



# PRAYER BOOK

FOR LAWYERS



## **Introduction**

The St. Thomas More Society of Dallas offers this prayer book to God in the sincere hope it will provide lawyers and other professionals spiritual support in their everyday work and in the uniquely difficult aspects of professional life. Please see the hyperlinked Table of Contents for all the issues of professional life that this prayer book can support.

Special appreciation goes to the following people who contributed prayers and ideas to this prayer book: Hon. Jane Boyle, Hon. Robert Conrad, Hon. Kerry FitzGerald, Hon. Douglas Lang, Hon. Reed O'Connor, Hon. Renee Toliver, Dr. Gerard Wegemer, and Fr. Luke Rawicki, L.C.

Thanks also to Bishop Kevin J. Farrell, Diocese of Dallas, who has approved this prayer book.

Cover art by Theresa Rawicki (Rococo Loco Design).

### **Quotes on the Power of Prayer**

Cast your care upon the LORD, who will give you support. He will never allow the righteous to stumble.

*Psalms 55:23*

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened. Is there anyone among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish? If you, then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

*Matthew 7:7-11*

Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

*Proverbs 23:18*

The things, good Lord, that I pray for, give me the grace to labor for.

*Thomas More's Last Prayer<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Edited by the Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with permission.

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## Prayers for Daily Help and Inspiration

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, all I have and call my own.

You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.

Give me only your love and your grace.

That is enough for me.

*Suscipe by St. Ignatius of Loyola*

O God:

Give me strength to live another day;

Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties;

Let me not lose faith in other people;

Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery, or meanness;

Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them;

Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity;

Open wide the eyes of my soul that I may see good in all things;

Grant me this day some new vision of thy truth;

Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness;

and make me the cup of strength to suffering souls;

in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*For Today by Phillip Brooks<sup>2</sup>*

Our Father, may everything I do begin with Your Inspiration,

Continue with Your Help, and reach perfection under Your Guidance.

With Your loving care guide me in my daily actions.

Help me to persevere with love and sincerity.

Teach me to judge wisely the things of earth and to love the things of Heaven.

Keep me in Your presence and never let me be separated from You.

Your Spirit made me Your child, confident to call You Father.

Make Your Love the foundation of my life.

Teach me to long for Heaven.

May its promise and hope guide my way on earth until I reach eternal life with you.

*Prayer for God's Help in Daily Actions<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Reprinted with permission from Forward Movement. To learn more about Forward Movement's prayer resources, visit [www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org).

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted with permission of Catholic Online, [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org).

Lord, teach me to be generous.  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labor and not to ask for reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your will.  
*Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola*

My God, I offer you 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 Son's Sacred Heart, for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of Christians.  
*Morning Offering by Fr. François-Xavier Gautrelet*

This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.  
*Psalms 118:24*

## Prayers for Prioritizing Life

God, my Father, may I love You in all things and above all things.  
May I reach the joy which You have prepared for me in Heaven.  
Nothing is good that is against Your Will, and all that is good comes from Your Hand.  
Place in my heart a desire to please You and fill my mind with thoughts of Your Love, so that I may grow in Your Wisdom and enjoy Your Peace.  
*Prayer to Love God Above All Things*<sup>4</sup>

Lord, ... I want my work to serve others and not just my own self-interest. Help me grow in the conviction that this spirit of service will make me happier and will give a new, higher purpose to my professional life.  
*Novena for Work to St. Josemaria Escriva*<sup>5</sup>

### **For family life**

St. Thomas More, you who were a model parent–attorney, pray for me as I strive to balance family time with work time.  
You worked on your religious and philosophical writings while your family slept; pray that I have the fortitude to complete my work while maximizing time with my family.  
You took great care to educate your son and daughters; pray that I have the time and wisdom to educate my children correctly.  
You lived each moment, even unto death, with a good cheer that pointed to the joy of Heaven; pray that when spending time with family and friends I may be joyful and fully engaged.  
You taught your family that love of God was the highest priority; pray that my words and example may teach the same.  
*by Bennett Rawicki*

Thomas More, counselor of law and statesman of integrity, merry martyr and most human of saints: . . . Pray that my family may find in me what yours found in you: friendship and courage, cheerfulness and charity, diligence in duties, counsel in adversity, patience in pain—their good servant, and God’s first.  
*A Lawyer’s Prayer to St. Thomas More*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reprinted with permission of Catholic Online, [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org).

