

## LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

This handbook is a compilation of prayers that will help us talk to God in a confident and intimate way. Most of these prayers are traditional and are thus grounded in the piety of the communion of saints. Some are the fruit of meditations of St. Josemaria Escriva from his book *The Way of the Cross* and from his various homilies that deal with devotion to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—the *trinity on earth*. Others—such as the excerpts taken from the Order of Mass, the Prefaces, and the Liturgy of the Hours—draw upon the rich liturgical tradition of the church. As Pope Benedict XVI said in *Jesus of Nazareth*, in the public prayer of the church, “God has come to our aid: He himself provides the words of our prayer and teaches us to pray.”

We entrust this treasury of prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she, who needed only to embrace her Son to make her prayer heard, teach us to pray as she prays—with the utmost confidence, not rooted in our own worth, merit, or devotion, but rather in the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some words of Pope Benedict XVI regarding prayer:

“This is what prayer really is—being in silent inward communion with God. It requires nourishment, and that is why we need articulated prayer in words, images, or thoughts. The more God is present in us, the more we will really be able to be present to him when we utter the words of our prayers. But the converse is also true: Praying actualizes and deepens our communion of being with God.

“Our praying can and should arise above all from our heart, from our needs, our hopes, our joys, our suffer-

ings, from our shame over sin, and from our gratitude for the good. It can and should be a wholly personal prayer. But we also constantly need to make use of those prayers that express in words the encounter with God experienced both by the Church as a whole and by individual members of the Church. For without these aids to prayer, our own praying and our image of God become subjective and end up reflecting ourselves more than the living God.

"In the formulaic prayers that arose first from the faith of Israel and then from the faith of praying members of the Church, we get to know God and ourselves as well. They are a 'school of prayer' that transforms and opens up our life."<sup>1</sup>

"The great men and women of prayer throughout the centuries were privileged to receive an interior union with the Lord that enabled them to descend into the depths beyond the word. They are therefore able to unlock for us the hidden treasures of prayer. And we may be sure that each of us, along with our totally personal relationship with God, is received into, and sheltered within, this prayer.

"Again and again, each one of us with his *mens*, his own spirit, must go out to meet, open himself to, and submit to the guidance of the *vox*, the word that comes to us from the Son. In this way his own heart will be opened, and each individual will learn the particular way in which the Lord wants to pray with him."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 130.

2. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 133.