

PERSONAL PRAYER

Forming Missionary Mystics

“I always tried to walk in the presence of God and to do everything for His greater glory.”

— *St. Anthony Mary Claret*

I. FOUNDATIONAL VISION OF PERSONAL PRAYER IN CLARETIAN FORMATION

1. Personal Prayer at the Heart of Claretian Identity

Personal prayer is not one practice among many in Claretian life. It is the interior place where vocation is continually received, purified, deepened, and renewed. A Claretian missionary is not defined first by activity, competence, visibility, or effectiveness, but by his living relationship with Christ, from which all authentic missionary zeal flows. If this centre weakens, apostolic life gradually loses its evangelical depth and becomes vulnerable to activism, discouragement, self-reliance, and inner fragmentation.

Claretian formation seeks to form men with an interior life, men whose apostolic ardour arises from communion with the Lord and not merely from personal generosity or external discipline. Personal prayer grounds the missionary in Christ rather than in results. It protects him from becoming identified with his usefulness. It strengthens him to remain faithful when mission is difficult, hidden, or seemingly fruitless. It purifies desire, illumines conscience, integrates affectivity, and sustains the courage needed for proclamation. In this sense, prayer is not an interruption of mission. It is the deep root from which mission receives its truth and fire.

Without personal prayer, missionary life easily becomes functional rather than evangelical, reactive rather than discerning, driven rather than sent. A missionary may continue to work, organize, speak, and serve, yet gradually lose inward freedom and spiritual clarity. He may become efficient but less contemplative, committed but inwardly tired. In seeking relief from this inner emptiness, he may also become vulnerable to unhealthy dependencies and various forms of addiction—whether to work, technology, entertainment, relationships, or other compensatory behaviours that gradually weaken his freedom. Personal prayer helps prevent this erosion by returning the missionary again and again to the source of his identity and mission.

2. Prayer as Encounter, Not Technique

A decisive formative principle is that prayer is not a performance to master but a relationship to inhabit. This point is essential because many in formation approach prayer with hidden pressure. They may compare themselves with others, measure prayer by emotional intensity, or judge its quality according to fluency, peace, or apparent success. When this happens, prayer becomes subtly distorted. Instead of becoming a place of encounter with God, it becomes another area of self-evaluation.

Formation must therefore make clear that growth in prayer is measured above all by fidelity, honesty, availability, and love, not by perfection or emotional satisfaction. One learns to pray not by producing ideal experiences, but by returning faithfully to the Lord with one's truth. Some days prayer will feel clear and light. Other days it may feel dry, distracted, obscure, or poor. None of these, by themselves, determines its value. The essential question is whether the person is truly placing himself before God and allowing himself to be shaped there.

This perspective is deeply formative. It creates psychological and spiritual safety. It frees the formandus from comparison. It teaches perseverance during dryness. It strengthens trust in God's initiative rather than in personal ability. It also prevents a hidden perfectionism that can make prayer burdensome. The formandus learns that prayer is not the place where he proves his holiness, but the place where he receives mercy, light, purification, and strength.

3. Christocentric and Missionary Orientation

Claretian prayer is always Christ-centred, rooted in the Gospel, oriented toward mission, lived in communion with the Church, and attentive to real life. It is not a self-enclosed spirituality. It is personal, but never merely private. In personal prayer, the missionary comes to Christ not to escape reality, but to see reality more truthfully and to love it more evangelically.

Because it is Christ-centred, personal prayer continually returns the formandus to the person, words, attitudes, and mission of Jesus. Christ is not only the object of devotion. He is the living Lord who teaches, questions, consoles, purifies, and sends. Because it is missionary, prayer does not end in inward comfort. It opens outward into proclamation, service, solidarity, and discernment. Because it is ecclesial, it keeps the missionary within the faith and life of the Church rather than within private religious subjectivism. Because it is incarnational, it engages real relationships, concrete struggles, bodily limits, pastoral realities, and the ordinary circumstances of daily life.

Personal prayer, then, does not withdraw the missionary from the world. Rather, it returns him to the world with greater clarity, compassion, freedom, and fire.

II. THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. Jesus, the Praying Missionary

The Gospels reveal Jesus as a man of intense mission and deep prayer. He does not pray only when free from responsibility. He creates space for prayer within responsibility. He seeks solitude deliberately. He prays before decisive moments. He remains in communion with the Father amid the demands of ministry. He returns from prayer with renewed clarity, authority, and availability.

“Rising early, before dawn, He went off to a deserted place, and there He prayed” (Mk 1:35).

This pattern is highly significant for formation. Jesus does not treat prayer and mission as competing realities. Prayer is the hidden ground of mission. His proclamation, decisions, endurance, compassion, and obedience flow from communion with the Father. The same principle must shape Claretian formation. Mission does not excuse one from prayer. Mission makes prayer even more necessary.

For the Claretian missionary, Jesus becomes not only the one to whom one prays, but also the one from whom one learns how to pray. His life reveals that prayer is not withdrawal from apostolic life, but its interior source and sustaining centre.

2. “Lord, Teach Us to Pray”

The disciples did not ask Jesus first to teach them how to preach, organize, or heal. They asked, “Lord, teach us to pray.” This request reveals that they perceived prayer as the secret of His life and mission. They saw in Him a form of authority and inward rootedness that could not be explained by outward action alone. Prayer was the hidden apprenticeship from which everything else emerged.

This has direct importance for formation. The missionary must learn many skills and responsibilities, but prayer remains foundational because it shapes the interior quality with which everything else is lived. A missionary who knows how to speak but not how to pray will eventually become shallow or divided. A missionary who learns to pray enters the deepest school of mission.

For Claretians, personal prayer is the hidden apprenticeship of apostolic life. It forms not only the content of what one proclaims, but the tone, freedom, humility, and truth with which one proclaims it.

3. Prayer as Transformative Encounter

Prayer is not only communication with God. It is transformative encounter. In prayer, God does not merely receive words. He acts. He reorders priorities, clarifies motives, reveals attachments,

heals fragmentation, consoles wounds, illumines conscience, and strengthens freedom. Prayer is therefore formative in the deepest sense. It is God forming the missionary from within.

This inner transformation often happens quietly. Sometimes it comes through light, peace, and clarity. At other times it comes through unrest, exposure, repentance, or invitation to change. In both cases, prayer becomes a place where the truth of the person is gradually brought into contact with the truth and mercy of God. The missionary is formed not only by what he does for God, but by what God does in him when he stands before Him.

For this reason, prayer must be seen not as an obligation imposed from outside, but as one of the privileged places of inner transformation in formation.

III. PERSONAL PRAYER AS A FORMATIVE PROCESS

1. Prayer as Integration of the Person

Personal prayer touches all dimensions of formation because the human person is not divided into separate compartments before God. In prayer, the formandus does not bring only his spiritual side. He brings his whole person: memories, wounds, desires, questions, emotions, hopes, fears, relationships, temptations, and apostolic concerns. Because of this, prayer becomes a place of integration.

On the human level, prayer strengthens self-awareness, affective honesty, contact with one's limits, and a more truthful relationship with inner life. On the spiritual level, it deepens friendship with God, trust in grace, and receptivity to the Spirit. On the apostolic level, it clarifies motivations, purifies zeal, and strengthens missionary discernment. On the communitarian level, it supports forgiveness, empathy, patience, and deeper charity.

Over time, faithful personal prayer forms interior freedom, emotional maturity, apostolic discernment, and stability amid change. It helps the person live from a deeper centre. It gradually reduces fragmentation between prayer and action, desire and duty, interior movements and outward responses. The formandus becomes less divided and more unified before God.

2. Fidelity over Consolation

Formation must explicitly teach that dryness is normal, distraction is human, and consolation is gift, not entitlement. Many people become discouraged in prayer because they imagine that progress means increasing sweetness, peace, or felt closeness to God. When such feelings lessen, they conclude that something is wrong. This misunderstanding can weaken perseverance and distort spiritual growth.

In reality, prayer often matures precisely through aridity. When a person remains faithful during dryness, he begins to love God more for God's sake and less for the emotional support prayer may provide. He learns to remain in relationship without needing constant reassurance. This fidelity is deeply formative. It purifies motives, strengthens trust, and develops a quieter, more stable kind of love.

