

## **Marianist Prayers for Businesspeople** by Albert E. Prendergast

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### **Introduction**

I created this prayer resource to give businesspeople a source to find spiritual inspiration readily available during busy workdays and at other times. During my forty-plus-year business career, I did not find a compact source of spiritual inspiration that spoke to me as an active businessperson. The Internet has prayers, but they did not speak to me about my Marianist spiritual experience. In addition, most traditional prayers you find in church pews give little support to the daily struggles of businesspeople.

Marianists, both lay and religious, have a deep spirituality that is apparent to other people. We share that spiritual experience with those who have ears to listen and eyes to see from our example. Marian prayers focus on a set of characteristics called the "Marianist charism."<sup>1</sup> The five pillars of the Marianist charism are *faith, community, inclusivity, and mission*, which are all influenced by *Mary, the Mother of God*. NACMS is referred to frequently in this publication, and the acronym stands for the North American Center for Marianist Studies.

### **1**

#### **What Is Marianist Prayer?**

Marianist prayer is not about just the words, but it is about who we are. A Marianist believes in a holistic approach to prayer that draws us into a deeper relationship with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Mary, who is a model for mission and the acceptance of God's will.

Father Chaminade, the Founder of the Marianist Family, advocated for a life of prayer. "Our Founders repeatedly stressed the importance of prayer. Father Chaminade often reminds us that it is through prayer that we Marianists will remain strong in our faith and grow in our love."<sup>2</sup> We continually draw on our inner strength through prayer. We know that our outer strength comes from God, and we keep reaching out to God through our prayers. "Prayer is the heart

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<sup>1</sup> A charism is "A special gift or grace of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefits the Church, given in order to help a person live out the Christian life, or to serve the common good in building up the Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, second ed. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 870-71.

<sup>2</sup> Enrique Aguilera, SM, and Jose Maria Arnaiz, SM, *Enfleshing the Word: Prayer and the Marianist Spiritual Journey* (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2000), 33-34.

of our life.”<sup>3</sup> “In the Marianist Family a tradition of prayer exists. . . . We have a vibrant tradition of prayer; we take care to have places of prayer.”<sup>4</sup> Prayer is a way of life to us. We say that we all live a life of prayer, some days better than others, but we intend to live our lives to improve the world in which we live by service to others. It will require more than human effort to do it. “In a word, we have a life of prayer which can be identified and which must be cared for and shared because it is the heart of our best Marianist tradition.”<sup>5</sup>

I like to say that “we can’t take our own mothers to work, but we can take Mary and the Holy Spirit.” Mary is a figure who encourages and comforts us as we work, hopefully for the betterment of all, while the Holy Spirit guides us. The following is a passage from *Enfleshing the Word: Prayer and the Marianist Spiritual Journey* about bringing Mary, the Mother of God, into one’s prayer life.

*Praying as Mary did.* Mary accompanies us along our journey of prayer. The road is marked by the different ways in which Mary reacted to the Word. Mary listened to it, meditated on it, responded to what this Word asked of her. She enfleshed it, brought it to the light of day, proclaimed it and followed it. These responses of Mary inspire our own prayer.<sup>6</sup>

As we bring Mary to the work, we, too, en flesh the Word through our vocation to business. We en flesh the Word through all of our actions and all of our words. We lean on Mary to guide our prayers and actions as she guided God’s son as he grew and lived his vocation.

### **How Lay Marianists Pray**

Marianists pray all the time. Our life is a prayer. We open ourselves up to the experiences of the world and immerse ourselves in serving God and God’s people. We use mental prayer each day. We stimulate mental prayer with readings, both scriptural and secular. We know mental prayer will go stale if we don’t supplement it with other resources. Mental prayer takes practice, especially in the context of one’s frantically busy days and stressful workload. Marianists tend to have a method of prayer. “To make mental prayer well, it is important to follow a method. Without a method, even the simplest of tasks would result in failure” (*Writings on Mental Prayer*, § 191).<sup>7</sup> The method of prayer is a combination of meditation and reflection on a topic that is important to us at the time. “In choosing a topic, we follow our needs, our interior attractions, or the grace we desire to obtain from prayer. . . . So we choose the topic by considering what subject will most likely lead to the result we desire.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Rule of Life of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI)*, I, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Aguilera and Arnaiz, *Enfleshing the Word*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Aguilera and Arnaiz, *Enfleshing the Word*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Aguilera and Arnaiz, *Enfleshing the Word*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> Quentin Hakenewerth, SM. *A Manual of Marianist Spirituality* (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2000), 32.

<sup>8</sup> Hakenewerth, *A Manual*, 33.

These methods presume some time for preparation. That is why we try to set aside a time of day for prayer. It can be spontaneous, but it is better to plan if you can.

Getting spiritually fit is like getting physically fit: it takes time and effort. Setting aside a specific time each day to devote to mental prayer may relieve some of the pressure we feel each day that leads us to make quick and sometimes expedient-but-inappropriate decisions. Getting used to setting aside a few minutes each day to meditate and pray will not be easy. Try it for a few minutes each day, add a few more minutes when you can, and maybe make your prayer time a little longer. You will know when it is long enough. It is not about being rigid about the time but finding a way to fit it into the flow of your schedule, both at work and at home.

