

Prayers

Below are some suggested prayers that you may like to you use. They have been divided up into 7 topics relating to our work so that each of the headings can be used for a day of the week.

People and projects

Relationships, fellowship and community

Away From It All, holidays and respite

Young families, children and parents

Engagement and marriage

Renewal, new members and growth

Social reform, mission and love

People and projects

Mark 12:33 (NIV)

To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Teach us, good Lord,
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 labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do your will. Amen (Ignatius Loyola)

Lord, we give thanks for your abiding love and that you are the one true constant in an ever changing world. We pray that we may continue to grow in faith and deepen our relationship with you so that we may accomplish the work you have set before us.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours. (Teresa of Avila)

God has given us the most wonderful gift; the knowledge that he loves us, just as we are. We pray for our projects that offer support to families who have met with adversity. May we do everything we can to help them and to live and love alongside the marginalized people in society.

God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union especially the many projects that we carry out here in the Oxford Diocese. May we continue to help those in need and to campaign for all that supports family life. Help us to raise money to enable the worldwide projects to continue and help us to fulfil our part in this valuable work.

We pray for those members who represent you in the work they do on behalf of the Mothers' Union. We pray for those who counsel children and teenagers, who provide support for families with a member in prison or with a sick child in the special care baby unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital, those who visit the sick and support the bereaved. Bless all our projects across the diocese and may they flourish, then help us to find new ways to share your love with people in need.

Relationships, fellowship and community

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour:
If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you are a place of sanctuary and shelter whatever may be going on in
my life today. Empower me with your Holy Spirit to step back into the world filled
with your redeeming love.

Amen

*Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices. (St. Teresa of Avila)*

We give thanks for family, friends and the fellowship we share with members of the
Mothers' Union. Thank you Lord, for all the people we know and for the help we
receive from them. Help us to be loyal and loving friends in return.

*I come just as I am Lord, ready to offer my gifts.
Plant in me a seed of desire to spread your good news to everyone I meet.*

Forgive us for the things we do that separate us from you. Guide us in our own
relationships that we may remember to cherish each other and share with daring and
delight the gifts you give us. Help those who are in trouble today, those who doubt
and those who seek but have not yet found you.

*We are bound together through your love. We share five common aims that promote
and support family life within a Christian environment of fellowship and faith. Let us
develop our relationships with one another that we may work together to make our
vision a reality and thus the world becomes a place where your love is shown through
loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.*

We pray for the elderly people who live in our community. We ask that you will guide us to find ways to respect their views and involve them in society so that we value their wisdom and life experiences. Bless all who care for them, their families and friends so that they can continue to support them and provide all that they need.

Away From It All, holidays and respite

Psalm 23:1-3 (NIRV)

The Lord is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need.
He lets me lie down in fields of green grass. He leads me beside quiet waters. He gives me new strength.

We pray today for the Mothers' Union "Away from it all" holiday scheme, for those families that use it, for the people who run it and all those who fundraise for this valuable project. Amen

Dear Lord,

Thank you for holidays and a time to rest, for the chance to explore different parts of your beautiful world and to meet new people to befriend. We ask that you restore us with passion and energy, to better serve you in our daily lives on our return.

Amen

We give thanks for the work of those involved with the "Away From It All" project and for the numerous blessings it brings to many families. We also remember the colleagues outside the Mothers' Union with whom we work in order that these families may have this opportunity for respite away from their problems.

Young families, children and parents

Psalm 127:3 (NIV)

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.

Bless this home Lord, and the family who live here. May this be a house be filled with kindness and laughter but above all may it be full of your love.

Amen

God bless all those that I love;

God bless all those that love me;

God bless all those that love those that I love,

And all those that love those that love me. (From an old New England sampler)

Lord we give thanks for the young people we know, for their zest for life and their ability to adapt to change. We pray that they may grow in faith and understanding so that they learn to always put you at the centre of their lives.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the enthusiasm and joy of being a child and for the words of wisdom that they inadvertently utter. Help us to be open in our dealings with others and live in the moment just like a child.

We give thanks for our own families and loved ones and ask that you help members who may be experiencing difficulty at this time, that they may receive your strength and comfort in their troubles. Let us take a moment to call to mind those known to us personally who need prayer at this time.

