

## ***St Matthew Academy Spring Prayer Book***



*“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” Matthew 6:26-32*

## Daily Act of Worship

Three days a week when there is no assembly the Daily Act of Worship takes place immediately after registration.

It is the **QUALITY** of this time that is most important. We are supporting students to become more **REFLECTIVE** and therefore it is essential that the prayer time is **NOT RUSHED** and there is a time of silence.

### Daily Act of Worship

1. Place *“At prayer please wait”* notice on form room door.
2. Prayer begins with the Sign of the Cross. *“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*
3. Each day a daily prayer can be found in the form prayer book and this can be followed by a short time for students to share prayer in silence of their own hearts or out loud. This can then be followed by a Common Prayer found at the front of the prayer book.
4. End the prayer by saying *“St Matthew pray for us”* and the sign of the cross *“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*
5. The prayer time can be led by pupils however it is essential that the Form Tutor ensures that the time is reflective and has a clear beginning and end.

## Daily Act of Worship

### Common Prayers

*Use one of these prayers each morning*

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day, our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from  
evil.

AMEN

Hail Mary full of grace

The Lord is with you

Blessed are you among women

And blest is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, mother of God

Pray for us sinners now

And at the hour of our death.

AMEN

Glory be to the Father And to the Son

And to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning Is now and ever shall be World without end.

AMEN

St Matthew Academy Prayer

You are the light of the world

I have your light within me

I will not hide it away

But let your Light Shine out before others

So that they may see your good works

And give glory to You Father in heaven

AMEN

(Adapted from Matthew 5:14) Morning Offering

Lord I offer you this new day. I offer you everything that will happen. I offer you the routines of the day ahead. Help me to keep listening to you, to do what you inspire in me and to shoulder the crosses that wait for me on this day's journey into learning, friendship and love with you. AMEN

<b>Week beginning: 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>Feast of the Epiphany/Trust</b> <i>“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy”</i> <b>Matthew 2:10</b>
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On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> the Church celebrates the feast of the Epiphany. It is also known as the feast of The Three Kings, the revelation of God Incarnate, as it is when the three magi visited the baby Jesus. The Kings rejoiced because they knew what this baby represented, Hope, Peace, and Salvation.

### Day One

Dear Lord, The three Kings journeyed far and wide, seeking you out by following your star. They placed all their faith and trust in you as they knew you were the Saviour of the world. Father as we go about our day today, help us to always remember that we can trust you, when all else fails, you will always be there for us. Amen

### Day Two

O Lord, Mighty in Power, You say that I should have faith in You so that I will be upheld. I do, Mighty Lord. I place all my faith in You. You strengthen me. Your holy force keeps my spirit alive and burning fiercely for You. I know that with You I can overcome anything. Amen

### Day Three

Lord, You are the God of peace and love in Whom I place my trust. Give me a peaceful heart that rests in You and a loving spirit that pours fourth Your love to others. Amen

### Saints Days & Dates

Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	St Elizabeth Seton
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	St Peter of Canterbury
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	St Thorfinn

<b>Week beginning: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>Generosity</b> <i>“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” Proverbs 11:25</i>
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Small acts of kindness and generosity are considered momentous when coupled with a loving heart. We are all called to be generous. Not only by giving of our financial resources but by giving of our time, our talents, our gifts, a listening ear or a kind word. God loves a cheerful giver.

### **Day One**

Lord Jesus, you are such a generous and giving Father to us. You give us all that we need without us having to ask. Today help us to think about how we can pay it forward. Who can we bless today with our generosity. Amen

### **Day Two**

Remember the words the Lord himself gave, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Amen

### **Day Three**

Dear Lord teach me to be generous; teach me 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 reward, save that of knowing that I do your will. Amen

## **Saints Days & Dates**

Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> January	St William of Bourges
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> January	St Martin of Leon
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> January	St Felix of Nola

<b>Week beginning: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>Peace</b> <i>“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”</i> <b>Matthew 5:9</b>
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It is only the third week of school and already we are busy with studying, working and planning our time ahead. We can get so caught up in all of it that we often feel flustered and confused. Today while we go through our busy day, let us do so knowing that a peaceful heart is the key to us achieving all that we know is possible. The first prayer below from St Teresa of Avila sums it up beautifully.