### **Why Should I Pray?**

We should pray anytime we feel the need to pray. We don't have to wait until after work to pray or wait until we go to church. Freedom to pray at any time is one of the pillars of the Constitution of the United States. Businesspeople don't take advantage of that privilege often enough. Give yourself permission to pray anytime you feel or think it is appropriate.

We pray because we know that we are not alone, no matter how good or bad things are going on today. We are God's creation, and we are a community of beings trying to improve our world through what we do daily. Many lay Marianists see business as a vocation. At the Marianist Business Network, we say, "Working for money every day is a job. Working every day to improve the lives of all people is a vocation." Another way of looking at it is "Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need."<sup>9</sup>

Your commitment to your vocation to business will not survive without prayer and meditation. "Through prayer, Marianists remain faithful to the vocation received and to the mission which follows from this call. We cannot do this without prayer. Prayer, as has been said, is as important as breathing."<sup>10</sup> The pressures are too great. You need God's support and the support of a community of believers.

We all know too well that we all make mistakes, and some are more costly than others. Even when we make them, we pray that our intentions were good, but sometimes our intentions are not the best. Prayer can also be about forgiveness of those misguided intentions. Yes, Mary, I am sure, forgave Jesus for all the little mistakes a growing boy makes while learning to be an adult, as your mother forgave you. We should include petitions for forgiveness as a meditation in our prayers.

We need God and the prayerful support of our Marianist communities, both lay and religious, to guide our intentions and support us in our actions. We need help in discerning and choosing the right paths for our business decisions, personal decisions, and decisions that affect our families and loved ones. Prayer is a way of articulating the desire for help with complex problems and decisions that we are faced with daily. We should also not forget to celebrate success with

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<sup>9</sup> Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking* (<http://www.frederickbuechner.com/wishful-thinking-a> seekers-abc), access June 8, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Aguilera and Arnaiz, *Enfleshing the Word*, 36.

prayer. It doesn't have to be a public celebration, but a quiet, prayerful one will do.

### **How Can I Pray with My Busy Schedule?**

You think you don't have time to pray, but if you frequently pray when you can, you may begin to realize that your life is a prayer. Your life celebrates you as an extension of God's active love for the world. My life is a "prayer," and I need to invoke God's help to accomplish anything and avoid the daily pitfalls in life and the business world.

Are you too busy, too stressed, or too overloaded to even think? You may be asking yourself where can I go to pray? Pray on the commute to and from work. It could be in a car, train, or plane or while walking.

Praying may remove you from the day's frenzy and refocus you on the important things, ideas, or concepts. Praying may help you decompress after work to avoid bringing your work problems home and adding them to the stresses you may already have at home from your spouse and growing family. A few minutes of quiet, thoughtful prayer may be just what you need to clear your mind and refocus on improving your business and the world around you. Remember, Mary and the Holy Spirit are with you, especially when you're up in the air, either spiritually or physically.

Also, there are many locations for daily prayer: such as chapels, including those located in airports; formal places of worship near where you work or live; or nature settings, like a quiet park or meditative garden at work. You may even have a favorite conference or break room at work where you can sit, meditate, and pray.

You don't have to wear your faith or spirituality on your sleeve, as they say, but people should know you are a faithful person trying to do the best for your businesses, your people, and the communities around you. I have been in meetings when I thought the best use of my time was to pray because the meeting discussion was going in what I considered the wrong direction. You don't have to look like you're praying; you should just do it. A light may go on after praying that gives you the opening to move the discussion toward the best result.

### **What Do I Want to Pray For?**

Marianist prayer is not just about asking for my business to be saved or getting that wanted promotion or pay increase. There are plenty of those prayers on the Internet. Marianist prayer is about asking for guidance in tough situations, whether they are business-related, personal, or about your own spiritual beliefs, including any doubts in faith you may have. It is always better to win or be successful, but you may have to lose a round to do what God is leading you to do. You are a major player in God's creation, so losing this round may be the small price that prayer brings to you to create that better world. "But no one knew the power of time and patience better than Father Chaminade. He used to readily liken his way of proceeding to that of a quiet brook, which when it encounters an obstacle, makes no effort to overcome it. By stopping the brook, this very obstacle makes it grow wider and deeper. Soon it rises above its

ordinary level, overflows the obstacle, and leaves it behind, and continues on its way.”<sup>11</sup>

Business sometimes seems like a series of battles to get your ideas accepted. Egos get in the way of good decisions. Praying in these stressful situations may give you the wisdom to set aside your own ego and look at winning the strategy and not just winning this battle. During these stressful situations, you will be glad that you have made it a habit to set aside some time each day to pray. Praying may help you get your ego out of the heat of the decision and encourage active listening that may result in business decisions being made on good strategy and solid facts rather than on egos and powerplays.

Two books that I have relied on for inspiration in prayer are *Enfleshing the Word: Prayer and the Marianist Spiritual Journey* and *A Manual of Marianist Spirituality*, both published by NACMS.

## 2

### **Marianist Prayers for Businesspeople**

This section contains a collection of Marianist prayers from several different Marianist sources that I think speak to businesspeople, each with an introduction and a meaningful closing thought.