<sup>5</sup> Opus Dei. Used with Permission.

<sup>6</sup> Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with permission.

## For defending against materialism

Give me thy grace, good Lord:

To set the world at naught;  
To set my mind fast upon thee,  
And not to hang upon the blast of men's mouths;  
To be content to be solitary,  
Not to long for worldly company;  
Little and little utterly to cast off the world,  
And rid my mind of all the business thereof;  
Not to long to hear of any worldly things,  
But that the hearing of worldly phantasies may be to me displeasent;  
Gladly to be thinking of God,  
Piteously to call for his help;  
To lean unto the comfort of God,  
Busily to labor to love him;  
To know mine own vility and wretchedness,  
To humble and meeken myself under the mighty hand of God;  
To bewail my sins passed,  
For the purging of them patiently to suffer adversity;  
Gladly to bear my purgatory here,  
To be joyful of tribulations;  
To walk the narrow way that leadeth to life,  
To bear the cross with Christ;  
To have the last thing in remembrance,  
To have ever afore mine eye my death that is ever at hand;  
To make death no stranger to me,  
To foresee and consider the everlasting fire of hell;  
To pray for pardon before the judge come,  
To have continually in mind the passion that Christ suffered for me;  
For his benefits uncessantly to give him thanks,  
To buy the time again that I before have lost;  
To abstain from vain confabulations,  
To eschew light foolish mirth and gladness;  
Recreations not necessary, to cut off;  
Of worldly substance, friends, liberty, life and all,  
to set the loss at right nought for the winning of Christ;  
To think my most enemies my best friends,  
For the brethren of Joseph could never have done him so much good with their love  
and favor as they did him with their malice and hatred.

These minds are more to be desired of every man than all the treasure of all the princes and kings,  
Christian and heathen, were it gathered and laid together all upon one heap .

*Psalm on Detachment by St. Thomas More*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> From Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with permission.

Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.

*Matthew 16:19-21*

Do not work for food that goes bad, but work for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of man will give you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal.

*John 6:27*

Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?"

*Luke 9:23-25*



## Prayers for Issues at Work

O Glorious St. Joseph, model of all those who are devoted to labor, obtain for me the grace to work conscientiously, putting the call of duty above my natural inclinations, to work with gratitude and joy, in a spirit of penance for the remission of my sins, considering it an honor to employ and develop by means of labor the gifts received from God, to work with order, peace, moderation and patience, without ever shrinking from weariness and difficulties, to work above all with purity of intention and detachment from self, having always death before my eyes and the account that I must render of time lost, of talents wasted, of good omitted, of vain complacency in success, so fatal to the work of God. All for Jesus, all through Mary, all after thine example, O Patriarch, St. Joseph. Such shall be my motto in life and in death. Amen.

*Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker by Pope St. Pius X*

### **For determining and fulfilling your vocation**

Make known to me your ways, LORD; teach me your paths.

*Psalms 25:4*

Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of the world and Designer of our talents, grant me the wisdom to know your plan for my life, the strength to accept it, and the motivation to accomplish it.

Please pour forth your guidance, inspiration, and fortification, so that my actions may more-fully echo the great “Yes” of your mother, Mary: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

*by Bennett Rawicki (quoting Luke 1:28)*

Grant me grace, O merciful God, to desire ardently all that is pleasing to Thee, to examine it prudently, to acknowledge it truthfully, and to accomplish it perfectly, for the praise and glory of Thy name.

*Prayer Before an Image of Jesus Christ by St. Thomas Aquinas*

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission—I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. . . .

Therefore I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. . . . He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life, He may shorten it; He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends, He may throw me among strangers, He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide the future from me—still He knows what He is about.

O Adonai, O Ruler of Israel, . . . I give myself to Thee. I trust Thee wholly. Thou art wiser than I—more loving to me than I myself. Deign to fulfil Thy high purposes in me whatever they be—work in and through me. I am born to serve Thee, to be Thine, to be Thy instrument. Let me be Thy blind instrument. I ask not to see—I ask not to know—I ask simply to be used.

