

365 DAILY READINGS

**My Year**  
*with the*  
**SAINTS**

EACH DAY WITH AN INTENTION

COMPILED BY  
**PETER CELANO**



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# *A Message from* POPE FRANCIS

Hope to become a saint!

May the Lord grant us all the hope of being saints. But you might ask me: “Father, can someone be a saint in everyday life?” Yes, you can. “But does this mean that we have to pray all day?” No, it means that you have to do your duty all day. . . . But you have to do everything with a heart open to God, so that at work, even in sickness and suffering, even amid struggles, your heart is open to God. This is how we can become saints.

May the Lord give us the hope of being saints. Let us not think that it is something difficult, that it is easier to be scoundrels than saints! No. We can become saints because the Lord helps us; He is the one who helps us.

[Becoming a saint] is the greatest gift that each one of us can give to the world. May the Lord grant us the grace to believe so deeply in Him that we become the image of Christ for the world.

—POPE FRANCIS,  
*from an address given at his weekly general audience,*  
*June 21, 2017*

*Each day we will reflect on a saint, his or her example and teachings, and focus our intentions on God. Occasionally, we will look to a Scripture passage, rather than a saint, and pray. Each reflection requires very little reading time but offers you a way to carry the teaching throughout the day.*





# JANUARY



## • 1 •

We begin with the greatest of the saints, the Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. Today, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, is an occasion to pray one of the oldest prayers we have. There is no better way to begin a new year than by asking Mary to pray for us.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed are thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

## • 2 •

St. Basil the Great loved poor people with very special intentions. He also loved prayer, manual work, and living in community—all values that are rapidly vanishing from our lives today.

“When someone steals another’s clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not?”—ST. BASIL THE GREAT

*Pray for me, St. Basil.*

• 3 •

Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.

—1 SAMUEL 12:24 (ESV)

*Dear God, I want to serve you.  
What will be my service for you today?*

• 4 •

Holy Scripture tells us that who we are, what we do, and what we see, is important. “Don’t you know that you . . . are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?”

—1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 (NIV)

*God, I realize what a responsibility I have to live for you.  
Please help me today.*

• 5 •

“You cannot be half a saint; you must be a whole saint  
or no saint at all.”

—ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

*Oh God, I want to be a saint. I do. But how?  
Please show me how.*

## • 6 •

Remember this, when you go to Mass, you are meeting Jesus Christ. Meditate upon this truth:

“When you approach the tabernacle remember that he has been waiting for you for twenty centuries.”

—ST. JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

How does meeting Christ regularly help you to become a saint?

(Be sure to answer these questions honestly;  
this is a conversation between you and God alone.)

## • 7 •

“From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us!”

—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Don't try to look so serious when you are doing God's will. Smile! Laugh, sometimes. The saints teach us that God wants our obedience *and* our joy.

## • 8 •

Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ. —Ephesians 4:32 (NAB)

*Dear God, thank you for friends.*

*And please help me, today—to be a better friend.*

• 9 •

“Love God, serve God; everything is in that.”

—ST. CLARE OF ASSISI

What do saints mean when they say that “everything” is in loving God and serving others? They are repeating something important that Jesus taught—do you know where in the Gospels Jesus said that?

How will you love and serve God, today?

• 10 •

This is probably the most important principle of prayer to learn:

“Whether we receive what we ask for, or do not, we should still continue steadfast in our prayers—because to fail in obtaining the desires of our heart, if it’s God’s will that we not obtain them, is for our good. For we don’t know what God knows, and we don’t know what is really profitable for us.” —ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

• 11 •

St. Francis of Assisi taught his spiritual brothers and sisters—in other words, people who want to become saints—to develop their passion and desire for God in the Eucharist.

“What the poor man does at the rich man’s door, or the sick person in the presence of his physician, or someone who is thirsty at a flowing stream, I do before the Eucharist. I pray. I adore. I love.”

—ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

• 12 •

“Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven.”