### **Day One**

May today there be peace within. May you trust your highest power that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance. It is there for each and every one of you. Amen.

### **Day Two**

Dear God I ask for peace of mind. I pray that I am calm, collected and tranquil at all times today. I rest and relax in your presence. I let go of all anxious thoughts. I stop rushing and start praying. I let go and I let God. Amen.

### **Day Three**

Loving Father, In your arms I find refuge, I find shelter, I find peace. Keep me close to you Oh Lord, that I may always enjoy the peace and tranquillity that you bring. Amen

## **Saints Days & Dates**

Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> January	Bl. Gonzalo de Amarante
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> January	St Fabian
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Bl. Laura Vicuna

<b>Week beginning: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>Respect for Others</b> <i>Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity. Titus 2:7</i>
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The 27<sup>th</sup> of January brings our focus and attention to the horrible events of the Holocaust. It was a period of murder and mayhem which saw millions of Jewish people killed. There was no respect, there was no love of neighbour there was no peace. We have learnt so much from this. As children of faith we know that respect and love of others is the only way forward to a better world. Let us keep this in our minds today, that we can continue to care for each other and respect our differences.

### Day One

Dear God, we thank you for each day. Please help us to respect and tolerate everyone, including those that are different to us. Help us to be kind and patient with one another and always show respect. No matter what race, age, gender or religion people are, help us to be fair and kind to them. Help us to co-operate, be helpful and listen. Protect all of us and help us to make our school and the world a better place. Amen.

### Day Two

Lord, you made each one of us unique and special. Our differences make us who we are as a school community. We all have dignity. Help us to see that dignity in others and bear witness to your love for us here on earth. Amen

### Day Three

Heavenly Father, you taught us that every single human life is sacred and precious. You loved us from the first moment of our existence. Help us to use you as our example of truly loving and respecting others. Amen.

### Saints Days & Dates

Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	St Marion Cope
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> January	St. Angela Merici

<b>Week beginning: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>Human Dignity/ Trafficking</b> <i>“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14</i>
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We are all part of the body of Christ and whilst here on earth, together we work towards each person being their best self. Pope Francis said many years ago that "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity." Our baptismal call to promote human dignity teaches us that every life is a gift from God and sacred, and as such, deserves to be protected and nurtured. February 8<sup>th</sup> is an International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. February 8<sup>th</sup> also coincides with the Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita. St. Bakhita's trajectory from years of cruel enslavement in Sudan to freedom in Italy led her to experience the love of God through Christ and to become a shepherd for many others.

### Day One

O Lord, you said you came: "to set the captives free." In our world young men and women who are trafficked are modern day slaves. Help these young people not to lose hope. Lord, give the grace of conversion to those who mistreat unfortunates for their own personal gain. May the awareness of this horrendous crime spread throughout the world and may many join the efforts to stop trafficking and help the victims begin anew, filled with hope. Amen

### Day Two

Heavenly Father, we pray for women, children and men who have been tricked or coerced into slavery; suffering physical, emotional and sexual abuse. We know that nothing is hidden from You, and we cry out to You for justice, freedom and mercy. Amen.

### Day Three

Dear Jesus, equip and strengthen those in authority that they may be champions of justice and fairness for victims. Give them a compassionate heart and all the resources they require to end modern slavery. Amen.

### Saints Days & Dates

Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	St. Aldegunais
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	St. Brigid of Ireland
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February	St Blaise



<b>Week beginning: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>	<b>Children’s Mental Health Week</b> <i>“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:17</i>
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This week we will focus on Children’s Mental Health. A child or young person’s mental health is equally as important as their physical and spiritual well-being. Having good mental health can help you to be resilient and help you to cope with life’s many challenges. There are many things that can negatively affect your mental health, but always remember, that you do not have to face it alone. You are loved by God and you can always turn to your teachers and support staff for help and guidance.

