



# A Guide to Praying with Prayer Beads

## Introduction

By using prayer beads to connect with God, you are continuing in the living tradition of people from many times, places, backgrounds and religious expressions who have used pebbles, beads, and knots to facilitate prayer. Although prayer beads are ancient in form, their purpose and effect are timeless. There is nothing magical about prayer beads – they are one of many

tools for people to commune with God who graciously gives us life.

The focus of this guide is to offer some instruction and set prayers for Anglican Prayer Beads. Although “Anglican” is in the name, people outside the Anglican or Episcopal expression of faith have embraced the use of prayer beads and there is nothing inherently “Anglican” about this version of prayer beads. As noted in the first paragraph, prayer beads have a universal quality. The Anglican Prayer Beads are a hybrid of the Roman Catholic Rosary and the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope.

Prayer beads help us meditate. They help us clear our minds and simply be still in God’s presence. The touching of the fingers on each successive bead is an aid in keeping our mind from wandering, and the rhythm of the prayers leads us more readily into stillness.

Prayer beads can be used alone or in a group setting.

## Symbolism

The Anglican Prayer Beads are made up of twenty-eight beads divided into four groups of seven called “Weeks.” In both the Jewish and Christian traditions, the number seven represents spiritual perfection and completion. Between each week is a single bead, called a “Cruciform Bead” as the four beads form a cross. The invitatory bead between

the cross and the wheel of beads brings the total to thirty-three, the number of years in Jesus' earthly life.

## How to Pray with Prayer Beads

The following approach is suggestive, not prescriptive. There is not a "right" way to use the prayer beads. You can experiment to find an approach fitting for you and/or your season of spirituality.

To begin, hold the Cross and say the prayer you have assigned to it, then move to the Invitatory Bead (sample prayers begin on pg. 3). Then enter the circle of the prayer with the first Cruciform Bead, moving to the right, go through the first set of seven beads to the next Cruciform Bead, continuing around the circle, saying the prayers for each bead.

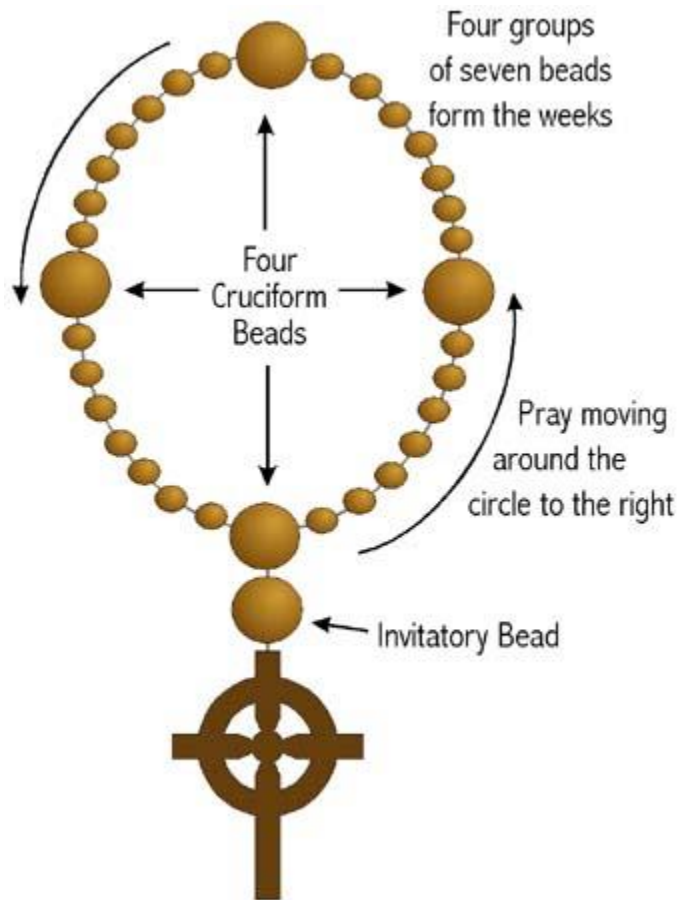
It is suggested that you pray around the circle of the beads three times (which signifies the Trinity) in an unhurried pace, allowing the repetition to quiet your mind and open your heart to God.

