

*Ask*  
*Search*  
*Knock*

Your date is: \_\_\_\_\_ each month

*A Movement  
of Continuous Prayer  
for Marriage  
and Family Life*

*Fri Johnny Doherty, CSsR*

Your hour is: \_\_\_\_\_ each month



*Ask  
Search  
Knock*

*A Movement of Continuous Prayer  
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*Contents*

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>About this booklet</i>	4
<i>Getting Started</i>	5
<i>For all those preparing for marriage</i>	7
<i>For all married couples</i>	10
<i>For all families</i>	14
<i>For married people who are alone</i>	18
<i>For those who are involved in supporting marriage and family life</i>	22
<i>For those taking over from you</i>	26

## *Introduction*

*“Ask and you will receive; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”* These words of Jesus form much of the basis for the prayer and activity of his followers in every generation. They need to be heard and listened to by us today, especially in the area of marriage and family life. We are very conscious of the increasing incidence of marriage break-up in our society. Many of us are touched at a personal level at least through family or friends by the pain and trauma that this causes to couples and their children. And we can despair that anything can be done to turn things around. *“Ask and you will receive. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.”* Do we believe that?

## *Dynamic Words*

The three words that Jesus speaks are all action words.

**Ask** - In order to ask for something you have to be very clear about what you want and why you want it. When we are not clear about what we want we tend to only make suggestions. Or when it's not clear why we want something we can end up demanding it. What is it we want for those preparing for marriage, for married couples, for families, for married people who are alone, for those who work to support marriage and family life? By praying through this question for an hour every month we might get much clearer ideas of what we want. And what we want might move closer to what God wants. God wants everything that's good, everything that's life-giving, everything that brings joy, peace, hope and love. The closer we come to being caught by his spirit, the more clearly we will see that we have to work for all of that in every way possible both in our own lives and within our communities.

# About this Booklet

To pray for an hour is a very daunting prospect for most people. This booklet is written to help make it possible and enjoyable. However, there are some things to remember as we engage in this hour's prayer and use what is written here.

- ◆ *"God does not need our prayers to either convince him about the importance of marriage and family life or to get him to give us what we need for these relationships. God is already on our side, wanting everything that is good and life-giving for every couple and every family. Prayer is about opening us up to receive all that he longs to give us. Through our prayer we can also help to open up what is closed in other people's lives or in the life of the church or society so that God may be effectively present to give life."*
- ◆ *"This booklet is written as a help to people, not as something that becomes a burden. If you can pray for an hour for marriage and family life in some other form then please do. Or you may find some of it helpful and other parts not. Remember, what is here is your servant to be used as you want."*
- ◆ *"There is more in this booklet than you will need for an hour. Take time to relax with different parts of your prayer time. Do not exhaust yourself with words but let yourself be enlivened and enthused by the Spirit."*
- ◆ *"The decades of the Rosary are suggested at various times. Some people will find this helpful, others will not. Pray the way that helps you to open up to the various issues of marriage and family life. Mary, however, is our great model of openness to God's way and God's Spirit."*
- ◆ *"This particular prayer time is specifically for marriage and family life. Your prayer is part of a continuous prayer for these so you can let yourself be lifted up by the prayer of people before you, after you, around you, as we fill our world with God's love."*

## *Getting Started*

You have dedicated the next hour to praying for marriage and family life. It is a big undertaking, a very generous one and a very important one. How it goes for you will depend to a great extent on how you begin. If you set out thinking of it as a chore or a burden it could become difficult for you. If, however, you set out seeing this next hour as a prayer adventure it could be exciting and enjoyable. It is an adventure into your own heart to find that God is there even though there are so many other things that hide his presence. It is an adventure in prayer into the lives and relationships of married couples and families. This may be your own relationship to start with and then those of your friends and neighbours and community. But your prayer can also bring you out into the wonderful, sometimes messy world of couples and families to the ends of the earth. And the great truth is that wherever you come to in prayer you can find that God is there before you, wanting everything that is best for those you pray for. Your prayer can take you into the heart of God.

## *Settling down*

It is so important to take a few minutes at the beginning to settle yourself down. Get comfortable. Have a special prayer space, maybe with a special candle lit in the centre. If you are married, photographs of yourselves and your family could help to get you into the atmosphere. If you are not married, maybe the photographs of friends or loved ones would help to put faces on your prayers.