**Day One**

Heavenly Father, sometimes my mind is so confused. I do not know what to do, say or feel. Help me Lord to remember that you are always with me, loving me and looking out for me through my ups and downs. Amen.

**Day Two**

Dear God, I have many situations in my life that make me afraid, including my relationships, my classes at school, my family, and personal projects. I fear that things will not turn out well. Lord, I pray that you give me the strength to pursue whatever it is I need to. Assure me that, for better for worse, you will always be with me. I need this courage to find happiness. I cannot do it without you, God. Amen.

**Day Three**

Loving God, today I will choose to trust you, because I know that you are with me. Please strengthen me and help me. Hold me in your righteous right hand when I can’t hold myself up. Help me not to be discouraged or dismayed. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**Saints Days & Dates**

Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	St Francis Nagasaki
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> February	St Jerome Emiliani
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	St Paschal

<b>Week beginning: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>	<b>Racial Justice</b> <i>“Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, it is a single unit because all these parts though many make one body, so it is with Christ” 1 Corinthians 12:14</i>
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We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Pope Francis said: ‘Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.’ Today let us think about how we can have love for all our sisters and brothers and how we can promote solidarity in a world surrounded by discrimination and inequality.

### Day One

Dear God, we pray today that you send your healing to this world that we may live in unity with each other and learn to be open and respectful to each other just as Jesus taught us. Help us to stand in solidarity with one another and uplift each other’s voices, to build your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

### Day Two

Heavenly Father, help us to celebrate each other’s differences because they are what make us special. Lord we are all your children; we are all members of your body here on earth. Give us the courage to stand up for what is right and be strong in times of adversity. Amen.

### Day Three

Lord Jesus, we pray today that we will recognise our responsibility for the common good of others and that you will give us the capacity to help when and where we can. We ask you to fill our hearts with love for others, so much so that we only desire what is good for them. Amen.

### Saints Days & Dates

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	St Jacinta Marto
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February	St Polycarp
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	St Callistus Caravario

<b>Week beginning:</b> <b>27<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>	<b>Lent &amp; Repentance</b> <i>“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:7</i>
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Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, and as this season begins it is a good time to reflect. The season of Lent calls us to abstinence and repentance. Let us use this period to reflect on ourselves and our lives and to try to make changes, no matter how small, to be better. Lent is also a period of charity. We should try always to reach out to those in need, not just with money, but also with our time and our talents.

*“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.” - Mother Teresa*

### Day One

Dear Lord, you invite us all closer to you in this time of Lent. Help us to open our hearts to your love and mercy. Create in me a humble heart, that I can come to you with my needs and my weaknesses. Strengthen me O Lord, to overcome my failings and transgressions. Amen.

### Day Two

Grant me grace, O merciful God, to desire ardently all that is pleasing to You, to examine it prudently, to acknowledge it truthfully, and to accomplish it perfectly, for the praise and glory of Your name. Amen. (St Thomas Aquinas)

### Day Three

O my God, because you are so good, I am truly sorry to have offended you. With the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.

### Saints Days & Dates

Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	Bl Maria Caridad Brader
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Pope St Hilary
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	St Angela of The Cross

<b>Week beginning: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>	<b>International Women's Day</b> <i>"Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!" Luke 1:45</i>
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The female species are fearfully and wonderfully made. From the dawn of creation God saw fit to create woman and he chose a woman, Our Blessed Mother, to be the ark of the new covenant, Jesus. This week as we celebrate all women we think about those women who have paved the way for younger generations such as Mother Teresa, Maya Angelou, Michelle Obama, Mary Shelley, Malala Yousafzai. We also think about the women in our lives, our mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts. God is with them. God is within them. God lifts them up so they can be a blessing to others.