#### **What Marianist Prayer Wisdom Is Helpful for Businesspeople?**

Meditation is one of the best recommendations from Blessed Father William Joseph Chaminade, the Founder of the Marianist Family of Communities. “The principal means devised by Father Chaminade to dispose the mind and heart for mental prayer was that part of his System of Virtues known as the Five Silences. ‘You see how necessary is the habit of the interior silences,’ he writes.”<sup>12</sup> “Of the entire System no part stands out more than the Five Silences of words, of signs, of the imagination, of the mind, and of the heart of passions.”<sup>13</sup>

“The practice of an absolute silence is an excellent means to arrive at a habitually active presence of God; it is also a disposition for receiving more frequently the favor of the passive presence of God. We call that silence absolute which permits us to hear God within us. . . . Silence is not absolute except in so far as we join to the silence of signs, of the imagination, of the mind, and especially of the passions.”<sup>14</sup>

A favorite go-to prayer for Father Chaminade for meditation and mental prayer was the Apostles’ Creed. “A form of prayer often referred to by the Founder and recommended especially, though not exclusively, for beginners is a mixed mental prayer on the Apostles’ Creed. He was vehement

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<sup>11</sup> This quotation is taken from an article by Jean Baptiste Lalanne, SM, “The Society of Mary,” published in the third edition of Helyot’s *Dictionnaire des ordres religieux*. [Translation by Lawrence J. Cada, SM].

<sup>12</sup> John Harrington, SM, *The Teaching of William Joseph Chaminade on Mental Prayer* (Dayton, OH: Marianist Press, 1961), 58. Extract from Chaminade, *Letters*, no. 352 to Caillet, June 23, 1825; vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Harrington, *The Teaching*, 156.

<sup>14</sup> Harrington, p. 59. Chaminade, “Method d’Oraison de Foi et de Presence de Dieu,” *lac. cit.*, 39.

in his defense of this kind of prayer as true mental prayer, and he extolled the advantages of such prayer particularly to initiate a soul into the happiness of mental prayer or to assist it in time of trial.”<sup>15</sup>

“Father Chaminade’s merit in this form of prayer is not in his insistence on mixed mental prayer as such but on the use of the Creed as the ordinary subject of prayer. The Creed contains so much that, as he has said, the soul could spend its entire lifetime without fear of exhausting the truths of faith contained in it.”<sup>16</sup>

The Apostles’ Creed is set out line by line so that each line can be a point of reflection. Read each line and then pause and meditate about the meaning of that line before moving on to the next line. Some people even meditate for a day on each line before moving to the next. The content of the Apostles’ Creed is cosmic in scope. It is amazing that it was written almost 2,000 years ago. (If one is so inclined, the word “he” could be read as “she,” and the word “Father” could be read as “Mother,” depending on who is reciting it today.) It is your prayer and meditation. Prayers and meditations should speak to you.

### *The Apostles’ Creed*

1. I believe in God the Father almighty,
  2. Creator of heaven and earth.
  3. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son,
  4. our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
  5. born of the Virgin Mary,
  6. suffered under Pontius Pilate,
  7. was crucified, died, and was buried.
  8. He descended into hell; the third day.
  9. He rose again from the dead;
  10. He ascended into heaven, and sits at
  11. the right hand of God the Father
  12. almighty, from thence He shall come
  13. to judge the living and the dead.
  14. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
  15. the holy Catholic Church,
  16. the communion of saints,
  17. the forgiveness of sins,
  18. the resurrection of the body
  19. and life everlasting.
  20. This is what we believe.
- Amen.<sup>17</sup>

Once you have meditated on the Apostles’ Creed you may have more questions about what you believe than before meditating on the Creed. Addressing these questions is how we grow in our faith. Prayer will lead us to a deeper

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<sup>15</sup> Harrington, *The Teaching*, 161-162.

<sup>16</sup> Harrington, *The Teaching*, 162.

<sup>17</sup> [The Apostles’ Creed - Prayers - Vatican News](#), accessed August 12, 2022.

understanding of faith and the power of faith. This form of meditation may be repeated regularly to see where you are in your spiritual journey.

### **Praying When Things Go Well**

We often pray when we have problems, but we forget to pray when things go well or when problems are solved in an unexpectedly joyful way. Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth reveals how to rejoice when things turn from bad to good. Reading the verse on the Visitation and the excitement and joy that this passage exudes brings joy to the reader and is an example of how to pray when you are joyful. This joy continues with Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat.

*The Visitation: Lk 1:44*

“For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”<sup>18</sup>

*The Magnificat: Lk 1:46-56*

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

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<sup>18</sup> “Bible Browser,” oremus Bible Browser, accessed June 9, 2022, <https://bible.oremus.org/>. All verses from Luke and Matthew in this work are from this source.

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned  
to her home.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all  
places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

You may not identify with all the joy reflected in the Magnificat, but you can  
take away the spirit of Mary’s joy at being chosen for good news. “Fully  
absorbed as she is in her joy, it is not herself or for herself that she rejoices; it is  
in God.”<sup>19</sup> She rejoiced in her state of life rather than curse God for burdening  
her with this challenge. Through prayer we become open to the challenges that  
God and a full life give to us. Often these challenges become opportunities for  
real growth, both personal and spiritual.

There are many more Marianist prayers that are short and can be used  
either on the spur of the moment or at a certain time each day to remind us to  
take a few minutes from our hectic environment and shift our focus to the larger  
picture. *The Marianist Family Prayer Book* (second edition), available through  
NACMS, is one such resource.

In addition, the Three O’clock Prayer is an often-recited daily prayer  
that Marianists say at 3:00 P.M. local time. This prayer is an attention-getter if  
you are immersed in the crisis of the day. Two versions of the Three O’clock  
Prayer follow: both are good. Take the time to read them both carefully and  
choose the one you want to say regularly. You may find one fits your  
personality better than the other. Print copies of your favorite and leave them in  
many places to remind you to pray when you see them at three o’clock each  
day.