A picture of Christ or Our Lady or some particular religious image that means something to you can also be a help to settling down and letting go.

Begin by praying for those who have just finished the previous hour's prayer. You may know who that is or you may not. They ended their prayer time thinking about you and wishing you well. Now, let them fill your mind, and heart for a little while. Ask God to bless them for their generosity, to enthuse them in their love, to heal them in any ways they need his healing. You are taking on the precious gift that they have been carrying so faithfully for the past hour.



# *Part 1: For all those preparing for Marriage*

*When we think of people preparing for marriage we immediately think of engaged couples. They are the most obvious people involved in this. But there are a lot more and we pray for them all in this time.*

## **1. Children**

Very many of those who are children now will one day get married. How are they being prepared for it? Some are getting a good example from their parents and are being given good values for their lives, values that are based on our faith in Christ. They will some day have to accept these values and examples or reject them. But at least they are being given a great opportunity in life. Many other children are not being offered this opportunity. As they grow up they may suffer abuse of one kind or another. Some children will be starved of real love and affection. Some will never know tenderness or praise. Pray for all children of every age that adults, especially parents, will learn the art of loving them in ways that will give hope.

## **2. Young People**

Falling in love is one of the most beautiful experiences of life. It so often happens in teenage years for the first time. It can also be one of the most traumatic experiences because everything changes. And that first love may not work out. Feeling special to someone is wonderful. Dating is a sign of leaving childhood behind and moving into the adult world of love. And yet it is not all as simple as it sounds. Young people today are so easily caught into a sex culture of "I feel like it, therefore I do it." Love and sex become the same and people get badly hurt.

We pray for young people that they may enjoy this special time of their lives. But we pray also that they will listen carefully to the wisdom of the ages. We pray that young men will learn to respect women in their lives - their mothers, sisters, girlfriends, other girls. We pray that young women will respect their own dignity and the dignity of the men in their lives and lead their men into a greater knowledge of what is right and good in their relationships.

### 3. Engaged Couples

These are the people who are most immediately preparing for marriage. They have decided to do so and they have their partner clearly identified. Today many of these couples are already living together, most are not. All of them have a great need to set their sights firmly on what is good and best for their lives ahead. There can be a lot of unexpressed doubt at this stage. This can come from a fear of the life-long commitment involved. Or it can come from aspects of the relationship that have not been talked about, e.g. drink patterns; family difficulties; occasions of violence, etc. We pray for couples that they will take the time and call on whatever help they need to sort these things out before they get married.

Most couples do a programme of preparation for marriage. Many of them very reluctantly! We pray for all the courses that are on this month, for those giving them and for those taking part.

In preparing for marriage couples need to look seriously at the priorities of their lives and let those priorities change so that their relationship of love is constantly placed at the centre of their attention. This is a difficult thing to do. So we pray that our couples will have the generosity to do it.

Finally, we think of and pray for all couples getting married this

month. We pray that their wedding days may be filled with joy and that all who attend these weddings will be blessed with God's love.

*I now suggest that you say a decade of the Rosary for all these people you have been thinking about on reading this. Pray that, through the intercession of Mary our Mother, all children, young people and those preparing for marriage may be blessed.*

*God of Love, we praise and thank you  
for the wonderful gift of life.*

*Help us to cherish that gift in ourselves and  
in all whom we meet.*

*Bless all children that they may know  
the joy of being alive and that we may  
help them towards a great future.*

*Bless all young men and women.*

*Be with them through these years  
of change in their bodies, their priorities,  
their relationships so that nothing may damage  
their joy and their hope.*

*Bless all couples preparing for marriage.*

*Help them to cherish each other more every day.  
And give them the courage to put their love for  
each other first so that their lives may  
be full and their marriages happy.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen*

## ***Part 2: For all Married Couples***

*Marriage is a journey, not a destination. It is a journey of each husband and wife towards one another in love. There are many elements common to each couple. But each marriage is unique, each journey is different.*

*In our prayer we thank God for the gift of love that drew each couple to one another. That gift of love developed into a great generosity of wanting to share their love for the rest of their lives. We ask our loving God to reinforce the gift of love in each married couple and to increase the generosity of their commitment to one another so that they can let go more fully, more freely, more joyfully to one another.*

### **1 We think of couples in their first year or two of marriage.**

This is a time of joy, of excitement, of romance. We pray that couples in this first year or two will make the most of their time together to learn what a wonderful way of living marriage is.