Distraction, likewise, should not be dramatized. It is part of being human. The important thing is not never to be distracted, but to return gently and honestly. Remaining faithful in prayer during aridity, obscurity, and limitation is itself a profound act of love and trust. Formation must teach this clearly so that formandi are not governed by discouragement or false standards of success.

3. Common Obstacles in Personal Prayer

- Constant busyness and lack of silence
- Excessive use of digital media
- Fatigue and poor self-care
- Unresolved emotional burdens
- Unrealistic expectations of prayer

- Discouragement after periods of dryness

Helpful Response: Rather than giving up, acknowledge the obstacle, speak about it honestly with God, and continue your daily time of prayer faithfully.

IV. STRUCTURE OF PERSONAL PRAYER (A Flexible Claretian Framework)

The following structure is offered as a pedagogical guide, not a rigid formula. Its purpose is to help the formandus enter personal prayer with greater simplicity, depth, and regularity. The Holy Spirit always retains primacy. The structure serves prayer; it does not replace living relationship.

Step 1: Entering the Presence of God

Purpose: To shift from activity to availability.

The first movement of prayer is not speaking, but arriving. The formandus needs to move from outward occupation to inward presence. This transition matters greatly because many people come to prayer physically present but mentally scattered and emotionally dispersed. Entering the presence of God means gathering oneself and consciously placing oneself before the One who is already present.

Helpful practices may include silence, conscious breathing, a brief act of recollection, a short invocation, or simple awareness of God's nearness. The point is not to create a complicated ritual, but to allow the heart to slow down enough to become available.

This step teaches interiority and recollection, both of which are essential for missionaries immersed in constant demands. It forms the ability to pause, become aware, and receive rather than rush immediately into words or reflections.

Step 2: Listening to the Word

The Word of God initiates dialogue, anchors prayer in truth, and protects prayer from becoming subjective or self-referential. In Claretian formation, personal prayer should ordinarily remain close to Scripture, especially the Gospel, because the missionary must be formed by the living Word he is called to proclaim.

Preferred sources may include a Gospel passage, the liturgical readings of the day, a scene from the life of Christ, or a concrete missionary situation brought into the light of the Word. The aim is not primarily study or analysis, but listening. The formandus receives the text, reads it slowly, and allows one word, phrase, gesture, or scene to begin resonating within.

This step forms receptivity. It teaches the person that prayer begins not with self-expression alone, but with listening to God who speaks.

Step 3: Consideration (Loving Attention)

This step is not cold analysis but contemplative attention. The formandus lingers with what has been heard and asks with simplicity: What is Christ revealing? What in this text touches my life, my community, or my mission? What stirs desire, resistance, attraction, discomfort, or invitation within me?

At this point, imagination may be used fruitfully, especially in Gospel scenes. One may place oneself within the scene, notice Christ's attitude, listen to His words, observe the movement of the people around Him, and remain with whatever begins to touch the heart. The aim is not to force insight, but to give loving attention to the way the Word meets life.

This step forms attentiveness, self-knowledge, and a more personal relationship to Scripture. It helps the formandus move from external reading to interior listening.

Step 4: Conversation (Heart-to-Heart)

This is the core of personal prayer. The Word and the movements of the heart open into relationship. The formandus speaks honestly to Christ, expressing gratitude, sorrow, longing, confusion, resistance, fear, trust, or desire. Prayer becomes more personal here because the person no longer remains only a listener, but becomes a respondent.

This conversation should be marked by honesty rather than pious correctness. One need not use elevated words. What matters is truth. The missionary learns to bring his real life before Christ. He says what is actually present within him. In this way, prayer becomes a place of friendship, not performance.

There are also times when words begin to fall away. In such moments, silence may deepen intimacy more than speech. When words fail, loving presence is enough. This too is prayer.

Step 5: Conversion and Discernment

True prayer gradually reveals areas needing healing, repentance, surrender, or growth. It exposes disordered attachments, hidden fears, ego-driven motivations, and places where freedom is blocked. This exposure should not be seen as failure. It is part of God's formative work.

