

Jesus Prayer — Prayed Unceasingly

“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.”

or

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”

or (my version)

“Lord Jesus Christ, *Light of the World*, have mercy on me a sinner.”

- In place of the adoration “Light of the World” use any of the biblical symbols of Christ: “bread of life,” “lamb of God,” etc. The Christian can discover these in Scripture for herself.

“**The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer.** All liturgical prayers conclude with the words ‘through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The Hail Mary reaches its high point in the words ‘blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.’ The Eastern prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer, says: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word ‘Jesus’ on their lips.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 435)

“This simple invocation of faith developed in the tradition of prayer under many forms in East and West. The most usual formulation, transmitted by the spiritual writers of the Sinai, Syria, and Mt. Athos, is the invocation, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners.’ It combines the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:6-11 with the cry of the publican [Lk 18:9-14] and the blind men begging for light.[Matt. 9:27] By it the heart is opened to human wretchedness and the Savior’s mercy.

The **invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always.** When the holy name is repeated often **by a humbly attentive heart**, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases, but holds fast to the word and "brings forth fruit with patience." This prayer is possible "at all times" because it is not one occupation among others but the only occupation: that of **loving God**, which animates and **transfigures every action in Christ Jesus.**” (*Catechism* 2667-68)

Biblical Background

- A Prayer for **Light**: “As Jesus passed on from there, two *blind* men followed him, crying aloud, ‘**Have mercy on us**, Son of David.’” (Matthew 9:27)
- “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, **be merciful to me a sinner!**’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14)
- “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:5-11)