This is also a time of adapting that can bring its own difficulties for couples. They are adapting to being full-time with someone else. They are facing together the realities of a home, of bills, of shortages. They are beginning to see faults in themselves and in each other that were not as noticeable before. Criticism and anger can become part of their relationship. They are facing the question of having a family in a way that was not there before; struggling with questions on how to avoid having a child for another year or two or maybe beginning to get anxious about whether they can have children.

This is a beautiful time in a couple's journey of love. But it is also a delicate time in which the future shape of their marriage is formed. Think of couples maybe whom you know who are in this early stage of their marriage and pray for them and for all young couples. Ask God to be with them, to bless

them with gentleness and patience and the ability to face everything together so that their love may grow.

## 2 We think of couples who are upward of ten years married.

People often talk about the seven year itch where after a few years married people can get very unsettled and have no real explanation for it. This can be difficult to cope with because it can seem that it was all a mistake. In the first ten years of marriage couples have been through a lot together - joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, delights and anxieties. Many have had children and that is both a great joy and a source of worry. Many also will have discovered that they cannot have children of their own and no one will ever know the devastation this can cause.

In those first ten years of marriage there have been so many new experiences that it can be difficult to handle the ever changing scene - decisions to be made; sickness to be faced; uncertainties to be got over.

Pray for couples who are at this stage of their lives. Pray in thanksgiving for the extraordinary generosity of love that has brought them through to this point. Pray for the grace and goodness that they need to stay with it together so that their joy will not be overcome by troubles; that their hope will not be dashed by disappointment and hurt; that their affection and romance will not be diminished by routine.

## 3 Couples who are celebrating their silver wedding this year

What a marvellous achievement this is, for a man and woman to work at their love relationship for twenty five years and then look forward to renewing that love for the rest of their lives. They have seen their children grow up into young women and men. They have shared the joys and sorrows of those years. They have been part of the awesome experience

of setting their children free. They have journeyed together into mid-life not without difficulty but together. There have been many times of closeness and joy in their life of love. There have been times of distance and loneliness. But now as they travel towards this point in their lives they need our prayers so that they can become people of thankfulness and praise. We pray that couples at this stage of their lives look at each other and know how blessed they are to have had each other. We pray that they can look to the future with confidence and with expectation that the best is yet to come in their love for each other, their communication with each other, their healing of one another, their lovemaking together.

#### 4 Couples who are entering old age together as husband and wife

For some people this can be a sad time as they experience more and more the pains of growing old, the worry about what is going to happen, the hurt of the past. But it can and should be a time of great peace and joy in a couple's love affair. Couples who are forty, fifty years married have so many great memories to share with each other and with others. They have so much experience of life to hand on to the young people of today, experience that is vital for today. They have worked at being faithful to each other for all the years. They have had so many times of starting again with one another. We pray that couples at this time of life will have the openness and generosity to pass on their wisdom of life to those around them.

Couples at this stage of life have also to learn that the most important gift they have is the present moment. As we grow older we learn the reality of our own mortality and that life is very fragile. We cannot allow ourselves to live in the past or get caught up in the future. The present is where life is lived and couples, as they approach their Golden Wedding Anniversary and beyond, it, know this only too well.

We pray for all couples who are at this stage of life that their homes may be filled with peace, that their love may be renewed in affection and that their lives may be lived in thankfulness and praise of each other and of those who make up their lives.

A second decade of the Rosary could be said now for all married couples. Pray that, through the intercession of Mary and Joseph, all couples may be renewed in love. Pray that every husband and wife, at whatever stage of life they are, will work together in making their lives together joyful and wonderful.