—POPE ST. PIUS X

*Lord, I know about going to Mass, but now I'm asking,  
please prepare me to know you in a whole new way  
when I take Holy Communion.*

• 13 •

Each of the sacraments are important for our salvation. Do you know about “sacraments”?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) helps to repair our relationship with God, and prepares us for heaven. Self-honesty is the beginning.

“We will either accuse ourselves or excuse ourselves.”

—ST. JOHN VIANNEY

• 14 •

“If a man wishes to be sure of the road he treads on, he must close his eyes and walk in the dark.”

—ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

*God, I sometimes have no idea where I'm going. But I know that you are here with me, and even when it feels like I'm walking in the dark, I know that you're in the lead, in front of me.*

• 15 •

Look for those portions of the Bible that talk about love. Saints have said that the whole message of the Bible is God's love for us. This is why our whole lives are meant to be love.

“Love is the most necessary of all virtues. . . . It is much the same with the word of God. If it is spoken by someone who is filled with love and charity—the fire of love of God and neighbor—it will work wonders.” —ST. ANTHONY MARY CLARET

• 16 •

Rest in this knowledge today, from St. Padre Pio:

“Our Lord loves you and loves you most tenderly. If he is not letting you feel the sweetness of that love, it is because he wants to make you more humble.” —ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINO

• 17 •

Today is the feast day of St. Anthony the Great. He is sometimes called the Father of All Monks. He encourages us to keep working at becoming saints.

“I pray that we should use every effort to press on toward this life's goal. Let no one look behind him as did Lot's wife. . . . To look back means to have second thoughts. . . . Do not fear the word 'virtue' as if it were unattainable.” —ST. ANTHONY

## • 18 •

“I am amazed when people say they are speaking with God by reciting the Our Father even while they are thinking of worldly things. When you speak with a Lord so great, you should think of who it is you are addressing and what you yourself are, if only that you may speak to him with proper respect.”—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Give God the Father your full attention today in prayer. Do this, if only for two minutes.

## • 19 •

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

—1 CORINTHIANS 13:3 (MSG)

*I want to do more for you, God.*

*Make me on fire with your love today, O Lord.*

## • 20 •

“[Love] is a choice, a preference. If we love God with our whole hearts, how much heart have we left? If we love with our whole mind and soul and strength, how much mind and soul and strength have we left? We must live this life now.”—DOROTHY DAY

*Who am I supposed to love today, Lord? Please show me—  
and please make it as obvious as possible!*

• 21 •

“Above all, I was growing in the love of God. In my heart I felt upward impulses that I had not known until then. Sometimes I was truly transported by love.”

—ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

*Dear God, I want to grow in Your love so much!*

• 22 •

The saints often say that the beginning of prayer is gratitude.

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. —PSALM 107:1 (NRSV)

Pray: *I am thankful today, Lord, for. . . .*

• 23 •

“In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give God thanks.”

—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Make a list today. (Even if you make the list in your head.) Look around you; what do you see that makes you thankful?



• 24 •

“No Christian duty is more urgent upon us than to give thanks.”

—ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

Most of us who pray the Lord’s Prayer regularly are not searching for our daily bread each day. We usually have plenty to eat. Compose your own version of the Prayer today, praying for each of the things we ask for, but making each one into a statement of thanks and gratitude.

• 25 •

St. Gregory Nazianzen died on this day in Cappadocia, which is today part of the country of Turkey. He was a fourth century archbishop of Constantinople.

“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.”

—ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

• 26 •

You might say, we spend our whole lives learning to pray.

“Prayer is an aspiration of the heart, a glance in the direction of heaven, a cry of gratitude, and love and joy in the middle of trials.”

—ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

• 27 •

If you live with intention for God each day, you will surely be made fun of from time to time. It's true! Don't let it bother you too much. St. Paul said, "we are fools for the sake of Christ" (1 Cor. 4:10 NRSV). St. Ignatius of Loyola said, "Out of gratitude and love for him, we should desire to be reckoned fools."

