

BASED ON POPE FRANCIS'  
THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL  
-EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 2013-

# *Book of Prayers*



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THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF  
SANDHURST



# BOOK OF PRAYERS

Jesus Christ,  
the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter  
you.

When we accept your offer of salvation  
we are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness.  
May we know, that it is through you that our joy is constantly born  
anew. Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 1]*

Loving God,  
whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and  
concerns,

there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor.  
May we always hear your voice, and feel the quiet joy of your love.  
Never let us become resentful, angry or listless.

May we live the dignified fulfilled life, that is your will for us,  
that has its life in the Spirit and its source in your heart, O Risen  
Christ. Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 1]*

Jesus Christ,  
You invite me, at every moment,  
to a renewed personal encounter with you,  
to be open, and to let you encounter me.

Help me every day, to accept that your invitation is for every one;  
no one is excluded from the joy that you bring.

Sometimes in my life I have let myself be deceived;  
in a thousand ways I have shunned your love,  
yet here I am once more,  
to renew my covenant with you. I need you.

Save me once again, Lord;  
take me once more into your redeeming embrace. Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium) 3]*

*The Joy of the Gospel*

# BOOK OF PRAYERS

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Loving God,

Joy is not always expressed the same way at all times in our lives, especially at moments of great difficulty.

Lord, even when Joy adapts and changes, let joy always endure, even as a flicker of light born of my personal certainty that, I am infinitely loved.

When I endure grief and great suffering, may I let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress.

When my soul is bereft of peace, when I have forgotten what happiness is...

I have hope, because your steadfast love never ceases, your mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Your faithfulness is great..it is good for me to wait quietly for you.

Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 6]*

Jesus, you are the Christ  
who transforms our lives:

I ask for a renewed encounter with your love,  
a deepening and enriching friendship with you.

Liberate me from narrowness and self-absorption.

Let me become fully human;

bring me beyond myself

so that I will attain the fullest truth of my being.

In you, let me find the source and inspiration for all my efforts.

May I receive the love which restores meaning to my life,  
and may I share that love with others.

Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium) 8]*

God of Goodness,  
every authentic experience of truth and goodness  
seeks by its very nature to grow within us.  
When we experience profound liberation  
we become more sensitive to the needs of others.  
As it expands, goodness takes root and develops.  
For me to lead a dignified and fulfilling life for myself,  
I have to reach out to others and seek their good.  
May your love urge me on.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 9]*

Lord God,  
you constantly challenge those who believe in you, 'to go forth.'  
Abraham received your call to set out for a new land.  
Moses heard your call, 'Go, I send you'  
and led the people towards the promised land.  
To Jeremiah you said, 'To all whom I send you, you shall go.'  
In our day, Jesus' command to 'go and make disciples'  
echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges  
to the Church's mission of evangelisation.  
I am one of those called to take part in this mission.  
As a Christian I, and my community,  
must discern the path that you point out.  
May we respond to your call,  
leave our comfort zones to reach out  
to those in need of the light of the Gospel.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 20]*

*The Joy of the Gospel*

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Your word O God,  
is unpredictable in its power.  
The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown,  
grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps.  
May we accept this unruly freedom of the word  
in our lives, and in our Church,  
for this word of yours accomplishes what it wills  
in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 22]*

Loving Father,  
May we live as your Church, called to be your house,  
with doors always wide open, welcoming everyone.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 47]*

God of the poor,  
when we read the Gospel we find a clear indication,  
that not so much our friends, nor our wealthy neighbours,  
but above all the poor and the sick,  
those who are usually despised and overlooked,  
those who cannot repay,  
are privileged recipients of the Gospel, today and always.  
There is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.  
May we never abandon them.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 48]*

God of Love, God of the Poor:

Let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ.

May we be a Church which is bruised,  
hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets,  
rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined  
and from clinging to its own security.

Let our consciences rightly disturb and trouble us,  
because so many of our brothers and sisters  
are living without the strength, light and consolation  
born of friendship with Jesus Christ,  
without a community of faith to support them,  
without meaning and a goal in life.

Let us not be satisfied with habits which make us feel safe,  
while people are starving.

Let us hear you, Jesus, when you do not tire of saying to us,  
'Give them something to eat.'

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium), 49]*

You have shown us

there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.

May we never abandon them. Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium), 48]*

Healing God,

may we be helped and healed.