*God of love, in your wonderful love for us you have made the love of woman and man, the mirror of your everlasting love.*

*May we reverence all married couples and make it possible for them to grow in their love every day.*

*Bless all young married couples.*

*May their passion for each other grow through their lives.*

*Be with couples who are a few years into marriage.*

*Give them a great commitment to each other as they learn to cope with and master the ever-changing decisions they need to make together.*

*Keep them faithful to each other and to you.*

*Journey with all married couples who are entering mid-life together.*

*Give them a real affection for one another.*

*Keep them open to one another and all around them.*

*May their love become an ever greater gift to the Church.*

*And we pray for couples who are entering into old age together.*

*Keep them young at heart, confident in their love for each other and your presence with them.*

*Keep all couples aware of the importance to love fully in the present so that our world may be transformed*

*by the radiance of married love.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen*

## Part 3: For all Families

*A beautiful part of our tradition, which was highlighted and renewed by the Second Vatican Council thirty years ago, is that the family is the Domestic Church. Christ is present in every home because of the people who live there. It is in our homes that the Church is at its best and its worst. It is in our homes and families in a very special way that we have the opportunity and the responsibility to make Christ present through the quality of our love, the aliveness of our affection, the generosity of our understanding, the freedom of our forgiveness. It is here that we have the greatest possibility of reverencing each person as she/he is; of encouraging each person to accept and live with their own gifts; of setting one another free to live life to the full.*

*Another lovely part of our tradition is being at ease with ourselves as far less than perfect. There is a huge variety of family groupings. Many of these are less than what we might consider the perfect combination. And yet Christ is present in all of them. During this time we think about and pray for all the different kinds of families that we know.*

### **1 For families with children:**

- ◆ *The couple with their new born baby.* We thank God for the joy of new life and the generous love of parents. May they treasure their little ones always and love each other so that their children can grow up with joy and hope. We pray for couples who may be finding it difficult to adjust to their new born baby. We ask you, Lord, to give them affection for each other and patience with themselves.
- ◆ *The couple with young children.* There is often a lovely atmosphere of joy and freshness in a home with young children. We thank God for that and pray that we can build it up. There is sometimes a lot of anxiety too as children grow in age and numbers. We ask you, Lord, to be powerfully present so that families can enjoy this special

time and have courage to share their anxieties. We pray especially that children will be treasured and not abused ever.

- ◆ *The couple with teenage children.* Again this is a time when joy and suffering are intertwined in family life. There is the joy of new friendship. There is the tension of new freedom. There is often the pain of disappointment mixed with the happiness of success. It can be a time of uncertainty for family members. We pray that all families at this stage will work at understanding each other, listening to one another, forgiving each other, growing in love and affection for one another.
- ◆ *Lone parents with little children or older ones.* This is often a very difficult situation for families. It can be difficult financially. It can also be difficult emotionally. There can be a sense of betrayal or failure, an experience of being abandoned. We pray that families in this situation will get all the help they need to believe in themselves, to fill the future with confidence and hope. There is also so much to be thankful for, maybe especially the extraordinary generosity of love that parents on their own give to their children. We thank God for this generosity and ask that it will be rewarded.

## 2 For families with no children:

- *People who live on their own.* Some people cope very well on their own and can build up a very happy and fulfilled life for themselves. Some find it very difficult and can end up with a lot of anger and bitterness. We pray for all who live on their own that their homes may be filled with happiness and peace and kept safe from all harm. We pray that they may grow in a knowledge of the Lord being with them.

- *Older brothers and sisters who live together.* We thank God for the bonds of family love that make this possible. We pray that they will grow in respect for each other; that they will give each other space; that they will truly learn to share their lives; and that their home will be a place of welcome for others.
- *Couples who have no children.* This can be young couples who have decided to leave off having a family for a few years. It can be a time of tension and anxiety about being pregnant or about maybe not being able to have a child. Or it can be couples who are coming to terms with the fact that they cannot have children. This is a growing phenomenon and is a traumatic experience for couples. Or it can be couples whose family have grown up and left home. They continue to come home but it is not the same. We pray for all these couples, asking God to turn them ever more fully to each other, to find their strength in their love, to discover the richness of life they share and to make the decisions that are necessary to bring joy and happiness to each other.