Take a minute to settle in your chair or wherever you are working and  
think about the ultimate sacrifices that some people you know have made to  
make the lives of others better. Now just read to yourself one of the two prayers  
below and permit yourself to continue to relax while the verses of these prayers  
touch you.

### **Three O’Clock Prayer**

(Updated by Rev. Robert Bouffier, SM)

Lord Jesus,  
you were lifted up on the wood of the cross  
to draw all people to yourself;  
you shed your life’s blood  
so that sin might be forgiven  
and we might have life to the full.  
By embracing this holy mystery of our salvation,

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<sup>19</sup> William Joseph Chaminade, *The Chaminade Legacy*, Monograph Series, Doc. 53,  
vol. 2 (Dayton, Ohio: NACMS, 2008), 254.



may we become your disciples,  
accepting from your outstretched arms  
your gift of Mary as our Mother.

May we learn from her  
to treasure and to ponder your Cross and Resurrection  
so that one day, with you as our Lord and God,  
with John our patron and model,  
and with Mary, our joy and our hope,  
we may be gathered together  
around the Tree of Eternal Life.

May the Most Holy Trinity be glorified  
In every heart, in every age, in every place  
Through the ever blessed Virgin Mary.  
Amen.<sup>20</sup>

### **Three O’Clock Prayer (Traditional)**

Lord Jesus,  
We gather in spirit at the foot of the Cross  
With your Mother  
And the disciple whom you loved.

We ask your pardon for our sins  
Which are the cause of your death.  
We thank you for remembering us  
In that hour of salvation  
And for giving us Mary as our Mother.

Holy Virgin, take us under your protection  
And open us to the action of the Holy Spirit.  
St. John, obtain for us the grace  
Of taking Mary into our lives as you did,  
And of assisting her in her mission.

May the Father and the Son and the Holy  
Spirit be glorified in all places through  
The Immaculate Virgin Mary.  
Amen.<sup>21</sup>

The previous prayers and all prayers in *Marianist Prayers for Businesspeople* end with the Marianist doxology: “May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.” I have used the Marianist doxology as the closing verse in each prayer. It

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Bouffier, SM, “Three O’Clock Prayer,” *The Marianist Family Prayer Book*, second ed. (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2019), 65.

<sup>21</sup> “Three O’Clock Prayer,” *Marianist Family Prayer Book*, 66.

reminds us that we are an instrument of God in creation and that we don't always see God's plan as God sees it. Marianists of all walks of life—religious and lay—say this doxology at the end of our prayers. It acknowledges the act of creation God has given us, and it leaves us with a sense of humility. You may not want to say it out loud as you pray or at all. Marianists do say it to complete our prayers. Try it for a while and see if it works for you. “The Founder of the Marianist Family says, ‘If as I have the happiness to believe,’ says Father Chaminade, ‘Mary is our necessary and universal Mediatrix, I conclude that it is impossible to make mental prayer without her.’”<sup>22</sup>

### 3

#### **Gospel of Matthew Passages**

#### **Plus Commentary that Speaks to Businesspeople**

In this section I have included prayers on many themes. I have experienced most of the themes as a businessperson or have dealt with the results of the problems described in these themes. The verses from the Gospel of Matthew were chosen because it is asserted that Matthew was a businessperson, a tax collector. Money is mentioned frequently in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The themes in the gospels are as relevant to businesspeople today as they were 2,000-plus years ago. I have tried to extract the meaning from each passage that speaks to today's business challenges and enable you to use these themes as prayers. I hope you can make the connections as I did.

#### **Prayer When Someone Else Got Rewarded**

You're mad. You didn't get the promotion, and you know you are more qualified. Take a few minutes and pray for guidance. Remember John the Baptist. He came first and was the forebearer of Jesus. Don't get winnowed out when they really need your talent. Who knows, you may be the next savior of your business. You never know. Meditation and contemplation may be the best for you now. Your time will come.

Calm yourself; read the following passage and sit for a while by yourself. Your talents are needed, and you know it.

*Matthew 3:11-12: John the Baptist Prepares the Way*

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Make sure you're not winnowed out. Be the one who lives your values and helps make everyone better. Time will reward your effort.



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<sup>22</sup> Harrington, *Teaching of William Joseph Chaminade*, 145. (Chaminade, *Methodes d'Oraison sur le Symbole*, loc. cit., p. 59.)

May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

**Prayer for Times You Are Tempted to Take the Low Road**

God help me now. I have a tough decision to make, and I'm being pressured to take the easy-but-dangerous road that may be the wrong road. It would be easy now to say, "Yes, I'll do it for the good of the organization," but it is not the best path to take. Calm yourself and read the following passage. Temptation comes when you're vulnerable. When you're vulnerable, it looks like there is only one choice, but there is always another choice that is better for you and those around you.

*Matthew 4:1-11: The Temptation of Jesus*

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'  
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Okay, you made the decision, or you're going to sleep on it. Maybe you will even talk to someone you trust about this decision. Pray to God for guidance. You may find you are led to the right decision for you and for those who are important to you.

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May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer for a Business Vocation**

In the Marianist Business Network, we suggest that if you work only for money, you have a job, but if you work for the betterment of all people, you have a vocation. Do you have a vocation to business? Take a few minutes to think about that statement. Read the following passage.