Let us find places

where our faith in the crucified and risen Jesus is renewed,  
where the most profound questions and daily concerns are shared,  
where deeper discernment about our experiences and life itself  
is undertaken in the light of the Gospel,

so that our decisions for ourselves and others  
are directed towards the good and beautiful.

Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium), 77]*



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God of Joy

The joy of the Gospel is such that it cannot be taken away from us by anyone or anything.

The evils of our world – and those of the Church – must not be excuses for diminishing our commitment and our fervour. Let us look upon them as challenges which can help us to grow.

With the eyes of faith,  
we can see the light which the Holy Spirit always radiates  
in the midst of darkness,  
never forgetting that “where sin increased, grace has abounded all the more”.

Our faith is challenged to discern  
how wine can come from water  
and how wheat can grow in the midst of weeds.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 85]*

God of Renewal,

Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council,  
we are distressed by the troubles of our age and far from naive  
optimism;

yet the fact that we are more realistic  
must not mean that we are any less trusting in the Spirit or less  
generous.

May we our prayer spring from the words of Pope John XXIII,  
as he opened the Second Vatican Council:

Loving God,

we disagree with those who are always forecasting disaster.

We know that in our times,  
your divine Providence is leading us  
to a new order of human relations which,  
by human effort and even beyond all expectations,  
are directed to the fulfilment of your superior and inscrutable designs,  
in which everything, even human setbacks,  
leads to the greater good of the Church”.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 85]*

God of understanding,  
although we are painfully aware of our own frailties,  
we have to go on without giving in,  
keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul,  
'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in  
weakness' (2 Cor 12:9).

Christian triumph is always a cross,  
yet a cross which is at the same time a winning banner.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 85]*

God of Light and Life:

the joy of the Gospel cannot be taken away from us by anyone or  
anything.

Do not let us make excuses that would diminish our commitment or  
fervour.

Let us accept the challenges which can help us grow.

With eyes of faith, may we see the light  
which your Holy Spirit always radiates in the midst of darkness,  
remembering that 'where sin increased, grace has abounded all the  
more.' (Rom 5:20).

In our own lives, help us to discern how wine can come from water  
and how wheat can grow in the midst of weeds.

Let us disagree with prophets of doom, always forecasting disaster!

May we always be confident that,

in our times, your divine Providence is leading us  
to a new order of human relations, which, by human effort,  
and even beyond all expectations,  
are directed to the fulfilment of your designs.

Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium), 84]*

*The Joy of the Gospel*

# BOOK OF PRAYERS

Jesus, our Friend,  
While painfully aware of our own frailties,  
we have to march on without giving in,  
keeping in mind your words to Saint Paul:  
“My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 85]*

Jesus Christ, Giver of Living Water:  
May we be living sources of water  
from which others can drink.

We know that, at times, this becomes a heavy cross,  
but it was from the cross, from your pierced side,  
that you gave yourself to us as a source of living water.  
May we never be robbed of our hope!

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium) 86]*

God of Loving Kindness,  
don't let us ever flee  
from a personal and committed relationship with you  
which at the same time commits us to serving others.  
May we learn to encounter others,  
accepting them as companions along the way.  
May we learn how to find the face of Jesus  
in the faces of others, in their voices, in their pleas.  
Let us learn too, to suffer in the embrace of the crucified Jesus  
whenever we are unjustly attacked,  
or meet with ingratitude.  
Let us never tire of our decision to live in fraternity.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 91]*

God of Life,  
Sometimes, our families and workplaces can be parched places,  
where faith nonetheless has to be preserved and communicated.  
Yet your cross shows us that  
“it is starting from the experience of this desert,  
from this void, that we can again discover the joy of believing,  
its vital importance for us men and women.  
In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living.  
In today’s world there are innumerable signs,  
of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life.  
And in the desert we need to be people of faith who,  
by the example of our own lives,  
point out the way to the Promised Land  
and keep hope alive”.

In the desert, we are called to be living sources of water  
from which others can drink.  
At times, this becomes a heavy cross,  
but it was from the cross,  
from his pierced side,  
that our Lord gave himself to us as a source of living water.  
Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!