*Meditations on Christian Doctrine: Hope in God—Creator by John Henry Cardinal Newman*

Good Lord, give me the grace so to spend my life that when the day of my death shall come, though I feel pain in my body, I may feel comfort in soul and—with faithful hope of thy mercy, in due love towards thee and charity towards the world—I may, through thy grace, depart hence into Your glory.

*A Treatise on the Passion—For a Happy Death by St. Thomas More*<sup>8</sup>

### **For help with difficult tasks**

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

*Proverbs 3:5*

Thomas More, counselor of law and statesman of integrity, merry martyr and most human of saints: Pray that, for the glory of GOD and in the pursuit of His justice, I may be trustworthy with confidences, keen in study, accurate in analysis, correct in conclusion, able in argument, loyal to clients, honest with all, courteous to adversaries, ever attentive to conscience. Sit with me at my desk and listen with me to my clients' tales. Read with me in my library and stand always beside me so that today I shall not, to win a point, lose my soul.

*A Lawyer's Prayer to St. Thomas More*<sup>9</sup>

I want what You want, O Lord. By asking You for guidance with complete confidence and faith that You are helping me, nothing that I am called upon to do becomes “too much” or “too bothersome.” Nor is there any room for worry.

I will find it easy to ask You each day to be a partner in my work to help me get things done to weigh my actions and decisions in the light of “is this right?” “is this just?” “is this doing Your will?”

With Your help I will make decisions better and faster, knowing that You will not lead me astray. I will have confidence that, by wanting what You want, I need not worry about the outcome. So I will live my life, knowing that it is Your will that I accomplish.

*Prayer for Professionals*<sup>10</sup>

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful.

In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Prayer to the Holy Spirit*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with permission.

<sup>10</sup> From *Finding God in All Things*. A Marquette Prayer Book; Doug Leonhart, S.J., Editor. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2009. Used with permission.

<sup>11</sup> The English translation of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit from *A Book of Prayers* © 1982, International Committee on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Absolute and all-knowing God, nothing is hidden from Your sight.  
In the prescience since the beginning, all knowledge existed within You.  
Kindly share Your knowledge with me, making me aware of what is meant to be, permitting my soul to understand it, and wisdom to agree with its outcome.  
Provide me with the gift of discretion, to prudently apply received knowledge, to ensure the fulfillment of Your Will.  
Your knowledge shines forth forever!  
*A Prayer for the Gift of Knowledge*<sup>12</sup>

Blessed is anyone who perseveres when trials come. Such a person is of proven worth and will win the prize of life, the crown that the Lord has promised to those who love him.  
*James 1:12*

You are my hope, Lord; my trust, GOD, from my youth. On you I have depended since birth; from my mother's womb you are my strength; my hope in you never wavers.  
*Psalms 71:5-6*

### **For managing others**

Almighty Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who created, led, and inspired the Apostles to build your Church, help me be a successful manager.  
In assuming management, help me be humble and gracious.  
In assigning tasks, help me be discerning.  
In leading others to complete their tasks, help me be inspiring.  
In answering questions, help me be wise.  
In fielding requests for accommodation, help me be compassionate.  
In reviewing work, help me be probing but complimentary.  
Ultimately, help my team complete its work timely and well, so that our final product is successful.  
May our work glorify you, O Lord, to whom we owe every talent.  
*Prayer for Managers by Bennett Rawicki*

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## For handling ethical issues

Give me understanding to keep your law, to observe it with all my heart.

*Psalms 119:34*

Almighty God,

Strengthen and direct, we pray,

the will of all whose work it is to write what many read, and to speak where many listen.

May we be bold to confront evil and injustice:

understanding and compassionate of human weakness;

rejecting alike the half-truth which deceives, and the slanted word which corrupts.

May the power which is ours, for good or ill,

always be used with honesty and courage, with respect and integrity,

so that when all here has been written, said and done,

we may, unashamed, meet Thee face to face.

Amen.

*A Prayer for Journalists by St. Francis de Sales*

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your kind spirit guide me on ground that is level. For your name's sake, LORD, give me life; in your righteousness lead my soul out of distress.