You're in holy company if you're ever made fun of for doing God's work!

• 28 •

Today is the feast day of a man known as perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of the Catholic Church. He was brilliant, and many of his writings became a part of our Catechism. Nevertheless, this same smart man is the one who said:

"All the efforts of the human mind cannot exhaust the essence of a single fly."—ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Don't take yourself too seriously.

• 29 •

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

—1 CORINTHIANS 13:1 (NRSV)

*Dear God, show me how to love with your love, today.*

• 30 •

You are special to God. Know that truth wherever you are today.


“As the sun shines simultaneously on tall cedars, as well as on each little flower, as if each flower was the only one on earth, in the same way our Lord is concerned particularly for every soul as if there is no other one like it.”—ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

• 31 •


Pope Saint John Paul II was our Holy Father from 1978 to 2005. He was a beloved Pope, and one of the most important people of the twentieth century. John Paul II taught all Catholics to:

“Remember the past with gratitude. Live the present with enthusiasm. Look forward to the future with confidence.”

—POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II



# FEBRUARY



• 1 •

“You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working, and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves.”

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

*Give me the courage, Lord, to put my faith into practice this day.*

• 2 •

Do you find yourself worrying often? Do your friends and colleagues talk about worries that are preoccupying them? We all worry; it is true. We worry way too much.

“Pray, hope, and don’t worry,” said St. Pio of Pietrelcino. Give your worries to God.

Pray: *Dear God. . . .*

• 3 •

“Pure love . . . knows that only one thing is needed to please God: to do even the smallest things out of great love—love, and always love.”—ST. MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

Who will you show love to, today?

## • 4 •

Remember to love the people around you throughout the day today—as one saint said, “first of all, in your own house.”

“Spread love everywhere you go: first of all, in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next-door neighbor. . . . Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.”—ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

## • 5 •

“The proof of love is in the works. Where love exists, it works great things. But when it ceases to act, it ceases to exist.”

—POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

If you say you love God but you don’t love others, you may not love God after all.

## • 6 •

What are you most “attached to” these days? What things or people or activities most preoccupy your time?

“The things that we love tell us what we are.”

—ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

*Dear God, I want to spend more time with you. I want to show you that I love you.*

• 7 •

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men.

That is what love looks like.”—ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

I will show my love for others with hands, feet, eyes, and ears today.

• 8 •

Open your Bible and read 1 Corinthians chapter 13 today.

Then, reflect on what St. Thérèse of Lisieux once wrote in a letter:

“My director, Jesus, does not teach me to count my acts, but to do everything for love, to refuse him nothing, to be pleased when he gives me a chance to prove to him that I love him.”

• 9 •

“Lord, grant that I might not so much seek to be loved as to love.”

—from the traditional Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

To know God is to love others. This is more important than feeling love ourselves.

• 10 •

If you don't feel loved by God today (we don't always *feel* it), take that as a sign that God wants you to learn something more important.

“Our Lord loves you and loves you tenderly, and if he does not let you feel the sweetness of his love, it is to make you more humble and abject in your own eyes.”

—ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINO

• 11 •

“We must love our neighbor as being made in the image of God and as an object of his love.”—ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

When you see that person at work or on the street who bothers you, try today and see him/her as someone loved by God.

• 12 •

If there is someone you don't love, or that you don't even like, you need to pray more. Pray. Now.

“Love, to be real, must cost—it must hurt—it must empty us of self.”

—ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

• 13 •

“What a weakness it is to love Jesus Christ only when he caresses us, and to be cold immediately once he afflicts us. This is not true love. Those who love thus, love themselves too much to love God with all their heart.”—ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

*Lord, I will love you every day. Please show me how.*

• 14 •

Yes, there really was a St. Valentine (*Valentinus*, in Latin), but we know nothing about him for certain. For various reasons, the early Church linked his life and reputation with love. But given the historical uncertainty, the Church removed him from the general calendar of saints in 1969.