By praying through the beads three times, including the cross at the beginning or the end, the person at prayer reaches the total to one hundred touches, the total number of touches of the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope. A period of silence should follow the prayer, for a time of reflection and listening.

Begin praying with the Anglican Prayer Beads by selecting the prayers you wish to use for the cross and each bead. Practice them until it is clear which prayer goes with which bead.

Find a quiet plan and allow your body and mind to become restful and still. After a time of silence, begin praying the prayer beads at an unhurried, intentional pace. Complete the circle of the beads three times.

When you have completed the round of the prayer beads, end with a period of silence, allowing yourself an extended opportunity to center your being in God. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and presence of God.



## **Closing your Prayers**

After three circuits around the prayer beads, you may use the following as a conclusion with any of the prayers in this booklet.

*Last time through:*

### **Invitatory Bead**

The Lord's Prayer

### **The Cross**

I bless the Lord. *Or, in a group setting:*

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God.

## **Sample Prayers**

### **A) General**

#### **1) Bless the Lord**

##### **The Cross**

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

Glory to God for ever and ever. Amen.

##### **The Invitatory**

O God make speed to save me (us),

O Lord make haste to help me (us),

Glory to the Father (or Mother), and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit (or substitute the Trinity reference to "the Holy and Undivided Trinity"): As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

##### **The Cruciforms**

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord. You that stand in the house of the Lord, lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord. (Psalm 134)

##### **The Weeks**

I lift up my eyes to the hills;

From where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord,

The maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121)

**Please see above for a suggested conclusion.**

## **B) Based on Prayers and Writings of the Holy Women and Holy Men**

### **2) Julian of Norwich Prayer**

#### **The Cross**

In the Name of God, Father (or Mother), Son, and Holy Spirit. (or substitute the Trinity reference with “the Holy and Undivided Trinity”) Amen.

#### **The Invitatory**

May I be still and know that you are God.

#### **The Cruciforms**

God of your goodness, give me yourself,  
For you are enough to me.

And I can ask for nothing less that is to your glory.

And if I ask for anything less, I shall still be in want, for only in you have I all.

#### **The Weeks**

All shall be well, and all shall be well,  
And all manner of things shall be well.

*Or*

In his love he has done his works, and in his love he has made all things beneficial to us.

*This prayer was created by Sister Brigit-Carol, S.D.*

[www.solitariesofdekoven.org](http://www.solitariesofdekoven.org)

### **3) St. Francis of Assisi**

#### **The Cross**

Let me bless the Father/Creator, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### **The Invitatory**

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord. Praise our God, all servants, and you who fear God, the small and the great.

#### **The Cruciforms**

My God and my all, I wish to love you. O Lord, my God, I have given you my whole being.

#### **The Weeks**

*Week 1*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union.

*Week 2*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

*Week 3*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

*Week 4*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned. And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## **C) Celtic**

### **4) Creation Awakens - A Morning Prayer**

#### **The Cross**

In the Name of the Holy-Three-in-One. Amen.

#### **The Invitatory**

Blessed are you, O Child of the Dawn, for your light that dapples through all creation.

#### **The Cruciforms**

Blessed are you, O Christ, for you awaken me (us) to life.

#### **The Weeks**

If the grace of seeing were mine (ours) this day, I (we) would glimpse you in all that lives.

*Last time through:*

#### **Invitatory Bead**

The Lord's Prayer

#### **The Cross**

May the light of God illumine the heart of my (our) soul(s).

May the flame of Christ kindle me (us) to love.

May the fire of the Spirit free me (us) to live this day, tonight and for ever. Amen.

*Words: J. Philip Newell from Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer*

*Adapted for use with Anglican Prayer Beads by The Rev. R. Derrick Fetz*

## **5) In the Silence of the Night - A Night Prayer**

### **The Cross**

In the Name of the Holy-Three-in-One. Amen.