Engagement and marriage

Hebrews 13:4 (NIV)

Marriage should be honoured by all.....

May the Lord bless you and pour the riches of his grace upon your marriage. May you live together in love and harmony, helping each other with kindness and compassion.
Amen

*Faithful God,
Giver of all good things,
give us wisdom and devotion
in the ordering of our life together.
May we dwell together in love and peace
all the days of our life,
seeking one another's welfare, bearing one another's burdens
and sharing one another's joys;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen*

Heavenly Father,
We offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

*Gracious God,
as you have brought us together in love,
enable us through the power of your Holy Spirit to make and keep the solemn
promises of marriage;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen (Adapted from Prayer and Worship, additional prayers for marriage)*

We remember before you, our Heavenly Father, families and marriages struggling with problems in their relationships, and we commit them to you. We pray for those members who provide marriage and parenting guidance and support families in need.

Renewal, new members and growth

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us to remain young at heart, trusting in your goodness to guide our ways so that we do not have to worry about what tomorrow may bring. Lord, keep me worshipping with every breath I take. Remind me daily to let my spirit focus on you, so that I allow your will to inform every action I take.

Dear Lord, thank you for inspiring each of us to join this wonderful organisation. Whatever gifts we may bring we give them willingly so that together we can make a difference in your world. Help us to find ways to tell people of our work and may we encourage them to become members. That they may enjoy the fellowship we share and play their part in the continuing work of the Mothers' Union.

We give thanks for the staff at Mary Sumner House and all the Central Committee members. We pray that you will guide them in their decision making and provide them with every good thing they need to do your will. Let each of us offer again our gifts and renew our endeavours that so filled with your love we may always be willing to serve.

We give thanks for the support of our indoor members and pray that they may still feel a very important part of the Mothers' Union. Bless them today and may we consider if there are members who would like to be part of this powerhouse of prayer.

We pray that younger women and men will be drawn into membership and service, so that we remain a vigorous and active organisation for change in society. Give us all the resources we need to inspire others to support our work both here and abroad.

Give us the courage and strength to live in the manner that close relationship with you demands. Make us bold disciples of your truth that we might help others to become members of the Mothers' Union and come to know your love.

Social reform, mission and love

Ephesians 4:6 (NIV)

One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Lord, we thank you for your gift of the Holy Spirit in whose power all things are possible. Give us the strength and courage we need to campaign for justice in your world.

*Give us courage, O Lord, to stand up and be counted,
To stand up for those
Who cannot stand up for themselves,
To stand up for ourselves
When it is needful for us to do so.
Let us fear nothing more than we fear you.
Let us love nothing more than we love you,
For thus we shall fear nothing also.
Let us have no other God before you,
Whether nation or party or state or church.
Let us seek no other peace but the peace which is yours,
And make us its instruments,
Opening our eyes and our ears and our hearts, So that we should know always
What work of peace we may do for you. (Alan Paton, South African Novelist)*

Dear Lord, make us conduits of your tranquillity and reconciliation in situations of discord and unrest. We ask you to be with all those who feel tired, unsettled or anxious today so that they may come to know your abiding peace.

Amen

We give thanks for people willing to get to know the people who live in their community. We acknowledge the good that comes from breaking down barriers in culture and communication. We pray this will help us to find new ways to live side by side, together in peace and build all that makes for the common good.

In a world torn apart by conflict, hate and suffering we pray for your love and peace especially in our Link Dioceses. Let the Mothers' Union bring hope in adversity and be a voice of calm in the dissonance. We pray for the delegation that represents the Mothers' Union at the Commission on the status of women at the United Nations.

We pray for women around the world, who are affected by poverty and violence. We pray for our work in supporting Christian family life, in areas where HIV/AIDS has destroyed the normal fabric of families and brought hardship and sickness to so many. We bring to you now the particular needs of families affected by disasters around the world.

Closing prayer

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

How great is our God? He is the same today as at the beginning of time and He will live forever! There is not a problem too big, too difficult or too complicated that He cannot overcome. So rejoice and be glad that He loves you today.

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!
Amen.*