What Christ said about love is absolutely certain: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these” (MK. 12:30–31, NAB).

• 15 •

“Do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.”—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Do you have something difficult you have to do today? Offer that difficulty up to God in prayer.



## • 16 •

Today is the feast day of St. Juliana, virgin and martyr. Juliana lived in the time of the Roman Empire when a young girl would be betrothed (promised in marriage) to an older man, even if it was against her will. Well, Juliana became a follower of Christ, and was baptized secretly because her father was pagan. He didn't approve. When her wedding approached, she refused. Her father was angry and handed her over to the local governor, who was also her former fiancé, to be killed.

*St. Juliana, pray for me, that I may be courageous in my faith as you were.*

## • 17 •

Are you experiencing something difficult today? If you are, know this:

“The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering or give you unfailing strength to bear it.”

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

• 18 •

Fish live best in plenty of water. People live best when they live with lots of prayer.

*I am like a fish today, God, wanting to spend time in your cool, dark waters.*

• 19 •

“Love is patient, love is kind.”  
—1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 (NAB)

*Dear God, teach me your love today. I am trying.*

• 20 •

“Almost the soul’s whole work is to realize its unworthiness to receive such great good and to occupy itself in thanksgiving.”

—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

All prayer might be summarized as giving thanks. If you are praying mostly for yourself—asking God for things you don’t have—then start praying today with thanks instead. Thank God for what you have, for who you are, for your family, your neighborhood, your. . . .

• 21 •

GOD'S there, listening for all who pray, for all who pray and mean it.

—PSALM 145:18 (MSG)

How often do you pray and not really mean it? How often do you pray only because other people tell you to pray? Or you're in church and you need to look like you're praying. It is time to begin praying because you want to.

• 22 •

“Do you think that because we cannot hear God, he is silent? He speaks clearly to the heart when we beg him from our hearts to do so. . . . He is always right at our side.”

—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

*Dear God, Our Father. . . .*

• 23 •

Try not to be someone who complains that it's Monday, or that it's raining, or that some other small thing is bothering you. Listen to a saint:

“The truly patient person doesn't complain of his hard lot or desire to be pitied by others. He speaks of his sufferings in a natural, true, and sincere way, without complaining or exaggeration.”

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

• 24 •

“Little children follow and obey their father. They love their mother. They know nothing of covetousness, ill-will, bad temper, arrogance and lying. This state of mind opens the road to heaven. To imitate our Lord’s own humility, we must return to the simplicity of God’s little ones.”—ST. HILARY OF POITIERS

When we are children we want so desperately to grow up. Then, the Bible says, the faith of a child is the truest kind of faith. What do you think that means? (Read Matthew 18:1–5, as you consider this.)

• 25 •

Do you have trouble at home? Sometimes it is necessary to talk with a counselor, spiritual director, a wise friend, or your priest. At all times, know this:

“The many troubles in your household will tend to your edification, if you strive to bear them all in gentleness, patience, and kindness. Keep this ever before you and remember constantly that God’s loving eyes are upon you.”—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

• 26 •

“Open your minds and hearts to the beauty of all that God has made and to His special, personal love for each one of you.”

—ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II

Take a minute today to write down the ways that God has shown his love for you. Share with someone what you’ve written.

## • 27 •

“I got this,” people often say, to show that they are in control of what’s about to happen. Of course, it’s never true. We are not in control. We need to remember that, with God, we truly have “got this.”

“Do not become upset when difficulty comes your way. Laugh in its face and know that you are in the hands of God.”

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

## • 28 •

During this season of Lent, we could learn a lot from the saints. If you are finding Lenten fasting and other small sacrifices to be difficult, listen to this saint:

“I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible.”—ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

## • 29 •

“You must ask God to give you power to fight against the sin of pride which is your greatest enemy—the root of all that is evil, and the failure of all that is good. For God resists the proud.”

—ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

What pride are you holding onto? Do you really believe that God can’t see it?