#### *Matthew 4:18-22: Jesus Calls the First Disciples*

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

If you are still reading this page, you should assume that you have a vocation for business. Being called is a real challenge. It will affect every decision you make, all hopefully for the better. It also calls you to pray more frequently so that your choices are clear. While clear choices are preferred, we all know that businesspeople live in the land of muddy information. Pray for guidance and know that you are doing your best to make the world better in your own way.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer and Meditation on Empathy**

When we are feeling successful and powerful, and you know you are, sometimes it is good to spend a few minutes contemplating the world we seldom consider. Relax for a few minutes and then read the following passage.

#### *Matthew 5:1-12: The Beatitudes*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely” on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

How many beatitudes do you embrace? If you are unable to identify with any of them, focus on the last one, “being persecuted for righteousness.” We have all been in that situation. Now you know how everyone in the above beatitudes feels about their situation. Empathy is a real virtue in a businessperson. Pray for that gift.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer and Meditation on Losing Your Focus**

Business is complex and stressful. There are days when focusing on my next deliverable or assignment is all I can handle. That is the day to read the following passages.

#### *Matthew 5:13-16: Salt and Light*

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

You are a vital person at your business. Are you losing your effectiveness by being too busy? Are you letting colleagues put your light under a bushel basket by covering you with burdensome work? Pray for guidance to let your light shine and use your strengths to make your business more valuable to everyone. Prayer helps lift burdens or at least puts them in perspective. Pray about your current situation for a few minutes each day to relieve the tension you are feeling right now. If you need help, ask for it.



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### **Prayers When Faced with Legal Decisions**

We all are faced with decisions that skirt but may not break the law. At these times we need to take the time to pray for guidance. The passage below is insightful. Is the law for all or only for the weak?

*Matthew 5:19-20: Fulfilment of the Law*

“Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

These words are tough to live up to when the pressure of business may tempt you to skirt the law. We have all been there, and which road we take will affect us both in our business and spiritually. A good CEO of a large corporation told me that he wanted his employees to live by the spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law. I have never forgotten that advice and live by it as well. It is hard to live by the spirit of the law. The spirit of the law is always more demanding than the actual statute. It is the difference between the righteous and the Pharisees in Jesus’ time. Living by the spirit of the law gives us peace and creates trust within our businesses.



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### **Prayer When You Are Too Tired to Think**

We have all been there. It is late in the day, and you may be commuting home. You don’t want to think anymore, but you need to tell someone you are with God. The following passage may be just what you need to open your mind.

*Matthew 6:5-14: Concerning Prayer*

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“Pray then in this way:  
Our Father 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 debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses,  
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”



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### **Prayer When Really Worried**

We have all been there. You're really worried. It is not paranoia when the fear is real. Yes, you may lose your job, and finding a new job at the same level may be challenging. Praying now will help you keep your cool and keep your priorities in perspective. Take your time and slowly read the following passage.

*Matthew 6:25-34: Do Not Worry*

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

You may need to read this passage several times before your fears recede and you begin to take charge of your life again. God loves you as you are. Your faith in yourself is what will see you through your trials. If you have to change to succeed, then take the time to become the person God wants you to be. Time is on your side.



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### **Prayer for When Help Is Needed**

Sometimes we pray too quickly for God’s help. Do you ask God for help when the information you need is available, but you have not yet done the research to find it? This reading requires you to actively work to get God’s help.

*Matthew 7:7-11: Ask, Search, Knock*

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

When Jesus walked our earth, there were many evil people around him: Romans, high priests, and highwaymen. You are not the evil one. You do have to work for success not only for yourself and your family but also for all of us. The title of this passage is so active: “Ask, Search, Knock.” Nothing in this passage is passive. Everything in business is active.

Maybe it is not God you have to ask but the leaders of your business. This takes skill. Ask God’s help for guidance. God does want us to create a better world for all. Pray that you are up to the challenge. If you are up to the challenge, God is there for you.



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### **Prayer When You Want to Make an Example of Bad Actors**



We have all been there. Someone does something so bad that you just want to publicly humiliate them so that it doesn't happen again. These times call for great humility and patience.

Pray for silence of the ego, wisdom of the heart, and the strength to carry out the process to achieve the best outcome for all involved, but don't ignore the problem. You must deal with the situation. Follow the advice below that is time-tested and true.

*Matthew 7:12: The Golden Rule*

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

It may take some time for your emotions to cool enough to apply the advice above, but that time in prayer will not be wasted. If this occurrence is known throughout the business, then the way you handle it will be known as well. Will your decision improve your influence, or will it generate fear and make it harder to build allies? Only time will tell.



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**MBN Prayer on Making Tough Decisions**

We have all been in a position that requires us to make a decision we may not want to make. The passage below may put your choice in perspective. If possible, take a few minutes to quiet yourself.

*Matthew 7:13-14: The Narrow Gate*

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

We often find ourselves faced with the choice, take the easy path, do what everyone expects from us, and collect the safe reward, bonus, or promotion. Or choose the right path for me, my business, or my family and struggle with the obstacles that will come up in front of me. How do I choose which path is the best? Who do I turn to for advice and counsel? Where do I find support for my life choice because sometimes it is a life choice? Often, once you choose, you cannot go back.

Help me make the best choice with the options in front of me.