At the same time, prayer also reveals invitations: where one is being called to trust more, forgive, change, let go, endure, speak truthfully, or act courageously. This is why personal prayer and discernment belong together. Prayer is not complete if it remains emotionally moving but does not touch life.

This step helps the formandus ask: What in me needs to be purified? What is God inviting me toward? What leads to greater love, truth, freedom, humility, and mission? In this way, prayer becomes a place of conversion, not merely consolation.

Step 6: Missionary Commitment

Personal prayer naturally culminates in a renewed "yes" to mission. This need not always take the form of a dramatic resolution. Often it is simple: a specific choice, a clarified attitude, a renewed willingness, an act of surrender, a patient endurance, a reconciliatory gesture, or a more faithful way of approaching the day.

Without this missionary movement, prayer risks remaining inward and disconnected from life. The Claretian missionary prays in order to be more available to Christ and more transparent to mission. The fruit of prayer should slowly enter relationships, decisions, service, study, preaching, and community life.

This final step helps unite contemplation and apostolic life. It reminds the formandus that prayer does not end in the chapel or in private reflection. It continues in the way one lives.

V. DISCIPLINE AND FIDELITY: "AN APPOINTMENT WITH GOD"

Personal prayer requires intentional structure. Left unprotected, it is slowly eroded by urgency, fatigue, distraction, and the subtle logic that everything else is more immediately necessary. This is why prayer must be treated as a real appointment with God, not as something done only when convenient.

Four Anchors of Fidelity

Person: The centre of prayer is God, not the self. This seems obvious, yet it must be remembered constantly. Prayer is not primarily a search for one's own clarity, peace, or emotional release. These may come, but they are not the centre. The centre is the living God who calls, receives, and transforms.

Time: Morning is often preferable because it offers the first fruits of the day and protects prayer from being continually postponed. Yet what matters most is not an abstract ideal but real fidelity. A consistent time is more formative than an occasionally perfect one. Regularity trains the heart and protects prayer from constant negotiation. In today's digital culture, protecting this time may also require intentional digital discipline, such as silencing mobile devices, turning off notifications, or leaving electronic devices outside the place of prayer whenever possible. By creating a space free from digital interruptions, the missionary becomes more fully present to God and more receptive to His voice.

Place: A stable, quiet, and prayerful place matters because the body and mind are shaped by environment. A consistent place helps recollection become easier and signals inwardly that one is entering a particular mode of presence. The place need not be elaborate, but it should support silence and dignity.

Memory: Scripture and, when helpful, a prayer journal support continuity in prayer. They help the formandus remember what God has been doing, notice recurring movements, and remain grounded in truth rather than in fluctuating impressions.

Helpful Practice: Some missionaries find it helpful to begin personal prayer with a brief period of reflective sacred music or a meditative hymn. Used with discretion, it can quiet the mind, foster recollection, and prepare the heart for a deeper encounter with God. Once recollected, silence should gradually become the principal atmosphere of personal prayer.

A key formative insight follows from all this: what is not protected by discipline is slowly lost. Fidelity in prayer is not sustained by good intention alone. It needs structure, choice, and perseverance.

VI. SCRIPTURE, JOURNALING, AND DISCERNMENT

1. Scripture as the Norm of Listening

God's voice is not arbitrary. He speaks consistently with His revealed Word. Regular contact with Scripture trains discernment, purifies imagination, protects against illusion, and forms the missionary mind in the attitudes of Christ. For this reason, Scripture should ordinarily occupy a central place in personal prayer.

When the formandus remains rooted in the Word, prayer becomes more objective, more ecclesial, and more Christ-centred. The person does not remain enclosed within subjective feeling. He allows himself to be addressed, challenged, corrected, and consoled by revelation. This is crucial in formation, where sincerity alone is not enough. Desire must be purified and guided by truth.

2. Prayer Journal

Journaling is not mandatory, but it is highly formative, especially in initial formation. Writing helps the formandus recognize inner movements, track patterns of grace and resistance, support accompaniment, and remember God's fidelity over time. Many things perceived in prayer are easily forgotten unless they are named. Writing gives them form and makes later discernment more concrete.