*A third decade of the Rosary could now be said for all families. The Holy Family of Nazareth is the model for family life, not because it was perfect but because Jesus was found there. We pray that every family can discover the joy of knowing that he is with them also.*

*Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit,  
we praise you and worship you.*

*You are the origin of all life.*

*You are the source of all love.*

*We thank you for sharing your life  
and your love with us, your people.*

*We pray for all families made in your image.*

*Unite all couples and fill them  
with enthusiasm for their love.*

*Bless all families so that parents may treasure  
their children of all ages*

*and that children may grow in affection  
and love for their parents and one another.*

*Be with those who are alone.*

*Help them to know their beauty and goodness  
and give them peace in their times  
of loneliness or isolation.*

*Fill every home with your love.*

*May each of our homes be places  
of your presence and sources of your peace.*

*Amen*

## ***Part 4: For married people who are alone***

*“Marriage is not all a bed of roses” is the kind of statement that is used far too frequently to put down the beauty of marriage. There is great joy and happiness in marriage. There is a wonderful sense of fulfilment in it. Couples experience the beauty of life and the exhilaration of new life. There is a sense of hope and peace, an experience of love and companionship. Marriage is a wonderful way of living.*

*But of course there are difficulties and problems in marriages as in every other way of life. These are often the growth pains of a relationship that is moving into a new phase. Working together through these difficulties can be a great experience for a couple that brings them to a better maturity.*

*However, being married and alone is a situation that can be very difficult to cope with. We pray for those people in this section and , through our prayers, encourage them to hope, trust and love.*

- ☞ ***Couples whose communication has broken down.***

Sometimes because of serious hurt couples find it very difficult to talk to each other. This can be a very lonely time and unfortunately the longer it goes on the more painful it becomes and the more difficult it is to do something about it. Pray that any couple in this situation will look for whatever help they need to talk out what is dividing them so that they can begin again with one another.

- ☞ ***Couples who are away from one another for long and frequent periods of time.*** This happens often because of the nature of work and it is most often the man who is away, the woman who is at home, maybe with children to look after. There is an obvious source of loneliness here simply in the amount of time spent apart. But there is an emotional loneliness that isn't obvious even to the couple themselves until serious problems of communication begin to appear.

- ☞ Pray that couples like this will stay open to each other on what is happening to them. And we pray that all couples will have the courage to make whatever decisions are necessary to keep their marriage alive and growing.
- ☞ ***Couples where one partner is seriously ill.*** This is a very difficult situation that needs our prayers and our care. It is a time of anxiety that many people are not prepared for. It is a time when many people suffer the pain of helplessness and the frustration of uncertainty. It is a very lonely time when both partners can feel isolated from each other and from all those closest to them. We pray for them that their love relationship may grow through this time, that they will get strength from one another for whatever is ahead and that they will get support from their families and their communities for their love to flourish.
- ☞ ***Married people who have lost a wife or husband through death.*** No one is ever ready for the death of a loved one. Even if there has been a prolonged illness death is always a terrible shock. This is even more true when death is sudden. Most difficult of all is to come to terms with a sudden death that is violent either because of the person themselves in suicide or someone else in an accident or in murder. We pray for all those whose wife/husband has died. We pray for those for whom this is very recent and they are feeling the intensity of their loss. We think of those who are having difficulty with the memory of a spouse who has died, maybe because of guilt or anger or anxiety. We remember those whose spouse has died that they will find comfort in the memory of the love they shared; that they will be able to forgive and let go where this is necessary; that those closest to them will allow them to grieve fully and not try to short-circuit it for convenience; that they may find consolation in their faith and grow in the love of God.

⇒ ***Married people who are separated or divorced.*** This is an increasing phenomenon in our society and one where deep pain and anger and despair is so often present. No one gets married in order to separate. Everyone gets married expecting that it will bring happiness and fulfilment. Yet so many people today have to live with what looks like failure. Sometimes this is because it was the wrong person they married in the first place. Better preparation would have helped here. Sometimes it is the right person but they fail to build intimate communication until it is too late. Sometimes it is the selfishness of one partner that causes the breakdown through over-indulgence in their own interests in sport or hobbies or work. Or it may come from a life of substance abuse or infidelity. Whatever the reason the breakdown of a marriage is always the source of terrible trauma and pain for everyone involved. And we pray for people who have to work their way through this to health again. We pray with compassion and an openness to understand. We pray that they will not despair but look for and be open to all the help they need to see them through. We pray that people going through this terrible experience will be able to let go of their deep anger and learn to forgive the person who may have done them such awful wrong by betraying their love. We pray for children who may be caught in the middle of a marriage break-up that everything will be done to protect them. And we pray that couples who may be moving in the direction of separation will take charge of their relationship and, for the sake of each other, their family, everyone around them, that they will find the ways of healing the wounds and making a fresh start.

