

# Faith Formation Prayer and the Seasons

S T . I G N A T I U S L O Y O L A P A R I S H

## THANKSGIVING @ THANKSGIVING

THANKSGIVING

KINGSHIP

ADVENT

REMEMBRANCE

APOCALYPSE

PRAYERS

It's not just about the Turkey, or football or even having family over (hold the politics). It's about thanksgiving—giving thanks to one another, for one another and to God.

I ask future wedding couples, "Do you pray together?" That kind of strikes them as strange for to many, when we say prayer we often mean private prayer. Yet that great prayer of thanksgiving and blessing before the Turkey dinner is just one example of us actually praying together (and not in church).

To encourage a life where a couple begins to share their spirituality, I point out that this is one of those places to begin. Don't just do the formal "Bless us O Lord", but spend some time together in actual thanksgiving, reflecting on the gifts and graces one has, but sharing that perspective with future spouse, with a long time spouse, with

children and even with grandchildren. Of course it is easier with the young, they seem willing to chime in. Some of the rest of us need to be "primed". That's okay. But it doesn't have to always be that way. Before heading to the big dinner, think about what you would like to share with others. That might be recovery from illness and/or the help you received from others when recovering. Take the time to thank not just God for what is, but for family and friends as well.

Again, be willing to take a lesson from the children. You might just want to google some children's prayers and have them ready to share.

Family Tree

**Lord, Please bless our family tree.  
Each branch is special to me.  
God, I thank you for those I love.  
And for all great gifts from above.  
Amen.**

**Continued next page**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Thanksgiving @	1
Christ the King	1
Advent is Coming	2
Prayer & the Apocalypse	4

## Christ the King

What image comes to mind when you think of Christ the King? Is it the "Son of Man" coming down from the clouds or is it that image of Jesus standing before Pilate, beaten, bedraggled and seemingly broken who dares to speak to Pilate of truth and of a kingdom not of this

world? For many of us, sometimes it's one way, sometimes the other. Such reflection may reveal just what we consider most important in life. Do we seek integrity or do we seek power and glory? It is worth praying about.

In the Spiritual Exercises of St.

Ignatius there is a meditation on Christ the King. But it is also paired with another meditation on the Two Standards—the banner under which Satan's army marches and the one under which Jesus leads us.

**Continued page 3**

## Thanksgiving @ Thanksgiving (cont)

[https://kids.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Thanksgiving\\_Prayer\\_for\\_Children](https://kids.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Thanksgiving_Prayer_for_Children)

The LovetoKnow website has a number of children's prayers as well as tips for creating your own. (They also have a number of other seasonal activities if you need some hints for the holidays. <https://kids.lovetoknow.com/holiday-seasonal-resources/christian-thanksgiving-activities-kids> You might have fun coming up with your own version of Thanksgiving Bingo.)

As to more adult activities, you might want to consider the Thanksgiving Examen listed on the Jesuits.org website but "borrowed" from Marquette University's online ministry.

<https://www.jesuits.org/stories/an-ignatian-examen-for-thanksgiving/> That and check out the two AMDG podcasts, [How to Give Thanks in a Tough Time](#) with Fr. Michael Rossmann, SJ and [A Disposition, Not Just a Holiday: Dr. Monica Bartlett on Thanksgiving](#).

In addition, consider checking out Becky Eldridge's article on gratitude and the examen on Becky's website <https://beckyeldredge.com/cultivating-gratitude-the-examen/> (Becky has been a frequent contributor to Loyola Press and IgnatianSpirituality.com.)

Remember, it is never too late to say thank you. That might be to one's parents or spouses. That might even be to siblings. And, remarkably enough, that might even be to your children. Imagine them having you say thank you, what an example for them.

Especially this month, as we remember those who have gone before us, say thanks to these folks as well. While we generally think of praying for someone, it is appropriate to pray to someone as well as with someone. Consider the Confiteor that we often use to begin our liturgy, asking help from Mary as well as "all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters."

## Advent is Coming

We're also getting ready for the Church's New Year, aka Advent. This time of preparation for Christmas has its own grace and rhythm. Each week has its own theme: 1st—Hope, 2nd—Peace, 3rd—Love, 4th—Joy. The Jesuit Institute London has a series of offerings to help you understand, reflect, pray and even craft during this season. <http://jesuitinstitute.org/Pages/Liturgy/Advent.htm>. Among the items cited here is a series from the BibleProject that focus on these four themes/word. <https://bibleproject.com/advent-word-series-churches/>. Why bother, we know what these words mean? Well yes, but there's more than "the absence of conflict" when speaking of peace. These quick little videos might just give you something to ruminate about each week.