### Day One

Dear Lord, today help me to think about the women in my life who make a difference. Those who are my safe haven, my rock, my shelter. Bless them Lord. Amen.

### Day Two

Heavenly Father, we are daughters of the King. We praise you for who we are and what we have to offer to the world. Keep your guiding hand on us that we may always walk in your light. Amen

### Day Three

You have given gifts to every woman to bless and serve each other. You provide all your daughters with gifts to carry out the mission you have designed for us. Remind us that everything we need is found in you. May your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## Saints Days & Dates

Tuesday 07 <sup>th</sup> March	St Perpetua & St Felicity
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	St Catherine of Bologna
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	St Anastasia Patricia

<b>Week beginning:</b> <b>13<sup>TH</sup> March 2023</b>	<b>Forgiveness</b> <i>“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32</i>
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Forgiving someone. Possibly one of the hardest things that we human beings must face. When we are wronged we feel the hurt deep within our very selves. The pain cripples us and prevents us from moving forward. Forgiveness is hard but it is strong medicine for healing. Jesus tells us in the Gospels that forgiveness is from God and of God.” For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Who do we need to forgive in this moment? Bring them to mind ask God to forgive you as you forgive them.

### Day One

Father, only you understand how much I’ve been hurt. I don’t want to carry the pain for another second. I don’t want to be a bitter person. But I need your grace and the power of the cross to release my hurt and to forgive those who’ve hurt me. Help me Lord. Amen

### Day Two

Dear Merciful Lord, Thank you for your gift of forgiveness. Your only Son loved me enough to come to earth and experience the worst pain imaginable so I could be forgiven. Your mercy flows to me in spite of my faults and failures. I love you Lord. Amen

### Day Three

Dear Heavenly Father, Let the words of Psalm 51 be my heart’s cry today, “Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.” When I feel weighed down by sin in my life, I will find freedom by seeking your forgiveness. Amen

## Saints Days & Dates

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March	Bl Agnello of Pisa
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	St. Aristobulus
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	St Joseph of Arimathea

<b>Week beginning:</b> <b>20<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>	<b>Feast of Oscar Romero</b> <i>“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” Proverbs 31:8-9</i>
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St Oscar Romero was a Catholic Bishop from El Salvador. He is particularly remembered for his advocacy for the poorest people in El Salvador. He fought governments to have justice for them. He was a vocal critic of the violent activities of government armed forces, right-wing groups, and leftist guerrillas involved in El Salvador’s civil conflict. He was assassinated for his beliefs and was made a saint by Pope Francis. St Oscar Romero used his voice for justice and for speaking out for those who had no voice. He is a wonderful example of God’s love and mercy for the poor. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

**Day One**

Generous God, we lift up to your mercy that poverty which is a moral and social wound upon our country’s soul. In your goodness, help us to heal this wound by working to alleviate the suffering and pain of the poor. Amen

**Day Two**

God of all creation, give the people of our nation the collective will to make the economic, social, and political choices to reverse the human-made disaster of poverty, and so offer a new vision of life and society. Amen

**Day Three**

Give those who struggle with poverty renewed hope, economic and educational opportunity, and dignified work in safe conditions for just wages, that they might live in economic security. Amen.

**Saints Days & Dates**

Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> March	St Nicholas of Flue
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	St Lea
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March	St Joseph Oriol

<b>Week beginning: 27<sup>th</sup> March 023</b>	<b>Easter</b> <i>"He is not here; he has risen!" Luke 24:6-7</i>
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In our Christian tradition Easter is the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. It follows 40 days of Lent where we sacrificed, prayed, fasted and petitioned God. Easter is very important to us as Christians because it means Salvation. We are saved from sin because Jesus chose to die for us. Our Father in heaven loves us so much that he sent his Son to die for us. How truly blessed are we!