*[Prayer from Pope Francis’ words ‘The Joy of the Gospel’ – Evangelii Gaudium, 86]*

Lord God,  
in a world being torn apart by wars and violence,  
and wounded by individualism which divides human beings...  
may we and all Christians,  
offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion.  
May we care for one another  
and encourage and accompany one another  
so that, By this everyone will know that we are your disciples,  
if we love one another.  
Let us never be jealous of others.  
Let us know we are all in the same boat and headed to the same port.  
We ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis’ words ‘The Joy of the Gospel’ – Evangelii Gaudium, 99]*

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Beloved God,  
In helping others we find true healing.  
Love of our brothers and sisters enables us  
to find you in every human being,  
We tolerate the nuisances of life by clinging to your Love,  
by opening our hearts to your divine love  
and seeking the happiness of others just as you do, God, Father of all.  
Here and now, as your little flock, a community,  
we are your disciples, called to live as a community  
which is the salt of the earth and light of the world.  
We are called to bear witness  
to a constantly new way of living together in faithfulness of the  
Gospel.  
Let us never let ourselves be robbed of community.  
Amen.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 92]*

Lord, God of Justice, Integrity and Peace,  
help us understand the law of love.  
How good it is to have this law!  
How much good it does us to love one another,  
in spite of everything.  
Yes, in spite of everything!  
Saint Paul's exhortation is directed to each of us:  
"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom  
12:21).  
And again: "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right" (Gal 6:9).  
We all have our likes and dislikes,  
and perhaps at this very moment we are angry with someone.  
At least let us say to you:  
"Lord, I am angry with this person, with that person.  
I pray to you for him and for her".  
To pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step  
forward in love, and an act of evangelization. Let us do it today! Let us  
not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love!

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 101]*

God of Compassion,  
In all places and circumstances,  
we Christians are called to hear the cry of the poor.  
Help us to take up daily the joys and hopes,  
the difficulties and sorrows of the poor,  
especially of those who are landless, homeless,  
lacking food and health care – to the detriment of their rights.

Seeing their poverty, hearing their cries and knowing their sufferings,  
May we be scandalized because we know  
there is enough food for everyone  
and that hunger is the result  
of poor distribution of goods and income, and wastefulness.

May there never be a time  
when we are not deeply moved by the suffering of others.  
May we listen as your word teaches us about mercy  
and allow that word to resound in our lives.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium) 191-193]*

Jesus Christ, Compassion of God,  
Sometimes I am tempted to be the kind of Christian who keeps your  
wounds at arm's length. Yet you want us to touch human misery, to  
touch the suffering flesh of others. You hope that I will stop looking for  
those personal and communal niches which shelter me from human  
misfortune. Instead, you invite me to enter into the reality of other  
people's lives and know the power of tenderness.  
You invite me to give reasons for my hope, with gentleness and  
reverence, and, as far as it depends on me, to live peaceably with all.  
You call me to overcome evil with good, and to work for the good of all.  
By doing this may I know the joy of sharing life, striving to light a fire in  
the heart of the world.

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 270-271]*

# BOOK OF PRAYERS

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Risen Christ,  
Your resurrection is not an event of the past;  
it contains a vital power which has permeated the world.

Where all seems to be dead,  
signs of your resurrection suddenly spring up.  
It is an irresistible force.

Often it seems that you does not exist:  
all around us we see  
persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty.  
But it is also true that in the midst of the darkness  
something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces  
fruit.

However dark things are,  
goodness always re-emerges and spreads.

Each day in our world beauty is born anew,  
it rises and transforms through the storms of history.  
Values always tend to reappear under new guises,  
and human beings have arisen time after time  
from situations which seemed doomed.  
Let us always see the signs and power of your resurrection.  
May we be instruments of that power.

Amen. 276

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' (Evangelii Gaudium) 276]*

Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,  
welcomed the word of life  
in the depths of your humble faith:  
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,  
help us to say our own "yes"  
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,  
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.  
Filled with Christ's presence,  
you brought joy to John the Baptist,

making him exult in the womb of his mother.  
Brimming over with joy,  
you sang of the great things done by God.  
Standing at the foot of the cross  
with unyielding faith,  
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,  
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit  
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.  
Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,  
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life  
which triumphs over death.  
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,  
that the gift of unfading beauty  
may reach every man and woman.  
Virgin of listening and contemplation,  
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,  
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,  
that she may never be closed in on herself  
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.  
Star of the new evangelization,  
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,  
service, ardent and generous faith,  
justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel  
may reach to the ends of the earth,  
illuminating even the fringes of our world.  
Mother of the living Gospel,  
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,  
pray for us.  
Amen. Alleluia!

*[Prayer from Pope Francis' words 'The Joy of the Gospel' – Evangelii Gaudium, 288]*

*The Joy of the Gospel*