A prayer journal may include the date, the Scripture passage or focus, the main inner movements, perceived invitations, resistances, questions, and one concrete resolution. The journal should not become a burden or a literary exercise. It is simply a tool of memory and discernment.

Used well, journaling helps the missionary become more reflective, honest, and aware of the way God is shaping him gradually over time.

VII. PERSONAL PRAYER IN INITIAL FORMATION

Primary Goals

In initial formation, personal prayer should help establish regularity, form habits of silence, develop basic discernment, integrate affectivity, and overcome comparison, fear, and discouragement. At this stage, what matters most is not sophistication of method but the gradual development of a stable and truthful relationship with God.

The formandus must learn that personal prayer is normal, necessary, and central to vocation. He must also learn that struggle in prayer is normal. Many beginners assume that difficulty means failure. Formation must correct this gently and clearly.

Formation Guidelines

Daily personal prayer of at least thirty minutes should ordinarily be protected. Clear accompaniment is essential. Evaluation should be non-judgmental and focused on fidelity, honesty, and integration rather than on visible intensity or emotional fervour.

Formators must normalize struggle, discourage perfectionism, and structurally protect prayer time. They must help formandi develop good habits without turning prayer into a performance metric. What is being formed here is not merely external discipline, but an inner relationship that can sustain the whole missionary vocation.

VIII. PERSONAL PRAYER IN ONGOING FORMATION

Ongoing Challenges

In ongoing formation, the difficulties often change. Ministry overload, functional prayer, fatigue, discouragement, role-identification, and loss of interiority become significant risks. The missionary may continue praying outwardly while gradually losing depth, attention, and freshness. Prayer can become reduced to duty, compressed by ministry, or thinned out by mental and emotional exhaustion.

Ongoing Formation Focus

At this stage, the focus is often on re-centering prayer amid mission, deepening contemplative attitude, integrating suffering and limits, and renewing apostolic zeal without returning to activism. The missionary learns to pray not only in ideal conditions but in the midst of real pastoral weight, disappointment, and fatigue.

A key insight here is that fidelity in prayer during dryness is itself a mature form of contemplation. Ongoing formation must help missionaries rediscover this truth. Prayer in later stages may become simpler, poorer, quieter, and less emotionally expressive, yet more stable and more surrendered. This is not regression. It may be deepening.

IX. PERSONAL PRAYER AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Personal prayer and community prayer mutually enrich one another. The missionary who meets Christ personally enters community prayer with greater authenticity, while the prayer of the community strengthens fidelity in personal prayer. Personal prayer has strong effects on community life. A person who prays with honesty and regularity becomes more aware of his inner reactions, less governed by projections, more capable of empathy, and more open to forgiveness. Personal prayer humanizes authority and obedience because it keeps the person in contact with truth, humility, and the need for grace.

Communities lacking personal prayer often become defensive, reactive, and emotionally polarized. Where there is little real prayer, tensions tend to harden, conversations become less patient, and fraternity easily weakens into coexistence without depth. Personal prayer does not solve all community problems, but it creates the inner conditions needed for charity, restraint, and truthfulness.

Thus, personal prayer should never be viewed as merely private spirituality. Its fruits are deeply communal.

X. EVALUATION AND DISCERNMENT CRITERIA

Personal Review Questions

A missionary may periodically ask:

- Is my prayer regular and protected?
- Does my prayer shape my apostolic decisions?
- Am I growing in freedom, charity, patience, and truthfulness?
- Do I allow prayer to question my lifestyle, attitudes, and motivations?
- Do I remain faithful in dryness, or do I withdraw when prayer gives no immediate comfort?
- Does my prayer gradually make me more patient, more available to others, and more joyful in mission?

These questions help keep evaluation focused on growth in life rather than on subjective experience alone.

For Formators

Formators should look for integration, not intensity. They should respect individual rhythm, encourage perseverance, and accompany without comparison. Their concern should not be whether the formandus appears impressive in prayer, but whether prayer is gradually shaping the whole person.

Signs of healthy growth may include greater regularity, increased honesty before God, more emotional steadiness, deeper charity, greater apostolic clarity, and more freedom from performance. Warning signs may include chronic neglect of prayer, excessive dependence on emotional consolation, rigid perfectionism, compartmentalization between prayer and life, or use of prayer language to avoid conversion.