### **Day One**

Heavenly Father, I believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God came to earth to be the Saviour of the world, and that by His death on the cross, He paid the price for the sins of the world, so that whosoever believes on Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. Thank You for Jesus and thank You for my free gift of salvation. Thank You that by believing in His name, I am forgiven of my sins and brought into sweet fellowship with my heavenly Father. Amen

### **Day Two**

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross and for saving me from sin. This Easter I give you my heart and I ask that you use me to continue your work here on earth. Amen

### **Day Three**

Lord I believe in you. I believe in your death and resurrection. You have given me everything with your death though I do not deserve it. I love you Lord. Amen

### **Saints Days & Dates**

Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	St John of Egypt
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	St Tutilo
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	St Mark

## Meditation

This meditation can be read at any time, and can be split into parts. Meditation is a reflective prayer leading students to contemplation and awareness of their own consciousness and their impact on the world around them.

BEFORE PRAYING- Take the students through the following steps, this should take 1 minute

- Keep feet flat on the ground
- Keep back straight
- Keep head straight, not drooping
- Keep hands on knees or one resting in the palm of the other, in the lap
- Keep eyes preferably closed
- Don't force any feelings one way or the other
- Relax all your muscles, one by one, from your toes to the top of the head
- Become aware of your breathing but without changing it other than to gradually slow it down.

Get comfortable and take in a big, deep breath. When you let it out, feel everything around you getting calmer and quieter.

Take in another long breath, release it slowly, and feel even calmer still.

Bring your attention to any part of your body where you hold stress and tension and just relax and release it now. As you continue to breathe deeply and calmly, focus on the sound of my voice.

Imagine walking along a long sandy beach. You can hear the gulls and the gentle roll of the waves. Your feet sink into the warm sand. It is quiet and safe. You are alone walking into the soft sea wind. The sun is shining down on you, making you warm. You have been looking for a place to be quiet and comfortable. This feels as if it is your beach, yours alone.

You stop and stand, looking out over the immense expanding ocean. The water moves and churns, creating the bubbly white crest at the top of each wave. The roll of each wave sounds like the Earth, breathing. Over and over again with each wave. You think about how God has created this powerful ocean and wonderful Earth.

A short distance ahead of you, you now notice a big house. It is beckoning to you. It looks like a temple or small castle of some sort. You walk towards it, relaxed and interested. You follow a short path to the house and see Jesus standing at the large open door. He invites you in. It is safe and calm. You step out of the sunshine and into the coolness of this beautiful house. You find yourself in a huge hallway with plants and paintings. Jesus shows you a magnificent, marble staircase ahead of you. You know you want to go up those stairs. Jesus tells you that he will accompany you to the top. You become aware of a very heavy backpack that you have been carrying all this time.

The backpack is full of your worries, troubles, concerns, and negative feelings. You have been carrying them for a long time and you realize that this backpack is weighing you down. Your shoulders ache, and your back feels tight and stiff from all these feelings.



Jesus removes your backpack and with it all your worries and concerns. He places it onto his shoulders. You feel released, free! You can now easily ascend the staircase. Each step you take with him, you become lighter, happier, and quieted. Each step brings you closer to absolute comfort and joy with him. The comfort and joy live in you, and now there is nothing to get in the way of feeling them, reaching them. Now at the top of the stairs, Jesus smiles at you and invites you into a large room with a large open window. In front of the window is a big comfortable chair. You sit down and face the window, watching the magnificent ocean once again. You are happy to spend this time with Jesus. This is your time with him. You watch from your chair, by your window in your house. Breathe in the soft ocean air, and know that he loves you.”

Now take in a nice deep breath and exhale slowly. Continue to feel all the wonderful feelings of God’s love and gentleness and when you are ready open your eyes and bring yourself back to the present.

**Dear Lord, thank you for helping me. You are always there when I need you. I know I can count on you to hold my backpack of worry fear and anxiety when it gets too much for me to bear. I love you Lord and I ask that you come into my heart. I ask that you live in me and help me to be more like you. Amen.**