*Psalms 142:10-11*

Gracious God, give me Your grace so to consider the punishment of that false great council that gathered together against You that I never to Your displeasure be partner, nor give my assent to follow the sinful device of any wicked counsel.

*A Treatise on the Passion—To Resist Wicked Counsel by St. Thomas More<sup>13</sup>*

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.

Amen.

*Holy Spirit Prayer by St. Augustine*

I call with all my heart, O LORD; answer me that I may keep your statutes. I call to you to save me that I may observe your testimonies.

*Psalms 119:145-46*

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<sup>13</sup> Modernized by the Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with Permission.

## **For resisting temptation**

Steady my feet in accord with your promise; do not let iniquity lead me.  
*Psalms 119:133*

Almighty God, . . . by Your tender pity of that Passion that was paid for . . . our redemption, assist me so with Your gracious help so that to the subtle suggestions of the serpent I never so incline the ears of my heart but that my reason may resist them and master my sensuality and keep me from them.

*A Treatise on the Passion—For Resistance to Temptation by St. Thomas More<sup>14</sup>*

Answer me, LORD, in your generous love; in your great mercy turn to me. Do not hide your face from your servant; hasten to answer me, for I am in distress.  
*Psalms 69:17-18*

In your justice rescue and deliver me; listen to me and save me! Be my rock of refuge, my stronghold to give me safety; for you are my rock and fortress.  
*Psalms 71:2-3*

## **For dealing with difficult people**

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
*The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr*

Rescue me, LORD, from my foes, for I seek refuge in you.  
*Psalms 142:9*

Jesus, Prince of Peace, you have asked us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We pray for our enemies and those who oppose us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, may all people learn to work together for that justice which brings true and lasting peace. To you be glory and honor for ever and ever.  
*Prayer for Our Enemies<sup>15</sup>*

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You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon. Though a thousand fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, near you it shall not come. You need simply watch; the punishment of the wicked you will see. Because you have the LORD for your refuge and have made the Most High your stronghold, No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent. For he commands his angels with regard to you, to guard you wherever you go. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

*Psalms 91:5-12*

### **For motivation and against procrastination**

Come, O Holy Spirit! Enlighten my mind to know your commands; strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; inflame my will.

I have heard your voice, and I don't want to harden myself and resist, saying "Later ..., tomorrow." Nunc coepi! Now I begin! In case there is no tomorrow for me.

O Spirit of truth and wisdom, Spirit of understanding and counsel, Spirit of joy and peace! I want whatever you want. I want because you want, I want however you want, I want whenever you want.

*Prayer to the Holy Spirit by St. Josemaria Escriva<sup>16</sup>*

Omnipotent God, vitality of life, Your strength supplies my motivation. I am stirred in the path of Your will. Maintain my self-motivation to always search, find, examine, will and act upon the truths placed before me. May I become a driving force for others, encouraging them to pick up their crosses and follow the virtuous road of life. I thank You for Your continued vigor that coexists in my whole being, my soul, my spirit and my body!

*A Prayer for Self-Motivation<sup>17</sup>*

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

*Galatians 6:9*

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## **For help finding employment**

God, our Father, I turn to you seeking your divine help and guidance as I look for suitable employment.

I need your wisdom to guide my footsteps along the right path, and to lead me to find the proper things to say and do in this quest. I wish to use the gifts and talents you have given me, but I need the opportunity to do so with gainful employment.

Do not abandon me, dear Father, in this search, but rather grant me this favor I seek so that I may return to you with praise and thanksgiving for your gracious assistance.

Grant this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*A Prayer For Employment*

Lord, help me find stable and suitable employment. And when I do find work, may I make good use of my time, regarding it as a treasure. Help me to grow in the virtue of order, doing my work punctually, attentively and steadfastly. May I develop a well-structured plan that will permit me to live my spiritual life, family life, professional life and social life in a balanced way.

*Novena for Work to St. Josemaria Escriva<sup>18</sup>*

Grant me, Lord, the joy of finding a job in which I can put my God-given skills to good use. And if my current job is beneath my level of competence and legitimate aspirations, may I not disdain it. Rather, while continuing to seek something more appropriate, may I carry out my work in a responsible way, giving it the same value that Jesus gave to his work [as a carpenter in] Nazareth.

