you awake, and will continue all day long as you offer everything to the Father, united with Jesus’ perfect offering.

How does the Eucharist connect us to the heart of Christ?

Living the Eucharist by means of the daily offering aligns your life with the self-giving attitude that was always in Jesus’ heart. In the Eucharist you receive the Holy Spirit that transforms your heart to the likeness of Jesus’ heart. But there is more. Jesus gave his life, his body and his blood, for love of us all. He died to bring together the entire family of God. In his heart we all meet; we all fit; we are all welcome. Here he offers the whole of humanity to his Father along with himself. As we pray our daily (Eucharistic) offering, we bring our family, our neighbors, our work, the poor... in short, all of humanity, into his heart. The Eucharist is the foretaste of the heavenly banquet of all nations, of all peoples, gathered and sheltered under God’s loving protection. Jesus is present, giving his life for

the salvation of the world and for the prayer intentions of the whole world. These intentions are symbolized and made concrete for us in the Pope's monthly intentions.

The Eucharist is the place where we bring the whole world into Jesus' heart. We in turn are sent from the Eucharist back to the world, with Jesus, taking his heart to all who need him.

So this is a spirituality of *prayer and service*?

Certainly. The Eucharistic spirituality of the Apostleship of Prayer begins with the awareness of God's personal heartfelt love for you, but it doesn't end there. Union with the heart of Jesus in the Eucharist leads us to share his concern for all people. Living a Eucharistic life by making a total offering of ourselves every day leads us to pray for and to serve others. It helps us become generous followers of Christ, sent out to make the world a better place.

Can you give me a step-by-step method to *live the Eucharist* as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer?

1. **Begin by being aware of your baptism.** On the day you were baptized God adopted you into his family and called you his "beloved child." He joined you to his own Son that day, "to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).
2. **Accept the friendship Jesus offers you.** You are dear to him and he loves you very much. He opens his heart to you and wishes to be always in your heart. He knows you are sorry for the sins that have alienated you from him, and he is very eager to forgive you.
3. **Offer yourself and your day every morning.** Respond to his love with your simple everyday life. Ask that you may do so with the mind and heart of Jesus (Philippians 2:5). Offer all your prayers, works, joys, and sufferings; offer every thought, word, and deed; offer every breath you take and every beat of your heart to God in union with Jesus' heart. Ask him for the grace to live your whole day according to his will. As you offer yourself, offer as well your family, friends and neighbors, the Church, the poor, and all of humanity, living your baptismal priesthood by interceding for all.
4. **Renew your offering throughout the day.** Keep telling Jesus during the day that you want your works and actions to be his, that you desire to live with him and in him. As you go about your day, place everything and everyone into Jesus' heart. He takes in our joys and our sufferings. Remind yourself that your life and the lives of your brothers and sisters are meaningful, and because you have offered yourself and them, you are all united to Jesus' own life. This is the way to be an apostle, sharing Christ's mission of making his Father's love visible to all humankind.
5. **Experience the Eucharist as intrinsic to your daily offering.** Participate in Sunday Mass and, as much as possible, in weekday Mass. Join your own life-offering

together with the priest who is celebrating and with the whole Church. Put your life on that altar and give it to the Father together with Jesus' life-offering. You will learn to live your whole day in this attitude, and in this way every moment of your life will be lived as an extension of the Mass.

6. **Unite your personal mission with the whole Church's mission.** By baptism you are a priest. By intercession you bring your brothers and sisters before the Lord. By your daily offering you give your life to God, willing to collaborate in his mission. Now you join your life and your prayer to the whole Church's mission and prayer by praying for the Holy Father. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ who carries the needs of the Church and the world in his heart. Each month he proposes two of his main concerns, asking people to join him in prayer. Learn about and pray for these intentions, offering your day for them. Be open to concrete ways that God may be calling you to address them.
7. **Make an *examen* or evening review.** Do not just ask yourself "What did I do wrong today?" but rather "What has God done with the gift that I gave him at the beginning of the day?" You will also see what you have done wrong, but it is more important to see what God has done right. Ask for his forgiveness and his help to correct what is wrong. The next day begin again, putting your life in his hands once more.
8. **Go regularly to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.** Confession helps you be aware of your own self-deceits and strengthens your desire to give the Lord all your life.
9. **Be close to Mary, loving her tenderly.** Carry Mary in your heart, and seek her as the best companion for your journey with Jesus. She knows better than anyone what it means to give all one's life to the Lord.

What words can I use to offer myself to God every day?

Express your offering in the way that is most meaningful to you. Use your own words or those of someone else. There are many forms of the daily offering, ancient and modern.

Our daily Morning Offering could be put in these words:

*God, our Father, I offer You my day.
I offer You my prayers, thoughts, words,
actions, joys, and sufferings
in union with Your Son Jesus' Heart,
Who continues to offer Himself in the Eucharist
for the salvation of the world.
May the Holy Spirit, Who guided Jesus,
be my guide and my strength today
so that I may witness to Your love.
With Mary, the mother of our Lord and of the Church,
I pray especially for this month's intentions
as proposed by the Holy Father.*

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Thank you for your generous support of our ministry.*

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