### **The Invitatory**

Glory be to you, O God of the night, for the whiteness of the moon and the infinite stretches of dark space.

### **The Cruciforms**

For the quiet that surrounds me (us) and your promise of peace deep within me (us), thanks be to you, O God.

### **The Weeks**

The stillness of God be mine (ours) this night.

*Last time through:*

### **Invitatory Bead**

The Lord's Prayer

### **The Cross**

Glory be to you, Life of all life. Renew me (us) this night in the depths of sleep, set free my (our) dreams of the unknown. Safeguard this time of resting, O God, enfold me (us) in the darkness of the night. Amen.

*Words: J. Philip Newell from Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer  
Adapted for use with Anglican Prayer Beads by The Rev. R. Derrick Fetz*

## **6) St. Patrick's Breastplate**

### **The Cross**

I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity,  
by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three.  
Of whom all nature hath creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word:  
praise to the Lord of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the Lord.

### **The Invitatory**

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

### **The Cruciforms**

I bind unto myself today  
the strong Name of the Trinity,  
by invocation of the same,  
the Three in One, and One in Three.

## **The Weeks**

1. I bind this day to me for ever, by power of faith, Christ's Incarnation;
2. his baptism in Jordan river;
3. his death on cross for my salvation;
4. his bursting from the spiced tomb;
5. his riding up the heavenly way;
6. his coming at the day of doom:
7. I bind unto myself today.

1. I bind unto myself the power of the great love of cherubim;
2. the sweet "Well done" in judgment hour;
3. the service of the seraphim;
4. confessors' faith, apostles' word,
5. the patriarchs' prayers, the prophets' scrolls;
6. all good deeds done unto the Lord,
7. and purity of virgin souls.

1. I bind unto myself today the virtues of the starlit heaven,
2. the glorious sun's life-giving ray,
3. the whiteness of the moon at even,
4. the flashing of the lightning free,
5. the whirling of the wind's tempestuous shocks,
6. the stable earth, the deep salt sea,
7. around the old eternal rocks.

1. I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead,
2. his eye to watch, his might to stay,
3. his ear to hearken, to my need;
4. the wisdom of my God to teach,
5. his hand to guide, his shield to ward;
6. the word of God to give me speech,
7. his heavenly host to be my guard.

*Words: attributed to St. Patrick (372-466)*

*translated by Cecil Frances Alexander, 1889*

*Adapted for use with Anglican Prayer Beads by Laura Kelly Campbell*

## **D) Penitential Focus (particularly appropriate for Lent)**

### **7) Trisagion\* and Jesus Prayer**

#### **The Cross**

In the Name of God, Father (or Mother), Son, and Holy Spirit (or substitute the Trinity reference with “the Holy and Undivided Trinity”). Amen.

#### **The Invitatory**

O God make speed to save me (us),  
O Lord make haste to help me (us),  
Glory to the Father (or Mother), and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit (or substitute the Trinity reference to “the Holy and Undivided Trinity”): As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

#### **The Cruciforms**

Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon me (us).

#### **The Weeks**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
Have mercy on me, a sinner.

*Or, in a group setting:*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy upon us.

\**Trisagion* means "thrice Holy"

(Please see the next prayer on pg. 9.)



## **8) Agnus Dei\* Prayer**

### **The Cross**

In the Name of God, Father (or Mother), Son, and Holy Spirit (or substitute the Trinity reference with “the Holy and Undivided Trinity”). Amen.

### **The Invitatory**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14

### **The Cruciforms**

Oh, Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world  
have mercy upon me (us),

Oh, Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world  
have mercy upon me (us),

Oh, Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world  
give me (us) your peace.

### **The Weeks**

Almighty and merciful Lord,  
Father (or Mother), Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless us and keep us.  
Amen.

*\*Agnus Dei* means "Lamb of God"

Some parts of this guide were adapted from a resource created by King of Peace Episcopal Church in Kingsland, Georgia and other parts were created by The Rev. R. Derrick Fetz. This is a free resource to encourage communion with God.