Help me to see what you are asking me to do; give me the support I need to do your will to take care of those who depend on me.

Keep me from being caught up in the frenzy of work and the trap of the ever-expanding desire to prove myself at the expense of those around me. Help me to clearly see the direction I should take and support my choices.

May my choice be your will, O God.



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### **Prayer for When You Are Unsure of Whom to Believe**

Everyone in business seeks advice from others. Sorting that advice is the critical judgment that separates the truly successful from the rest. How do you know whether the advice is good or from someone who has their own agenda? Take your time. Ask God for guidance. Meditate and pray about the advice you seek and the advice that is given to you. The following passage may help your discernment.

#### *Matthew 7:15-20: A Tree and Its Fruit*

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will know them by their fruits.”

Have their past decisions or advice been good for you and your business? What is the source of their wisdom?

You may want to broaden the source of your counsel. Are there others who share your vision for your business? If so, it may be wise to bring them into your decision process—maybe even into your prayer process. Pray for patience and wisdom, and you will make the best decision possible.



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### **Prayer for Forgiveness**

We all make mistakes. Some of them are inconsequential, but others are real mistakes that cause harm to us and those near us. We do need forgiveness for the harm we cause, whether intentional or by lack of care. Take a few minutes and think of recent events for which you may need to ask for forgiveness. Who

do we turn to for forgiveness? Maybe the following passage will give you the answer.

*Matthew 9:2-8: Jesus Heals a Paralytic*

And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” Then some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.” And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

Our God is a forgiving God. However, one has to ask for forgiveness. When someone asks humbly for forgiveness, God seldom withholds forgiveness. Ask and you shall not be turned away.

Do you have the humility to ask God to forgive you for the injustices you may have burdened on others? Meditate on that idea for a few minutes and ask God to forgive you for whatever is tugging at your soul.



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**Prayer for Why I Am Here**

We have all been in the company of people we would not choose to socialize with, either for business purposes or at important social occasions. These times are a good occasion to take a few minutes and remind yourself that you have a vocation. How you act now will affect everyone because everyone is watching you. The passage below gives a glimpse of how we are perceived in a social setting, even though it is 2,000 years old.

*Matthew 9:9-13: The Calling of Matthew*

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and

learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

It takes strength of spirit and character to act well in the presence of those who want you to be more like them than the person you know you should be. God does not ask us to do the easy. God asks us to do the right. Pray we all can live up to that expectation.



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### **Prayer for Expanding Your Influence or Business**

You know that what you are doing in business is helping people live better lives. People are paying for the products and services you provide. You know that the demand exceeds your ability to deliver what you know is needed. You may need to pray for help. The following passage may summarize your plight.

*Matthew 9:35-38: The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few*

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Pray to God that help may become available, whether it be a budget increase or a better way to deliver what is needed with the resources you have. God often provides what is needed at the time it is needed. Asking for help is important. It is a risk but a risk worth taking. Seek God's guidance through prayer before you take the risk, but take it.



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### **Prayer for Strength Against All Odds**

When you feel like you're sheep amid wolves, you may need to take time to meditate on why you are in this situation and what you should do about it. Now is an excellent time to ask God for help. It may not turn out as you expected, as this passage below describes.

*Matthew 10:16-23: Coming Persecutions*

“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

We often say in the Marianist Business Network that dead soldiers do no one any good. Try your best to influence the best outcome. You probably will be successful, but if you're not successful, sometimes you cannot stay where you are. You may not have to leave town just yet, but you may have to leave your company and, who knows, maybe even move to a new location. Praying may not save you here but may lead you to a new, more rewarding life.



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**Prayer When You Find Yourself in a Bad Place**

You may inadvertently find yourself in a place where you should not be. Now is the time to pray to God for guidance and strength of will. You are not the first or the last person to find yourself in a situation that is unbearable. If the passage below describes where you are, now is the time to pray and act.

*Matthew 10:24-33: Whom to Fear*

“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them

will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.”

Your situation may call for real strength of character and personal integrity. God is with you now and as you go forward. You are the most important one to God and to those who love you. Pray for strength and guidance.



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### **Prayer When Weary from Your Burdens**

We all feel at times that everyone depends on us and that if we fail, we will let down everyone. It may not be true, but that is how we perceive the situation, but it may be true. These burdens can come not just from our businesses but also from our communities, friends, or family.

Where do we turn for comfort? There are many easy ways to seek comfort: drugs, alcohol, or a friendship at work. All of these will make you feel better for a short time but will have long-term costs. God is available to you if you seek God’s comfort. Meditate on why you feel so burdened and then talk to God about your problems. The passage below may be a help.

*Matthew 11:28-29*

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Sometimes our burdens affect our effectiveness and our personality. We can do harm in this state, so we need to take steps to minimize the stress of our burdens, before the stress hurts not only those around us but also hurts us and our business.

If you need further counseling to deal with the pressures that you face, seek out professional help, either through programs at work or at your local place of worship. Your family and friends may also be of comfort to you and may have suggestions to help you unload your burdens. Giving God your problems may lead to a new perspective on your challenges. Pray frequently about this need because it is a reoccurring challenge.



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### **Marianist Business Prayer on Being Pulled**

We have found that when things become too demanding it is time to put oneself in a quiet place and pray. Praying not for an answer but for a calming of one's spirit. Take a minute to calm yourself from the rush of the day. After a few minutes, read the two short readings that follow.