*Novena for Work to St. Josemaria Escriva<sup>19</sup>*

Gracious God, we know that your love is infinite and that you care about all areas of our life.

In this time of economic insecurity, help us to trust that all of our security is in you.

Keep us mindful that you always have and always will provide for our needs.

Apart from you we can do nothing.

*Prayer During Difficult Economic Times<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>18</sup> Opus Dei. Used with Permission.

<sup>19</sup> Opus Dei. Used with Permission.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Used with permission.

## **For excelling at work**

I pray, for the glory of God and in the pursuit of His justice, that I, like You, St. Thomas More, may be trustworthy with confidences, keen in study, accurate in analysis, correct in conclusion, able in argument, loyal to clients, honest with all, courteous to adversaries, ever attentive to conscience. Stand always beside me so that today I shall not, to win a point, lose my soul.

*Lawyer's Prayer to St. Thomas More (modified)*

Come Holy Spirit, light my way. Inspire me, guide me, fortify me and stand beside me as I [name your task]. "Prosper the work of our hands!"

*by Bennett Rawicki (quoting Psalms 90:17)*

O Lord, my God, Creator and Ruler of the universe, it is Your Will that human beings accept the duty of work.

May the work I do bring growth in this life to me and those I love and help to extend the Kingdom of Christ.

Give all persons work that draws them to You and to each other in cheerful service.

I unite all my work with the Sacrifice of Jesus in the Mass that it may be pleasing to You and give You glory.

I beg Your Blessing upon all my efforts.

With Saint Joseph as my example and guide, help me to do the work You have asked and come to the reward You have prepared.

*Prayer for God's Blessing of One's Daily Work<sup>21</sup>*

## **For strength to share faith in the workplace**

Lord Jesus, who over the ages has called and inspired countless disciples to preach the Good News, give me the strength to share my faith in the workplace and the world, with friends and with strangers.

Help me overcome timidity. Help me determine how best to approach others. Help me find the right words. Help me be joyous when describing your Good News. Help me remember that, even if I face opposition, you have assured: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Help me place all my trust in You and Your mission for me.

*by Bennett Rawicki (quoting Matthew 5:10)*

Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

*Holy Spirit Prayer by Saint Augustine*

St. Josemaria Escriva, through your intercession help me find a job that will challenge me to grow professionally and will provide a fertile ground for the apostolic mission that God entrusts to all the baptized. With your help I want to lead my colleagues, friends and clients to discover the marvels of the Christian faith.

*Novena for Work to St. Josemaria Escriva<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>22</sup> Opus Dei. Used with Permission.



## Prayers for Faith

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

*Matthew 5:6*

You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.

*St. Augustine*

O my sweet Savior Christ, who in Your undeserved love towards mankind so kindly would suffer the painful death of the cross: suffer not me to be cold or lukewarm in love again towards You.

*A Treatise on the Passion—For Fervent Love of Christ by St. Thomas More<sup>23</sup>*

O God, send forth your Holy Spirit into my heart that I may perceive, into my mind that I may remember, and into my soul that I may meditate. Inspire me to speak with piety, holiness, tenderness and mercy. Teach, guide and direct my thoughts and senses from beginning to end. May your grace ever help and correct me, and may I be strengthened now with wisdom from on high, for the sake of your infinite mercy. Amen.

*Prayer for the Help of the Holy Spirit by Saint Anthony of Padua*

Give me the grace to amend my life, and to have an eye to mine end without grudge of death, which to them that die in Thee, good Lord, is the gate of a wealthy life.

...

Almighty God, take from me all vainglorious minds, all appetites of mine own praise, all envy, covetise, gluttony, sloth, and lechery, all wrathful affections, all appetite of revenging, all desire or delight of other folks' harm, all pleasure in provoking any person to wrath and anger, all delight of exprobatation or insultation against any person in their affliction and calamity.

And give me, good Lord, an humble, lowly, quiet, peaceable, patient, charitable, kind, tender, and pitiful mind—with all my works, and all my words, and all my thoughts, to have a taste of Thy holy, blessed Spirit.

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity—a love to Thee, good Lord incomparably above the love to myself, and that I love nothing to Thy displeasure, but everything in an order to Thee.

