

EIGHTH GRADE: THE MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.

I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians.

I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.

Praying and focusing on this one prayer throughout the entire year will allow the students to encounter Christ and to deepen their friendship with Him. The following resources are meant to foster this process. Please consider implementing one simple aspect each session.

Jesus' love for you

Jesus knows you and loves you. In the Bible the LORD says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!" (Isaiah 1)

Why do we want to pray the *Morning Offering* each day?

- 1) We want to encounter the Person of Jesus on a daily basis and
- 2) Deepen our friendship with the Person of Jesus and
- 3) Become accustomed, at the beginning of each day, to become aware of God's Presence within us and to greet Him. This will lead to a continual awareness of the reality of His presence with us.

Meaning of the Words of the *Morning Offering* – explain one line at a time

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

We begin the prayer by addressing Jesus, our Creator and Lord, our Savior and God, our Model and Friend. We remember with gratitude all that Jesus did out of His deep love for each individual person. Jesus died on the Cross to forgive our sins and open the gates of Heaven. We begin our Morning Offering in a spirit of gratitude and generous devotion. And we offer this prayer through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. God chose Mary to be the Mother of Jesus. And Mary freely gave her "yes" to God's plan. Jesus took on human flesh so that He could save us from our sins. Therefore, Mary's role in God's plan of salvation is extremely important.

We refer to Mary's heart as Immaculate because she was preserved from the stain of Original Sin from the first moment of her conception. Further, Mary, through her own free will and in cooperation with God's grace, never sinned throughout her entire life. Therefore, Mary's heart is pure, in other words immaculate.



I offer You all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.

It is so important that we offer our entire day to God. According to St. John Vianney, “All that we do without offering it to God is wasted.” Pope Saint John Paul II observed that the Morning Offering is “of fundamental importance in the life of each and every one of the faithful.” This prayer is simple but if we truly believe that each new day is a gift from God, it follows that we would want to show our gratitude by making the most of that gift. By starting our day with the Morning Offering, we are turning each moment of our lives into a prayer, even though it will not always be on our minds. We want to offer everything in union with the Masses being offered throughout the world because the Mass is the highest form of prayer. In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is made present, and this perfect sacrifice reconciled us to God. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hereafter CCC; paragraph 1436)

I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians.

Jesus’ Heart is called the Sacred Heart and is a sign of perfect love for us. The intentions of Jesus’ Sacred Heart are the most important things in life and for which we need and want to pray.

Jesus knew and loved us during His life, His agony and His Passion, and gave Himself up for each one of us. He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, “is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that. . . the love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings without exception.” (CCC 478)

Salvation of souls: Jesus came and gave His life for us so that each person can be saved and spend eternity with God in Heaven. Jesus said, “And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:39)

Reparation for sin: We are to make reparation for something that we have done wrong, such as an offense against another person’s reputation. (CCC 2487) Reparation means to repair for our sins and the sins of others. We make reparation for sin through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Christ made amends for Adam’s disobedience and our sins (CCC 411, 615)

In the sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus in the Eucharist is offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead. (CCC 1414)

Reunion of all Christians:

Jesus founded only one Church and gave the Keys of the Kingdom to Peter, the first Pope. It is God’s desire that all Christians be united in His one true Church. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed the High Priestly Prayer as found in the Gospel of John. Jesus prayed, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. I pray that they may be [one] in us, that the world may believe that you sent Me.” (John 17:20-21)



I offer them for the intentions of our bishops, and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.

We want to offer our prayers, works, joy and sufferings for the intentions of our bishops, who are the successors of the Apostles. Bishops are to guard and protect the Deposit of Faith, so that it is not changed, as the Faith was given to the Apostles by Christ. (1 Timothy 6:20) Our bishop, here in the Diocese of La Crosse, is the chief teacher of the Faith and shepherd of our souls.

About the bishop (CCC 1555-1556)

To fulfil their exalted mission, "the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, and by the imposition of hands they passed on to their auxiliaries [the bishops] the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration." (Acts 1:8, 2:4; John 20:22-23; 1Timothy 4:14; 2Timothy 1:6-7)

About the Pope (CCC 880-882)

When Christ instituted the Twelve, "he constituted [them] in the form of a college or permanent assembly, at the head of which he placed Peter, chosen from among them." (Luke 6:13; John 21:15-17) Just as "by the Lord's institution, St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles constitute a single apostolic college, so in like fashion the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, are related with and united to one another."

The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock. "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head." This pastoral office of Peter and the other apostles belongs to the Church's very foundation and is continued by the bishops under the primacy of the Pope. The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful." The Pope is the Vicar (representative) of Christ on earth.

