

## Using this Book for Prayer

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This book is a tool for nurturing the spirit of prayerfulness—that spirit through which our attentiveness to God becomes second nature. It is also the spirit through which we recognize that we are always living in God’s loving presence. As a tool, the book can be used most effectively as a complement to your usual, personal discipline of daily prayers and spiritual practices. It is not meant to replace those prayers and practices, but to support and enhance them. The contents are designed to serve as a framework for your day—every day for a month. Each daily reflection is divided into three sections.

The first section, “Awakening to God’s Presence,” can be used in the morning or whenever your day begins. This section focuses on a theme or principle that was of particular importance to Basil Moreau. The reflections are translated adaptations of Moreau’s own words. The spirit marking these meditations is awareness, a sensitivity to God’s presence and activity that will pervade

whatever unfolds during your day. In a moment of interior and exterior quiet, before the busyness of the day begins, read through this section.

Read slowly through the section, line by line. Let these words sink into your heart. See and hear the words. Remember that spiritual reading is not speed-reading. The key is to approach the text, not as informational, but as inspirational. What do these reflections say to your heart? If a word, phrase, or image is particularly striking while you are reading, remain with that for a moment before moving on. As Father Moreau recommends, you will want to benefit from whatever God may be saying to you. In praying this section, you can reflect on what it says to you and how it could support you throughout the day.

The second section, “Living by God’s Grace,” is a single sentence. It can be used as an antiphon or mantra throughout the day. It is a quick and simple reminder of God’s role in your daily life, and of what you can do to live in union with God in the midst of your everyday tasks and responsibilities. This sentence can be a challenge that you set before yourself several times a day. It may be helpful to write this phrase on a piece of paper and keep it in sight, or save it on your electronic calendar or daily planner. Then, you can readily call it to mind each time you review or revise your schedule.

The third section, “Acknowledging God’s Gifts,” can be used in the evening or whenever you conclude your day and prepare to rest. It is presented as a prayer to close your day. The spirit of this prayer is longing. It also recognizes the many blessings that God has given to you and to all of us. It voices a desire that those blessings continue to grace our lives. This section bolsters our commitment to live those blessings for the next day and beyond. That recognition, desire, and commitment constitute an expression of profound gratitude to God for the gift of being called to live as a follower of Jesus. As with the first section, you should set aside a period of quiet and stillness.

Take some deep breaths so that your body can share in that stillness. Read the prayer slowly, reflectively, line by line. Really hear the words as they are prayed. Then, recall and review the day’s events, through memory images if possible. That way, your prayer is linked with and becomes a blessing for whatever transpired during the day. Conclude the prayer and welcome the rest that will refresh you for tomorrow.

All three sections should be adjusted to use whenever it is most practical and convenient for you. In today’s world, a variety of activities configure and constitute our daily routines. The times for reflection may have to change from day to day, depending upon your schedule.

Don't worry about that. The key is fidelity so that your entire day is touched by prayer.

As Father Moreau taught and emphasized, union with God is nurtured by an increasing fidelity to prayer. The purpose of these reflections and prayers is to guide you ever more deeply toward the transformation to which Basil Moreau invites us. It is a transformation through which we clearly reflect and truly become the living likeness of Jesus.

This book can also be used randomly and spontaneously, without following the thirty-day pilgrimage from Day One to Day Thirty. There is a progression of themes through these days that reflects Moreau's perspective on the spiritual life. But, any day or combination of days can be used to focus your prayer in response to a particular need or experience. The following list indicates the themes associated with each day.

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|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Days 1–3 | Providence, recognizing God's constant presence and activity |
| Days 4–5 | Faith, responding to God's Providence                        |
| Day 6    | Holiness, living in fidelity to Providence                   |
| Days 7–9 | Mission, serving others                                      |

Days 10–12	Prayer, supporting our life and mission
Days 13–14	Union, working together in the mission and with a sense of family
Days 15–17	Love, sustaining our union with one another
Days 18–21	Imitating Jesus, striving to live and love as he did
Days 22–23	Spiritual journey, progressing toward union with God through daily life
Days 24–26	Cross, embracing the transformation it offers
Day 27	Hope, watching for the Lord's return
Day 28	Gifts of the Holy Spirit, nurturing your spiritual life and mission
Day 29	Transformation, accepting the new life to which God calls you
Day 30	Mary, looking to your model and guide

Allow these themes to mix and interact with your spirit. Reflecting on and praying with a combination of these themes may also enhance your spiritual journey. The

goal is to use this book in any way that will strengthen your relationship with God. It is meant to sustain your progress in living the example of Jesus.

Beyond what is presented here, Father Moreau has some wise recommendations for enhancing the quality of even your most familiar prayers. He said,

Reflect sometimes on each word of your ordinary prayers but do not move from one word to another unless the spirit and the heart have nothing more to say and until you have drawn some practical consequence from it. At other times, stop for a second on each word of the prayer you have chosen, then penetrate into the meaning of the expression you are saying. Conclude with a personal, spontaneous prayer. These ways of praying are very useful for avoiding routine and they awaken our attentiveness to prayers that we are accustomed to using.

Finally, this book can be used for group reflection and sharing. There is a communal dimension within the transformation to which we are called. We can encourage, support, and challenge one another along the spiritual journey. The second section of each day, "Living by God's Grace," can be useful for a communal reflection and sharing. It could inspire practical strategies for

making the day's simple instructions a reality in daily life.

However this book is used, may it nurture within you a "fervent and continuous desire" for God. That, Father Moreau said, is the very nature of prayer. That desire is an essential element of the spiritual life. If this book makes even a small contribution in that regard, then it will fulfill the noblest of tasks.





**A 30-Day Retreat  
with Basil Moreau**

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# Day One

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## AWAKENING TO GOD'S PRESENCE

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Live a balanced life,  
for neither  
discouragement nor pride  
serves us well.  
And neither  
truly reflects who we are.  
God is more gentle with us  
than we are with ourselves.  
God balances  
ups and downs,  
the good times  
with the not-so-good times.  
We could become  
too proud  
if all those around us  
were admirers.  
And disheartening  
would be our lot  
if all were critics.  
We need  
a discerning ear,  
a listening heart,

a sense of balance  
and humor.  
We should not  
expect only good times  
and eschew the bad.  
The important point  
is to do everything  
and accept everything  
in conformity  
to God's will.

#### LIVING BY GOD'S GRACE

Be gentle as God is gentle.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S GIFTS

May this night's rest  
be filled  
with the peace and quiet  
that will refresh  
my efforts for tomorrow.  
Accept this day, God,  
and all it held for me.  
Make holy tomorrow  
and whatever it may bring.

Help me to live  
the grace of balance,  
seeing and celebrating  
your will  
ever around me,  
guiding me,  
beckoning me.  
I want to live that grace.  
For this day, thank you.  
Bless this night.  
May tomorrow be a fresh beginning.