#### **A Few Minutes of Quiet**

The readings are from the Gospel of Matthew. He was supposed to be a tax collector: close enough to a businessperson for our purposes.

#### *Matthew 11:28-30: True Rest*

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

#### *Matthew 12.25: House Divided*

He knew what they were thinking and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.”

We pray to you, O God, to comfort us when we need to be wise, for we know that our best comes from your wisdom and grace.

As you read these passages, feel free to ask God to help and support you. If you are in a private place, say your petition out loud; it will allow you to verbalize and hear your thoughts and needs.



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### **Prayer for the Times When No One Listens**

Your best ideas fall on deaf ears while business is lost and opportunities are missed. If only they would listen and understand what you are trying to communicate to them.

The following passage talks about those seeds that fail and those seeds that bloom.

*Matthew 13:1-9: Parable of the Sower*

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

Pray to God before you speak to someone or to a group of people so that you can cultivate the good soil in them to hear what you are trying to communicate. If Jesus had this problem, you will, too. You need God's help to not only have your ideas heard but also to have the ideas implemented. Leave your ego at home and work with your audience to gain understanding. Your prayers may be answered, or you may have to try again, and again, and again.



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**Prayer for Great Ideas But No Support**

Prayer is a way to bring oneself closer to God. But sometimes the events of the day or month make us question, "Where is God when we need divine intervention?" How do I cope with this ambiguity? There is no easy answer, even for God. Our free will is a gift from God, and sometimes I think God would like to take it back, but God keeps the promises to us.

*Matthew 13:24-30: Parable of Weeds Among the Wheat*

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So, when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want



us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Take a few minutes and think about these words in relation to your situation and how you will move forward without creating stress for yourself or your organization. Dead soldiers win no battles. Pray out loud, if you can, to let God know you need help.



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### **Prayer When an Idea Bears Fruit**

Your idea worked and is now adopted by your organization. You feel great and may be well rewarded. Who got you here? Maybe mentors, friends, or coworkers. Maybe even God. The passage below looks at the fruits of your labor.

#### *Matthew 13:31-32: Parable of the Mustard Seed*

He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Maybe it is time to celebrate your success. Your ideas or seeds sprouted and grew to fruition. You were rewarded perhaps with a promotion or even monetarily. This is not the time to wave your own banner but to remember how you succeeded. With whom will you celebrate? Meditate on this question. Who deserves the most thanks? Make sure they know you realize that you could not succeed without their help. Let God know that you know you could not succeed without God’s help, as well.

Enjoy this moment of success because, as everyone knows, joy is fleeting, but enjoy this moment. Maybe an extra donation to a charity of your choice would be a good idea at this time. God appreciates gestures of thanksgiving in addition to prayers of thanksgiving.



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### **Prayer Before a Purchase or Deal**

We forget that Jesus was not against good business, but he warned against deceptive business. We all are faced with big choices and need to consider them from all perspectives. The passages below may stretch your perspective so that you consider all the players and participants.

#### *Matthew 13:44-50: Three Parables*

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

We work every day to make the world a better place to live for everyone, but sometimes we are faced with tough decisions that will affect the lives of many. How we make those decisions will add up in the end and affect our legacy. You may want to meditate on these readings before making a major purchase to determine whether it makes the world better or makes just a few richer.



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### **Prayer for Resources**

You know you don't have the resources to do what needs to be done. You have tried the usual path to secure the resources but to no avail. Maybe God will give you what you need, as God gave Jesus the food for the crowds of people who faithfully followed him. (You won't know until you pray and ask.)

#### *Matthew 14:13-21: Feeding the Five Thousand*

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted

place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Where the food came from is not of importance. What is important is that Jesus knew that the resources to feed the crowd were right there. They didn’t have to go into the town to get what they needed. You must have faith and patience. Your work is important, and your commitment to business as a vocation will be rewarded in time. Prayer is a resource: use it.



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#### **Prayer for the Skill to Handle a Sensitive Problem**

We have all had to deal with a problem in our business that is very sensitive. It takes not only personal strength but also personal skill. The passage below may stimulate your thinking to find the skill and the process to eliminate problems without harming yourself or your business. Meditate on your problem before reading the passage below.

*Matthew 18:15-20: Reproving Another Who Sins*

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Now that you understand the sensitivity of the situation, you may be ready to put a process together that delivers the best result with the least pain and disruption to your business and the people involved.

Mercy and firm resolve in handling this situation will be noticed throughout your business. Meditating and praying for guidance will help you find the right solution. Inaction is not advised. A sensitive problem seldom gets better or resolves itself.



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### **Prayer for the Gift of Forgiveness**

Do you seek forgiveness? Are you open to giving forgiveness? Praying to ask for forgiveness is one you may turn to frequently, but prayer to give forgiveness is another story. The passages below put forgiveness in perspective and warn us about hardness of heart. Take a few minutes and meditate on when you were forgiven and when you truly forgave a significant offense. Read the passages below after your meditation, and then pray for forgiveness.

#### *Matthew 18:21-22: Prayer for Forgiveness*

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.”