Learning the Principles

- **The Morning Offering is a prayer to Jesus.** It was written in 1844 by Fr. François-Xavier Gautrelet for his Apostleship of Prayer, and is still in existence.
- The main focus of the *Morning Offering* is to start the day by giving everything to God: all that we may do and encounter, such as friends, school work, difficulties, joys and sufferings. Prayer is the best thing that we can give God as the first thing of our day; first of all by recognizing the presence of God and putting the day in His hands.
- **This prayer truly offers God *everything* in our day, both the good and bad,** while reminding us of the importance of praying for others, with the help of our Blessed Mother.
- The Morning Offering provides a great foundation for building a solid prayer life. We can supplement our offering by speaking to Jesus throughout the day, reaffirming our desire to offer up all daily activities. When problems arise or we are faced with a mundane task, a quick "I offer this to you, Lord" helps us to focus on the prayerful nature of the activity. On the other hand, saying "Thank you, Jesus" for a pleasant experience is a great way to



express our appreciation for the many joys that we are granted. Such comments also allow our friendship with Christ to grow. As time goes on, we will find ourselves becoming more aware of Our Lord's presence in your daily activities.

Explanation

- The Morning Offering reminds us that we want to engage in our actual work done with a spirit of excellence in conjunction with the intention of doing it all for Christ and the conversion of souls – those who do not believe in God or have rejected Him.
- Saint Mechtilde was a Benedictine nun from Germany (1241-1298) who had visions of Jesus. She transmitted the following words of Jesus: "When you awake in the morning, let your first act be to greet My Heart, and to offer Me your own. Whoever shall breathe a sigh toward Me from the bottom of his heart when he awakes in the morning and shall ask Me to work all his works in him throughout the day, will draw Me to himself. For never does a man breathe a sigh of longing aspiration toward Me without drawing Me nearer to him than I was before." (St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, MA)
- Saint John Mary Vianney said: "All that we do without offering it to God is wasted."
- "The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross... and dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Savior's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father." (CCC 2157)
- Encourage students to make a request of Jesus for a specific need. Give an example from your own life, such as help on a test, for a sick grandmother, rain for the farmers, safe travel in a storm. When a prayer is answered, it makes faith come alive for them and will help the students to develop a relationship with Jesus. At a time when students have a specific prayer that was answered, it is most helpful for them to share it with the class. God desires a relationship with us. We don't want to just ask for good things from God with no desire to speak with Him and develop a friendship with Him.
- Teach the students how to pray with their heart; not just rattling words. "Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of Him 'to whom we speak.' In the case of the *Morning Offering*, we are speaking with the person of Jesus.
- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745)

Activities for Learning the Words

- Pray the *Morning Offering* at the beginning (or end) of every session.
- Explain one phrase at a time for better understanding then memorize the phrase.
- In pairs, let students work together to memorize and to pray the prayer with their heart.
- Encourage students to pray the *Morning Offering* at home every morning, so that they learn the prayer "by heart."
- Make a graphic using the words of the *Morning Offering* drawing out what appeals to each student and how this prayer is meaningful to their lives.
- Make a booklet of the *Morning Offering*, with a phrase on each page. Allow the students to draw a picture of each phrase to describe what it means to them.
- When teaching about this prayer to Jesus, include Sacred Art pictures.



Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that students understand the meaning of the words and to know if they are encountering the Person of Jesus. Allow them time to journal at various times, noting what stands out for them in the prayer.
- After becoming familiar with the prayer, allow them to express the effects on their life.
- **This one prayer is the prayer the students should know by heart and with good understanding before they advance to the next grade level. Therefore it should be prayed at every opportunity.** Please continue to review and teach the other prayers as listed in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Eighth Grade found here:
<http://diolc.org/catechesis/religion-curriculum/grade-school-religion-curriculum/>

Encountering Jesus in Prayer

- After the students have received explanation of each phrase of the *Morning Offering*, allow them periods of silence, to reflect on what stood out for them. This takes it to the next level of a deep personal encounter with Jesus.
As a further progression, provide silence so that students may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with Jesus or Mary.
- Since the *Morning Offering* is a Christ-centered prayer, we want to pray this prayer with deep respect and love for Christ, which will lead to deeper friendship with Him and adoration of Him each time we recite it.
- To help students deepen their relationship with Jesus, allow frequent times of silence in the chapel where Our Lord is reserved in the tabernacle. Guide the youth to acknowledge that they truly believe that the Person of Christ is in the tabernacle by a reverent genuflection and attentiveness to Him. The teacher’s language referring to Jesus present in the tabernacle helps to build the awareness of this fact.

Scriptural Foundation

- Jesus loves us and gives us everything. We want to offer the gift of our lives back to Him.
“...God proves His love for us: that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
(Romans 4:8) “He loved me and delivered Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)
- Immaculate Heart of Mary: God created Mary “full of grace” (Luke 1:28) and her heart was completely pure with no stain of sin because she always cooperated with God’s grace.
- The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the chief sign of His love, and immediately after dying on the Cross, was pierced by a lance for our sins and for our salvation. (John 19:34)
- The blind man kept calling out to Jesus. He said to Barimeus, “What do you want Me to do for you?” (Mark 10:46-52) In the same way, Jesus wants us to ask Him for what we need. Jesus loves us and so He ask Him directly and simply.

Resources

- Video of Msgr. Joseph Hirsch, priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, singing “Salvation Poem” at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The song is about living for Jesus and why we would want to do this. <https://vimeo.com/37612135> (4min. 22 sec.)