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with Thee, not for the avoiding of the calamities of this wretched world, nor so much for the avoiding of the pains of purgatory, nor of the pains of hell neither, nor so much for the attaining of the joys of heaven, in respect of mine own commodity, as even for a very love to Thee.

*Thomas More's Last Prayer<sup>24</sup>*

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<sup>23</sup> Modernized by the Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with Permission.

<sup>24</sup> Edited by the Center for Thomas More Studies. Used with permission.

## **Novena to Saints Thomas More and John Fisher**

*by Judge Robert Conrad*

### **Day 1**

- 1. Make sign of the Cross*
- 2. Say the Act of Contrition*
- 3. Meditation*

#### TRUTH

Thomas More resigned his lofty office as lord chancellor rather than violate his conscience concerning the king's "great matter." John Fisher stood before the king at the legatine hearing and declared that he was a "professor of the truth; I know that God is truth itself, nor he never spoke but truth." Each man believed his eternal soul depended upon his speaking the truth. Pope St. John Paul II's observation of Thomas More is equally true of John Fisher: "Precisely because of the witness which he bore, even at the price of his life, to the primacy of truth over power, Saint Thomas More is venerated as an imperishable example of moral integrity." With More, we pray, "Give me the grace, good Lord, to set the world at naught; to set my mind upon thee ... to walk the narrow way that leadeth to life."

#### *4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us that you came from the Father "full of grace and truth," (Jn 1:14) and that you are "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Let us read these words, believe these words, live these words.

#### *5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

### **Day 2**

- 1. Make sign of the Cross*
- 2. Say the Act of Contrition*
- 3. Meditation*

#### VANITY

Thomas More reluctantly took employment in the king's court. He knew he had "no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go." John Fisher was not fooled by the extravagance of the king's "Field of the Cloth of Gold," later preaching: "Our eyes have seen many pleasures, many gay sights, many wonderful things that have appeared and seemed to us joyous and comfortable. But yet all these were but dull and dark images of the perfect comfort which the blessed saints have now above in the kingdom of heaven." There exists no title, no castle on earth, no amount of gold to equal the faithful believer's heavenly reward.

#### *4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us that we have been raised with Christ and should set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, that we should set our "affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col 3:1-2). For "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21).

#### *5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

### Day 3

1. *Make sign of the Cross*
2. *Say the Act of Contrition*
3. *Meditation*

#### HEAVEN

Visited in the prison tower by his beloved daughter Meg, Thomas More gazes out the window and what does he see? Three Carthusian monks being led off to their execution because they would not compromise their faith at the insistence of the king. More tells her: "Do you not see Meg, that these blessed fathers are now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage?" John Fisher awoke on the day of his execution, donned his best clothes, and said, "This is my marriage day." These thoughts anticipate by three centuries that of St. John Henry Newman, who felt that a Christian should look forward to death with the joy schoolboys feel as they prepare for Christmas vacation. May we have before us this vision of joy and celebration of the kingdom prepared for those who believe.

#### 4. *Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us not to fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Mt 10:28). For "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9; quoting Is 64:4).

#### 5. *Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 6. *Concluding Prayers* – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

### Day 4

1. *Make sign of the Cross*
2. *Say the Act of Contrition*
3. *Meditation*

#### DETACHMENT

When informed his house was broken into and goods stolen, St. John Fisher said, "Is that all? Then let us go to dinner and be merry and thank God for all that we have still remaining and look better to it than we did to the rest before." Similarly, when Thomas More was informed that his manor at Chelsea had partially burned and all his barns were destroyed, he wrote his wife Alice: "I pray you and my children and your household be merry in God." For thus he perceived the fire to be an act of divine providence to teach the family the insignificance of material goods. Everyone, he said, "should go to church and give thanks." Material goods given by a gracious God are meant to edify and not to enslave. May we experience the freedom that comes from detachment from the things of earth, and attachment to the things of God.

#### 4. *Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us to be mindful of the seed sown in thorns where "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful" (Mk 4:19). "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt 6:33).