#### *Matthew 18:23-35: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

We in business often find ourselves in the king's position. Someone does something that is almost unforgivable, but we forgive. We pray that our forgiveness is well-placed and well-received. If not, then the last passage empowers us to take the appropriate steps to expel the problem from our business. We pray for God to guide us in the use of forgiveness and the use of penalties; may they fit the offense and help us and our businesses to become better—not only for the sake of our work but also for the sake of the world. Justice is hard to give and hard to receive.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer When Faced with Divorce**

You may be faced with making the decision to ask for a divorce, or maybe your spouse is asking for a divorce. If there is any time to pray, this time is it. God is here for you no matter what the outcome may be. Praying, maybe even praying with your spouse, and meditating about your situation may be better than action. The passage below is one view on divorce.

#### *Matthew 19.3-9: Divorce*

Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?’ He said to them, “It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but at the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.”

Today, a businessperson spends more awake time with the people at their business than with their family (even on Zoom calls with colleagues). It is understandable that one would make very close connections with coworkers and possibly weaken connections in the family. Is it worth the upheaval to you, your family, and your career to split up?

The wording in the above passage might be very different if Jesus were alive today. I think the passage would not be so male-focused. It does speak to continuing to work on a solution, but it doesn't exclude divorce as a possible outcome.

The Marian prayer below may help you and your spouse with this tough decision.

### **Prayer to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots**

Mary, Undoer of Knots, pray for me.

Virgin Mary, Mother of fair love, Mother who never refuses to come to the aid of a child in need, Mother whose hands never cease to serve your beloved children because they are moved by the divine love and immense mercy that exist in your heart, cast your compassionate eyes upon me and see the snarl of knots that exists in my life. You know very well how desperate I am, my pain, and how I am bound by these knots. Mary, Mother to whom God entrusted the undoing of the knots in the lives of his children, I entrust into your hands the ribbon of my life. No one, not even the evil one himself, can take it away from your precious care. In your hands there is no knot that cannot be undone. Powerful Mother, by your grace and intercessory power with Your Son and My Liberator, Jesus, take into your hands today this knot.

[Mention your request here.]

I beg you to undo it for the glory of God, once for all. You are my hope. O my Lady, you are the only consolation God gives me, the fortification of my feeble strength, the enrichment of my destitution, and, with Christ, the freedom from my chains.

Hear my plea.

Keep me, guide me, protect me, o safe refuge!<sup>23</sup>

Continuing to pray and meditate on this situation is important to do. There are many resources available to you; personal and professional counselors, including your local religious leaders (priests, ministers, rabbis, or others). Use them.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer for Perspective on Life**

You have worked hard all your life. No one gave you a leg up, as they say. You struggled through school at all levels but got the education you needed to succeed. You found the right job. You succeeded when others failed. You

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<sup>23</sup> Prayer to Mary, the Undoer of Knots, <http://www.traditionalcatholicpriest.com/2014/10/21/prayer-to-mary-undoer-of-knots>, accessed August 13, 2022.

earned it all. Your business is thriving, and there is no one to thank but you. You are rich, so heed this passage well.

*Matthew 19:23-26: Rich and the Kingdom of Heaven*

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

If there is ever a passage that puts our relationship with God in perspective, it is this one. We cannot attain everlasting life without God’s help. Only through a life of real prayer can we expect to gain the kingdom of God that Jesus speaks of throughout the Gospels. The Gospels are Good News for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Your prayers will get you there if you are truly faithful to a life with God and have eyes that really see and ears that really listen.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

**Prayer for Guidance**

Do you really love God with your whole heart? Do you really love your neighbor as you love yourself or should love yourself? Sometimes prayer brings us solutions to these complex issues once we take the time to think and meditate about what we are doing and why we are doing it. The passage below simplifies these dilemmas.

*Matthew 22:34-40: The Greatest Commandment*

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Are we treating everyone the way we would like to be treated? Are we giving God the love and respect that God deserves? Pray for help with this concept because both are hard to do in day-to-day life.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

### **Prayer When All Is Lost**

The great idea you have been praying about turned into a business or a project, but now it failed. Who do you turn to for help and consolation? No one is going to listen. No one is going to help. It failed. In this situation, there is only one to whom to turn. The following passage shows that there is only one to turn to in despair.

#### *Matthew 27:45-50: Death of Jesus*

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

When it is clear that all is lost, will you have the courage to say, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46)? This is the last act of faith and the true test of your soul. Who will you depend on at the lowest moment? All your prayers throughout your life led to this true act of faith. Will you put all your faith in God? Now is the time to test that faith by putting all your faith in God and seeing where it takes you and your business. It may be a place you never expected.



May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

## **4**

### **Personal, Community, or Group Prayer**

My advice about how to use this work on personal prayer will fall short of what you need to do. You will have to go deeper inside yourself and beyond yourself to come closer to God and to know who you really are from a spiritual perspective. I am old by today's measures, but I keep learning who I am through frequent prayer. I am surprised by what I learn about myself and my relationship with God, God's children, and Mary.



Through talking about prayer with my friends and acquaintances, I learn not only what they believe but also how to listen with an open mind to what they believe (maybe an almost open mind, but I do listen). You are a part of many communities—at work, home, your place of worship, and maybe even with the people with whom you play sports. I talk carefully with all these people about prayer and what I believe. We do have to be careful. We must not drive people away by what we believe and how we exhibit our spiritual life. What we say and do should attract people, not drive them away. Remember, Jesus had many followers, and his legacy has lasted for more than 2,000 years. His lessons helped people live better lives in very challenging times. Our challenge is to help us live better lives by getting closer to God and helping our family, relatives, friends, and business associates be better people.

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