There are variations on the themes. Fr. Felix Just, SJ includes the following on his website: <https://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Seasons-Advent-Christmas.htm>

Some Christian traditions assign specific symbolism to each of the candles:

- 1) The *Prophet's* Candle, symbolizing Hope;
- 2) The *Bethlehem* Candle, symbolizing Faith;
- 3) The *Shepherd's* Candle, symbolizing Joy;
- 4) The *Angel's* Candle, symbolizing Peace.

Scrolling to the bottom of Fr. Just's webpage you will find an extensive list of resources which will keep you reading throughout the whole season.

**Don't miss this wonderful song/animation pair by Poor Bishop Hooper**

<https://www.firstbornmusic.org/>

## Season of Remembrance

Have you reflected on the Creed lately? Probably not, it is something that we say every Sunday but not a very exciting or inspiring prayer. Yet embedded in that prayer is our belief in the resurrection of the body as well as the Communion of Saints, both appropriate to this Season of Remembrance.

The Cathedral of Los Angeles has a wonderful set of tapestries depicting this Communion of Saints. <https://www.olacathedral.org/tapestries> With the tapestries hanging on the

walls one does feel as if one were standing in the courts of heaven surrounded by this communion of saints. That's the way we should feel whether standing at Loyola or sitting at home in prayer.

But those are not the only saints, there are so many others, many of whom we know—family and friends that have gone before us. This is a season not only of Remembrance, but of experiencing that sense of still walking with these beloved individuals.



## Christ the King (cont.)

There is a stark contrast between the power and the brutality of Satan to achieve loyalty and the quiet invitation that Jesus offers. For one steeped in the gospels you might think of the invitation to Zaccheus up in the tree, “Come down, I wish to stay at your home tonight.” or even the invitation to the rich young man to give up everything and to follow Jesus. For me, the latter meditation brought to mind the stories of the civil rights marches, where folks simply walked together, gathered and stayed together. Not because of fear but because of the truth,

the rightness of the cause, the dignity we felt that we were shown by the leader who called us, shared our lot, even ate with us on the bus, the side of the road or at a simple home meal.

Part of your prayer this week might just be a meditation on what it would have been like to eat at table with Jesus, whether that's at Zaccheus' house, with the unwelcoming Pharisee where Jesus feet are anointed, or even at the last supper. All of these reveal Jesus' understanding of leadership, of being “King” of the people.

Now in our baptismal formula

we speak of being anointed priest, prophet and king. Although the roles may be distinct, still the manner, the character of the person who takes on these roles should be patterned after Jesus. So despite the role, the vocation that you have been given, what aspect of Jesus' manner do you think can be yours? What way can you be like Jesus even though you and I will never make it as king? It is something worth pondering and praying about as we consider this feast of Christ the King.



FIND US AT  
LOYOLADENVER.ORG

### To Ponder and to Share

1. How does your prayer change during the winter months? Does the season make up for the cold and lack of light?
2. What do you look forward to this Advent? Are you active in your anticipation, making preparations for the season?
3. Sometimes when we feel down or seem to lack hope, there are others who help us find our way again. Who do you know is like that? Can you follow their example and shine a little light for others?
4. Who do you remember in this season of remembrance? Have you spent time remembering, letting the graces flow once again?

St. Ignatius Loyola Church  
2309 Gaylord St  
Denver, CO 80205

Phone: 303-322-8042  
Fax: 303-322-2927

**Finding God in All Things**

## Prayer & the Apocalypse

The end of the year readings always seem dire. However, those from Revelation are actually so much more. The late Fr. Frank Doyle, SJ, who developed the biblical commentary website "[LivingSpace.SacredSpace.ie](http://LivingSpace.SacredSpace.ie)" writes this about the apocalyptic readings for the Solemnity of Christ the King.

There is a great contrast between the readings. The First Reading is from the Book of Daniel and the Second is from the Book of Revelation. These are what we call apocalyptic books. The word 'apocalypse' comes from a Greek word (apokalypsis, ἀποκάλυψις) which means an 'uncovering' or a 'revelation' of something hidden. The books reveal the inner meaning of life and both were written for people who were suffering great persecution for fidelity to their religious beliefs – Jews in one case and early Christians in the other. The books are full of hope and look forward to a day when God will come in triumph and overcome the earthly powers which commit so many evils and bring so much suffering....The Book of Revelation represents an underground document intended to rally morale and build up the courage of Christians. It is full of symbolical language and imagery, which the Christians could understand but which made little sense to their non-Christian persecutors. While the meaning of much of the symbolism and images has been recovered, there are still parts of the book whose meaning we can only guess at.

Even though times seem dire, what gives you hope, stirs up your courage, would rally others? Share this time with those Christians living in the time of the Book of Revelations, and ask them to reveal to you their hope.