#### 5. *Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 6. *Concluding Prayers* – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

## Day 5

1. *Make sign of the Cross*
2. *Say the Act of Contrition*
3. *Meditation*

### PURSUIT OF TRUTH

Fisher wrote concerning the king's great matter that "he had taken great pains to arrive at the truth and he could not change his mind without injury to both his reputation and his conscience." More told his daughter Meg, "For the instruction of my conscience in the matter I have not slightly looked, but my many years studied and advisedly considered, and never could see or hear that thing, and I think I never shall, that could induce my own mind to think otherwise than I do." Diligent study matters, but what we study matters most. Fisher uses the metaphor of a book for the study of Christ's saving work on the cross: "Thus whoever with a meek heart and a true faith muses and marvels over this most wonderful book (I speak of the Crucifix), he shall come to more fruitful knowledge than many others who each day study their common books. This book may suffice for the study of the true Christian man all the days of his life. In this book he may find all things that are necessary for the health of his soul." May we have the discipline to study the truth, a desire to speak the truth and the courage to witness to the truth.

#### 4. *Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us that you are the way, and the truth, and the life, let us come to the Father through you (Jn 1:14). May we "speak of your statutes before kings" and "not be put to shame" (Ps 119:46).

#### 5. *Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's Throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely

———6. *Concluding Prayers* – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

## Day 6

1. *Make sign of the Cross*
2. *Say the Act of Contrition*
3. *Meditation*

### CHRIST'S PASSION

Bishop Fisher's last surviving sermon refers to his constant theme, Christ on the Cross: "Is it not a wonderful thing, that he, that is the Lord and author of all liberty, would thus be bound with ropes and nailed hand and foot unto the Cross?" More, like Fisher, turns to a contemplation of the passion of Christ when confined in the Tower: "If we could and would with due compassion conceive in our minds a right imagination and remembrance of Christ's bitter painful Passion—of the many sore bloody strokes that the cruel tormentors gave Him with rods and whips upon every part of His holy tender body; of the scornful crown of sharp thorns beaten down upon His holy head, so strait and so deep that on every part His blessed blood issued out and streamed down; of His lovely limbs drawn and stretched out upon the cross, to the intolerable pain of His sore-beaten veins and sinews, feeling anew, with the cruel stretching and straining, pain far surpassing any cramp in every part of His blessed body at once; of the great long nails then cruelly driven with the hammer through His holy hands and feet; of His body, in this horrible pain, lifted up and let hang, with all its weight bearing down upon the painful wounded places so grievously pierced with nails; and in such torment without pity, but not without much scorn, suffered to be pined and pained the space of more than three long hours, till He Himself gave over His spirit; after which yet, to show the mightiness of their malice, after His holy soul departed, they pierced His holy heart with a sharp spear, at which issued out the holy blood and water, whence His holy sacraments have inestimable secret strength—if we could, I say, remember these things, in such a way as would God that we would, I verily suppose that the consideration of His incomparable kindness could not fail so to inflame our key-cold hearts, and set them on fire with His love, that we should find ourselves not only content but also glad and desirous to suffer death for His sake who so marvelous lovingly forbore not to

sustain so far passing death for ours.” May we, in our freedom, contemplate our Savior’s willingness to be bound in love to the cross.

*4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us that for the joy set before him, Christ endured the cross (Hb 12:2). He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should “follow in his steps” (1 Pt 2:21).

*5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God’s Throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God’s will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

*6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

**Day 7**

- 1. Make sign of the Cross*
- 2. Say the Act of Contrition*
- 3. Meditation*

FORTITUDE

When threatened by the king’s henchmen with imprisonment, confiscation of property, and even death, More responds that “these terrors be arguments for children not for me.” More knew that one can “lose his head but have no harm.” Fisher faces down the king before the legatine counsel, “No sir, not I,” denying that he ever signed an affidavit in support of the king’s divorce. Knowing that the “wrath of kings is death,” he refuses to yield to power. As a result of their courageous stands, both men were stripped of all that mattered to them on earth, yet they stood fast for the cause of Christ. In life, and with their lives, they declare with Job: “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

*4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us too many times to count to not be afraid. You said to your disciples, “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do” (Lk 12:4).