*The fourth decade of the Rosary could be said now for all these situations of pain and trauma in people because of their marriage journey. Mary is called the Comforter of the Afflicted. We pray that she may help to bring healing and comfort to all who need her intercession.*

God of love and compassion we ask your  
special blessing on those among us  
who have lost a wife or husband in any way.

They all set out with high ambitions.

Many now live in disappointment or deep loneliness  
or anger or despair.

Reach into their hearts and lives  
and bring them to healing.

We ask you to comfort those who are alone  
through death.

We ask you to strengthen those whose spouse  
is seriously ill;

to inspire those whose communication has  
broken down and give them courage to begin again.

And we pray for those whose marriages  
have broken down.

Help them to find the ways back to  
health of body and spirit.

Give those around them a generous love  
and a caring understanding so that  
they will be supported as they need.

And prompt those who may be moving in  
the direction of break-up to see what  
is happening and to do everything that is  
needed to prevent it.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

## **Part 5: For those who are involved in supporting marriage and family life**

*There are many people who give their time and energy in supporting marriage and family life and who need and deserve our prayers. We thank God for the generosity of their lives. And we ask that God may inspire them with an even greater reverence for the love of husband and wife, an even deeper compassion for those who are suffering in these intimate relationships, a greater ambition for building up the unity of our people's homes.*

### **◆ *Our Holy Father, our bishops, priests and religious***

All of those have a special call in their vocations to care for couples and families. So much good work is done by them in their teaching, their active involvement in visiting, in advising, in comforting and strengthening people. We thank God for the very many wonderful priests and religious that grace our Church. We pray that they may be strengthened in their own vocation and find support among us. And we pray that they may recognise ever more clearly that the greatest strength for the Church is found in the love of husband and wife, that the greatest potential is in the vibrancy of good family life. We pray that a lot more of the resources of the Church, both in personnel terms and others, may be devoted to the support of marriage and the development of family life.

### **◆ *Teachers and all who are involved in education***

For a whole variety of reasons teaching is becoming an increasingly stressful occupation. We thank God for the very many generous and good teachers who work in our schools. We ask God to give them confidence in what they

are doing. We pray that they may have a greater love for the children and young people in their care and that they may receive from those they teach the respect and gratitude they deserve. We pray that all our schools will be developed into places where our young people will be treasured. And we ask God to help us all to make the education of our young people more and more centred on true values of human life as found in the gospels and the following of Christ.

◆ *Organisations and Movements that are dedicated to the support of marriage and family life*

Many groups in various ways give their time and talents to supporting marriage and family life. Think of the ones you know and pray for them. Their generosity is so often taken for granted. We pray for those who help young couples prepare for marriage either with weekend courses or one night a week courses. We ask God to bless any of these courses that are taking place this month, that those giving them will be rewarded for their generosity and those taking part will be open to searching for all that is good and best for their future marriage.

◆ *We pray for those groups and individuals who are working at parenting courses, Sacramental courses, young people's programmes*

All of these are important contributions to the development of good communication within our homes and we pray for the spread of them into all our communities. We thank God for those who take initiative in developing and implementing them for others. May his spirit continue to inspire people to look for better and more effective ways to help us towards unity with one another.

- ◆ *We pray for those who work at bringing healing to people who have suffered because of the intimate relationships of marriage and family life*

We think of those involved in counselling or therapy in groups like Accord, Beginning Experience, Family Centres, counselling services of various kinds. May people involved at this level not get discouraged by the enormity of the task but see each person as precious and to be reverenced. We pray that they may find support and encouragement from all of us to continue their healing service.

- ◆ *We pray for all those who are involved in this movement of continuous prayer for marriage and family life and for all other movements of prayer*

We ask God to give us all an ever greater spirit of faith, hope and love. And we ask him to reward greatly those who dedicate themselves in this way to others.

- ◆ *We pray for all governments and legislators that they may develop the laws in ways that favour marriage and family life and we pray for those groups that are dedicated to keeping pressure on our governments for that purpose*

May these groups be led in ways that do not resort to violence or division but always keep the values of respect for every human person as the motivation of their activities. As the laws of our land are developed for the common good of all may our legislators keep in mind that the greatest stability is to be found in strong marriage and family relationships.