Discernment must remain patient, realistic, and attentive to the whole formative process.

XI. CONCLUDING SYNTHESIS

Personal prayer is the root of missionary zeal, the school of discernment, the source of inner freedom, and one of the principal guardians of vocation. It is where the missionary repeatedly learns who he is before God and for whom he is sent. It is where apostolic fire is purified, motives are examined, love is renewed, and mission is received anew. Far from being an interruption of ministry, personal prayer is the living source from which authentic missionary life continually draws its strength.

St. Anthony Mary Claret embodied this reality throughout his missionary life. Amid extraordinary apostolic activity, constant travel, preaching, writing, and numerous pastoral responsibilities, he continually returned to personal prayer as the wellspring of his strength and missionary zeal. His remarkable fruitfulness did not arise from restless activism or personal ambition, but from deep and faithful communion with Christ. His life reminds every Claretian that the missionary who remains rooted in prayer never loses the inner fire of his vocation, even amid fatigue, trials, or demanding apostolic commitments.

A Claretian missionary who prays does not become less apostolic; he becomes more available to be sent. Rooted in Christ, he is less driven by anxiety, self-reliance, or the need for visible success, and more attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His preaching gains credibility because it springs from lived experience, his discernment becomes wiser because it is shaped in God's presence, and his relationships become more patient, compassionate, and evangelical. Prayer gradually forms not only what he does but also the kind of missionary he becomes.

In this sense, personal prayer forms missionary mystics: men inwardly rooted in Christ, evangelical in freedom, truthful in discernment, joyful in hope, and generous in apostolic charity. Before proclaiming the Word with their lips, they allow the Word to shape their hearts. Thus, little by little, they become living Gospels, whose lives bear witness to the transforming power of God's presence and whose missionary service flows from a deep and abiding friendship with Christ.

Further Reading

- Green, T. H. (2006). *Opening to God: A guide to prayer* (Rev. ed.). Ave Maria Press.
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- Claretian Resources.

PRACTICAL WORKSHEETS & PRAYER GUIDES

For Initial and Ongoing Formation of Claretian Missionaries

WORKSHEET 1 – PERSONAL PRAYER RHYTHM REVIEW

Purpose: To help the formandus or formandus become aware of his real prayer rhythm and gently strengthen fidelity.

A. My Current Practice

Usual time of personal prayer: _____

Average duration: _____

Place where I usually pray: _____

Frequency in the past two weeks:

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ 5–6 days
- ☐ 3–4 days
- ☐ Irregular

B. Inner Experience (No Judging)

What usually helps me enter prayer?

What usually distracts or discourages me?

C. Awareness

When prayer is faithful, how does it affect my day, relationships, or mission?

D. Gentle Resolution

One concrete adjustment I will try this week:

WORKSHEET 2 – WEEKLY PRAYER REVIEW

At the end of each week ask yourself:

- Was I faithful to my daily prayer?
- When was I most attentive to God?
- What distracted me most?
- What invitation from God remained with me?
- How did prayer influence my community life or ministry this week?

WORKSHEET 3 – ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Purpose: To cultivate recollection and availability before God.

Prayer Exercise (5–10 minutes)

Sit comfortably. Place yourself consciously before God.

Breathe slowly and repeat quietly: **“You are here, Lord, and I am here for You.”**

Remain in silence.

Reflection Questions

What do I notice in my body and emotions as I become still?

Is there resistance, fear, or hurry I need to acknowledge before God?

Journal Notes

WORKSHEET 4 – PRAYING WITH THE WORD (GOSPEL-BASED)

Purpose: To form a Christ-centred and missionary prayer.

Step 1: Choose the Text

Gospel passage used: _____

Step 2: Loving Attention

What is happening in this scene?

What attracts me? What disturbs me?

Notes:

Step 3: Listening

What word, phrase, or gesture stays with me?

Step 4: Conversation

Write a short, honest prayer to Jesus from your heart:

WORKSHEET 5 – HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATION

Purpose: To deepen relational prayer beyond reflection.