# MARCH



• 1 •

“If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get his help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who “worry their prayers” are like wind-whipped waves. Don’t think you’re going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.” —JAMES 1:5–8 (MSG)

What more is there to say? Pray today. And be honest with God!

• 2 •

Pope Francis praised the American monk and spiritual writer Thomas Merton in 2013 when he spoke before a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

Pray today with Thomas Merton: *“For now, oh my God, it is to You alone that I can talk, because nobody else will understand. . . . I hear You saying to me . . . ‘I will give you what you desire. . . . I will lead you by the way that you cannot possibly understand.’”*

## • 3 •

“Be glad when you are blamed. In time, you will see what gains your soul experiences.”—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

This is a hard lesson to learn and accept.

*Dear God, thanks for reminding me that small sufferings can teach me a lot.*

## • 4 •

“Even if the whole world blames you, what does it matter as long as you are in God’s arms? He is powerful enough to free you from everything; only once did he command the world to be made and it was done.”—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

*As I go about my day today, God, I will remain “in your arms.”*

## • 5 •

“God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”

—1 JOHN 4:16 (NRSV)

Show love today to someone who wouldn’t expect it from you.  
Surprise them with your kindness.

## • 6 •

“During the time ordained for prayer, the devil is apt to arrive in the soul, causing much more conflict and trouble than when the soul is not occupied in prayer. He does this so that holy prayer may become tedious to the soul. He tempts the soul often with these words: ‘This prayer avails you nothing.’” —ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

There are dangers in the world, even, or especially, from what we cannot see. Don't allow the devil to trip you up!

## • 7 •

On this day in 1274, St. Thomas Aquinas died in a monastery in Italy, where he was trying to recuperate from an illness. Since his death, he has been acknowledged as one of the smartest people ever to write books of theology. Still, he once said: “Love takes up where knowledge leaves off,” which means, you can't ultimately “know” your way to God.

You have to love God first and foremost. And be humble.



## • 8 •

We read six special Psalms during Lent each year. They are called the Six Penitential Psalms. The first of them is Psalm 6. Pause to pray these words more than once throughout the day, today.

“The Lord has heard my supplication;  
the Lord accepts my prayer.  
All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror;  
they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame.”  
—PSALM 6:9–10 (NRSV)

## • 9 •

The next Penitential Psalm is number 32. Pray these powerful words today and remember to go to Confession.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my iniquity;  
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.  
Therefore let all who are faithful  
offer prayer to you;  
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters  
shall not reach them.  
—PSALM 32:5–6 (NRSV)

• 10 •

This is a season to uncover our sins. We shouldn't be trying to hide them. We of course can never hide our sins from God. Pray today with the writer of the third Penitential Psalm:

“I confess my iniquity;  
I am sorry for my sin.”  
—PSALM 38:18 (NRSV)

• 11 •

From the last of the Penitential Psalms:

Teach me to do your will,  
for you are my God.  
Let your good spirit lead me  
on a level path.  
For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life.  
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.  
—PSALM 143:10–11 (NRSV)

What will you do, today, to show God that you are turning away from your sin?

## • 12 •

On this day in 1622, Pope Gregory XV canonized Teresa of Avila, the great Spanish mystic and theologian, author of books such as *The Interior Castle*.

“Oh, my Lord! When I think of the many ways you suffered, I do not know what to say for myself. I don’t know what I must have been thinking when I wished for no suffering or what I am doing when I make excuses for myself. For what is it to you, Lord, to give much rather than little? I do not deserve it, but I have not deserved the favors you have already shown me. How can it be that I should want others to think well of someone so evil as me, when they have said such wicked things about you, who are good above all other good? It is intolerable, my God.”—ST. TERESA OF AVILA

## • 13 •

“The whole world is not worth one soul.”

—St. Francis de Sales

Who will you help today? Who will you feed, or clothe, or comfort?  
With whom will you share the Good News of God’s love?