*The fifth decade of the rosary could now be offered for all those who are involved in supporting marriage and family life. We ask that, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, that they may all be given a fresh enthusiasm for their particular work and that together we may all help couples and families into fuller life.*

*All powerful and ever living God,  
your will is that no one should have  
to go through life without knowing how special they are,  
how treasured and loved they are.*

*We ask you to forgive us for failing so many people  
in their journey through life.*

*Bless all those who give themselves so generously in  
helping husbands and wives to renew  
their love constantly so that  
through each other they may know your love.*

*We ask your blessing on those  
who work at helping parents and their children to develop  
a good communication so that  
understanding and love may grow  
in our homes and each person be reverenced as he or she is.*

*And we pray for an outpouring  
of your Spirit on those who are engaged in  
bringing healing to the people who are  
damaged because of their experiences  
in marriage or family life.*

*Inspire all leaders of church and state to know more clearly  
that it is in marriage and family life especially that  
human life has its greatest potential  
and that it is in these relationships that we can come to know your  
presence and love in a special way.*

*We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen*

## ***Towards the end - those taking over from you***

As you come towards the end of your hour of prayer take a few minutes to think about and pray for whoever is taking over from you. You may know who that person/couple/family/group are or you may not. If you know who it is think of them by name. Bring them into your mind and heart and ask God to bless them with peace, with joy with love. Each person has their own preoccupations as they enter into an hour's prayer like this. Ask the Lord to ease any anxiety that is there and help them to be open to all that they are going to pray about.

If you don't know who is taking on the prayer next just be aware that it is going to happen. There are so many wonderful people among us and around us. Someone else is going to take over where we leave off and they take over in our name. Thank God for them and pray that whoever it is will be blessed in all that they do and that their home will be filled with God's peace and love.

Pray the Hail, Holy Queen for whoever is taking over from you, asking that, through the intercession of Mary, they may come to a real sense of the presence of Christ in the hour ahead and that through this they may have confidence in his love.

*Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy  
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.*

*To thee do we cry poor  
banished children of Eve.*

*To thee do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.*

*Turn then, most gracious advocate,  
thine eyes of mercy towards us.*

*And after this our exile,  
show unto us the blessed fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.*

*O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

*Pray for us O Holy Mother of God  
that we may be made worthy of  
the promises of Christ.*

*Let us pray. Pour forth we beseech thee,  
O Lord, thy grace into our hearts that  
we to whom the Incarnation of Christ  
thy son was made known  
by the message of an Angel,  
may by his Passion and Cross  
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.  
through the same Christ our Lord.*

*Amen*

Take the final few minutes to rest in the presence of God with you.

God of love, we praise and thank you  
for the privilege of  
knowing you and loving you.

Thank you for this time  
spent in your presence.

Bless all those we have thought about  
and prayed for during this time.

Bless all married couples.

Help them to rejoice in their love today.

Be with all families so that your love  
and peace may be in all our homes.

And bless all of us so that  
your will may become ours,  
your name may be held holy,  
and that your kingdom may  
be established in our world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

*Ask  
Search  
Knock*

*A Movement of Continuous Prayer  
for Marriage and Family Life*



You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by people.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of others, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

(Mt. 5,13-16)

*Ask  
Search  
Knock*

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This movement of prayer for marriage and family life originates from **Love is for Life** Trust, a non-profit organisation dedicated to fostering the values of the Sacrament of Marriage. It depends totally on the contributions of couples and others who have been very generous with their money. If you would like to contribute or covenant to the Trust, please contact Fr. Johnny Doherty, CSsR, Marianella, 75 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6.

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*Other publications/programmes:*

*Together Forever*

A set of 5 videos for married couples with 3 talks on each, plus a Leader's Guide £195.00

*Living the Sunday Liturgy*

A book of questions for every Sunday of the 3 year cycle £10.99

*Make me a channel of your peace*

A programme for young people

*Nazareth Programme*

A parish-based programme for those preparing for Confirmation. Sr. Carmel O'Shea, O.P.

*Cana Weekends for Married Couples*

*Engaged Couples Weekends*

*A*  
*S*  
*K*