Complete one or two of the following sentences in prayer:

Lord, today I am grateful for...

Lord, I feel resistance about...

Lord, I desire...

Lord, I fear...

Lord, I trust You with...

Journal

WORKSHEET 6 – DISCERNMENT AND CONVERSION

Purpose: To allow prayer to shape life and mission.

Awareness

During prayer, what truth about myself became clearer?

Was there an invitation to change, let go, or grow?

Discernment

Does this invitation lead to greater love, freedom, humility, or mission?

Is it consistent with the Gospel and my vocation?

WORKSHEET 7 – MISSIONARY COMMITMENT

Purpose: To connect prayer and daily life.

Today's Concrete Resolution (Realistic, simple, and specific)

In relationships: _____

In community life: _____

In mission or work: _____

In personal discipline: _____

Prayer of surrender: **"Here I am, Lord. Do with me what serves Your Kingdom."**

WORKSHEET 8 – PRAYER JOURNAL GUIDE

Purpose: To use journaling as a tool for discernment and memory.

Suggested Structure (Optional)

Date and place

Scripture or focus

Inner movements (thoughts, feelings, resistances)

Perceived invitation

Resolution

Review Question (Weekly)

What patterns of grace or struggle do I notice?

PRAYER GUIDE A – 30-MINUTE DAILY PERSONAL PRAYER

Presence (5 min) – Silence, breathing, awareness of God

Word (10 min) – Gospel reading and listening

Conversation (10 min) – Honest dialogue with Christ

Commitment (5 min) – Resolution and missionary offering

PRAYER GUIDE B – PRAYER IN TIMES OF DRYNESS

When prayer feels empty or difficult:

Remain present without forcing words.

Repeat slowly: **“Lord, I am here because You are worthy.”**

Read one Gospel verse and stay with it.

Offer your dryness for the mission.

Remember: fidelity itself becomes prayer.

PRAYER GUIDE C – PRAYER FOR BUSY MISSIONARY DAYS

Morning (5 minutes): “Lord, I give You this day, its people, and its demands.”

Midday pause: One deep breath and: “Jesus, remain with me.”

Evening (Examen – 10 minutes):

- Gratitude
- Review of the day
- Awareness of God’s presence
- Trustful surrender

PRAYER GUIDE D – MONTHLY REVIEW WITH ACCOMPANIER

Prepare to share:

- My prayer rhythm
- What sustains or discourages me
- One area of growth
- One area of struggle

Goal: discernment, not judgment.

CONCLUDING REMINDER

Prayer does not make us less missionary. It makes us more available to be sent.

These worksheets are tools, not tests. They should be used with freedom, honesty, humility, and perseverance. Their value lies not in completion as such, but in the way they help the person become more attentive, more truthful, and more available to God’s forming action.

HOW THESE CAN BE USED CONCRETELY

Initial Formation: In initial formation, one or two worksheets may be used each week. They can support monthly review with the formator and help the prayer journal serve as an accompaniment tool. Their purpose is to establish rhythm, honesty, and basic discernment without creating pressure.

Ongoing Formation: In ongoing formation, these tools may serve personal renewal plans, retreat follow-up, and support during ministry overload or spiritual dryness. They can help missionaries re-enter prayer more consciously when life becomes functional or fragmented.

For Formators: For formators, these worksheets can assist discernment conversations and provide a way of accompanying prayer without reducing it to performance. They help make prayer speakable without making it measurable in a narrow sense.

Weekly Reflection for Formators

Personal prayer is the first witness a formator offers. Formandi learn not only from what the formator teaches about prayer but also from the fidelity and serenity they observe in his own relationship with God. At the end of each week, take a few moments to reflect:

- Was I faithful to my own daily personal prayer despite the demands of formation and ministry?
- Did my prayer help me accompany formandi with greater patience, wisdom, and compassion?
- Have I encouraged fidelity in prayer more than the search for extraordinary spiritual experiences?
- Did I witness to the value of personal prayer by my example as well as by my teaching?
- What invitation is God giving me to deepen my own life of prayer in the coming week?

This brief review reminds formators that the most effective way to teach prayer is to become a person of prayer.