*5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God’s Throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God’s will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

*6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

**Day 8**

- 1. Make sign of the Cross*
- 2. Say the Act of Contrition*
- 3. Meditation*

LOVE

In Bishop Fisher’s meditation *The Way to Perfect Religion*, written from a Tower cell for the benefit of his sister, he describes love as the principal thing that makes any work easy, even if the “the work be right painful of itself.” Without love, no labor can be comfortable to the doer. In fact, “great fervor and love to the service of God” makes life “a very paradise and heavenly joy in this world.” In the Tower, More writes a prayer, probably using coal after the guards removed his writing instruments: “To think my greatest enemies my best friends; for the brethren of Joseph could never have done him so much good with their love and favor as they did with their malice and hatred.” Love of God and neighbor converts enemies, makes labor a joy, and gives meaning to life. May we, through the examples of your saints, live in love with you, and with each other.

#### *4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word commands us to love one another as you have loved us (Jn 15:12). It assures us that perfect love casts out all fear (1 Jn 4:18) and instructs us that greater love has no man than he lay down his life for another (Jn 15:13).

#### *5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's Throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

### **Day 9**

- 1. Make sign of the Cross*
- 2. Say the Act of Contrition*
- 3. Meditation*

#### FORGIVENESS

More and Fisher are sentenced to death. The mere reading of the sentence shocks our ears: "You are to be drawn on a hurdle through the city of London to Tyburn, there to be hanged till you be half dead, after that cut down yet alive, your bowels to be taken out of your body and burned before you, your privy parts cut off, your head cut off, your body divided in four parts, and your head and body to be set at such places as the King shall assign." "Mercifully," the king commuted the sentence to beheading. More and Fisher meet it all with equanimity. To his lords who pronounced the sentence, More said, "So I sincerely trust, and thereafter heartily pray, that though your Lordships have now here in the earth been Judges to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter in heaven merrily all meet together to our everlasting salvation." Fisher responded, "I have no more to say but only desire Almighty God to forgive them that have thus condemned me, for I think they know not what they have done." We, too, have opportunity to respond to evil with love and so to emulate these worthy servants of the Lord as they follow Him.

#### *4. Scripture*

Lord Jesus, your Word tells us to bless those who persecute us (Rom 12:14), to put away all malice, bitterness, wrath, anger, and slander, and to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave us (Eph 4:31).

#### *5. Petition*

Dear Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, lovers of life, triumphant in death, I ask that you intercede for me, confident that you will advocate for me before God's Throne with the same zeal and diligence that marked your careers on earth. If it be in accord with God's will, obtain for me the favor I seek, namely \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *6. Concluding Prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## **Biography of St. Thomas More, a Patron Saint for Lawyers**

St. Thomas More is a model for faith-filled professionals: A lawyer who reached the heights of his profession, became a leading voice in defending the Catholic faith and peace in England, was a loving and attentive parent and spouse, and proclaimed the joy of faith through unceasing cheer even in the most difficult of times.

Among his many professional accomplishments, he was a successful lawyer and judge in London; a leader in the House of Commons who secured its first known guarantee of free speech; the Lord Chancellor (England's chief administrator); a diplomat who staved off war with France; and a leading writer in philosophy and theology, including the famous philosophical work *Utopia*.

Foremost, he was a witness for God and the Catholic faith. He vigilantly prayed and studied Scripture. He voluntarily sacrificed comforts to build virtue, explaining with his renowned wit: "We cannot go to heaven in featherbeds." He published Catholic responses to emerging Protestant theology. He resigned from his chancellorship as an objection to King Henry VIII's bringing the Catholic Church in England under secular control. And he was martyred for refusing to accede to the King's claim to be the head of the Catholic Church in England, instead remaining faithful to St. Peter's successor in Rome. His final words to the public on the scaffold perfectly summarize his honorable life: "I die the king's good servant, and God's first."

He was a man of scholarship and action; contemplative prayer and public life; dedication to family and service to his country; and good cheer and wit even unto death. In 1935 he was canonized a saint, on the 400th anniversary of his martyrdom. In 2000, St. John Paul II proclaimed St. Thomas More the patron saint of "gubernatores"—political leaders, statesmen, the "helmsmen" of ships of state.

For more on More, see the Center for Thomas More Studies ([thomasmorestudies.org](http://thomasmorestudies.org)), and books such as *Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage* by Dr. Gerard Wegemer.