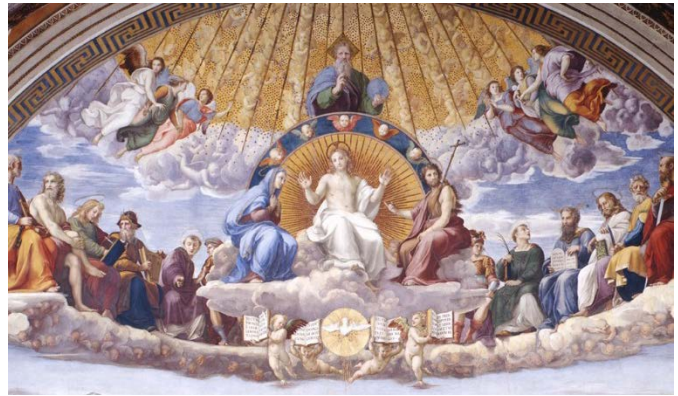


Dear Parents,

We are very excited to provide you with an initiative that has been requested over the last five years by, most notably, students, as well as parents, Catholic school teachers, directors (DREs) or coordinators (CREs) of religious education, youth ministers and priests. **“Going Deeper in Prayer”** is the title of this initiative.

The vision:

Many prayers and ways of praying are taught each year, and that needs to continue. However, there is a need for you the parents, as well as your sons and daughters and indeed, all of us, to go deeper in prayer by spending a whole year focusing on one prayer and allowing it to become very personal and a place of encounter with Our Heavenly Father for each person who is praying with it.



The Blessed Trinity with Biblical images of the Father portrayed as a grandfather and the Holy Spirit as a dove; with Jesus – the Risen Savior – surrounded by Mary, St. John the Baptist, and the Apostles.

“Going Deeper in Prayer” needs to begin and continue in an ongoing manner primarily in the family:

- “Family catechesis... precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 2226)
- “Parents are the primary educators in the faith.” (*General Directory for Catechesis* for the Universal Church, n. 225).
- “...With their parents leading the way by family prayer, children... will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation and holiness. (The Church in the Modern World – *Gaudium et Spes*, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, n. 48)

The role of the family is so vital to each young person’s understanding of the importance of and commitment to a daily habit of prayer that starting this initiative *is to be preceded* by intentional parental engagement. In other words, the “Going Deeper with Prayer” Initiative will begin in the Catholic school or Parish Faith Formation Program as support for families when you, the parents, are on-board. This could take place, for example, through a parent gathering where the initiative can be explained, the Prayer Card read over and the Prayer modeled, and formation on prayer can take place. You want the best for your children and therefore your participation in such gatherings is essential. We hope that you will be committed to formation on family prayer in an ongoing manner.

The goal:

The goal is that your sons and daughters pray in the home with you each day as well as in the Catholic School or Parish Program in order to continue to deepen their friendship with Jesus Christ. When you, along with your sons and daughters, complete the year of praying and learning about this specific way of praying, it will become a part of your, and their life, that they will never forget.

Parent Resources

Learning about Jesus in an ongoing way, being committed to speaking with and listening to Him on a daily basis and receiving the Sacraments are needed in order to be strengthened to love God and our neighbor. This is the path to happiness – interior peace and true joy.

If you have more than one child, it is suggested that you begin with the prayer of the smallest child. There are various ways that you can slowly implement the prayers of all of your children.

The following **Parents Resources** are also provided online for use in helping children to go deeper in their understanding of the **Our Father**: <http://diolc.org/prayer/>

- A simple introduction about God’s love
- The goals for praying this prayer each day
- The meaning of the words of the prayer
- The Principles underlying the prayer
- Activities to help students remember the words
- Spiritual Comprehension: Do they understand?
- Encountering God in Prayer
- The Scriptural Foundation of the words of the prayer
- Resources



The creation of Adam, with the portrayal of Eve as still in the mind of God

The following truths underlie any formation in prayer:

1. *The Person of Christ desires that you develop a friendship with Him.* This relationship is prayer. You are to teach your sons and daughters about the Person of Jesus, but even more importantly, you need to help them to encounter and develop a friendship with Him by modeling your own personal and communal prayer.
2. *Every person needs to learn how to pray.* “Like a wise teacher Jesus takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hereafter CCC, paragraph 2607). *Jesus teaches you how to pray!*
3. *The Holy Spirit dwells within you and guides you in prayer!* “The Holy Spirit is the interior Master of Christian prayer” (CCC 2672). The Holy Spirit helps and guides you to develop a daily habit of prayer. If you ask, He will even give you the desire to pray.