

Catholic Identity: Session 2

We begin our prayer:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving Father,
You are the source of all love,
and in Your Son Jesus Christ You have shown us
the fullness of that love poured out for the world.
As we open our hearts to Your Word today,
help us to listen with reverence and joy.
Teach us to love one another as You have loved us,
to see Your image in every person,
and to remain rooted in the perfect love
that casts out all fear.
May this time of prayer draw us deeper
into communion with You.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture and just focus on what the passage is saying. Take notice of any word, phrase, thought or image that catches your attention.

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

We have come to know and believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have

confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God* whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.
(1 John 4:7-12, 16-21)

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Read the passage again, and this time focus on what speaks to you in this text and how it relates to your life.

You may use the following questions to guide your meditation if needed:

What might God be trying to say to you through that word, phrase or image that caught your attention initially?

How have I experienced God’s love in my life and how did I respond? How might I “abide” more deeply in God’s love each day?

What fears or barriers are keeping me from fully trusting in God’s mercy and love for me?

In what ways is God calling me to love others more concretely?

If practicing lectio divina *as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.*

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the Scripture passage one more time. What do you want to say to the Lord? Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture a final time, then rest in God's presence. Simply be with Him and listen for His voice. Allow His love and grace to fill you.

After a period of silent reflection conclude your time of prayer with the closing prayer below:

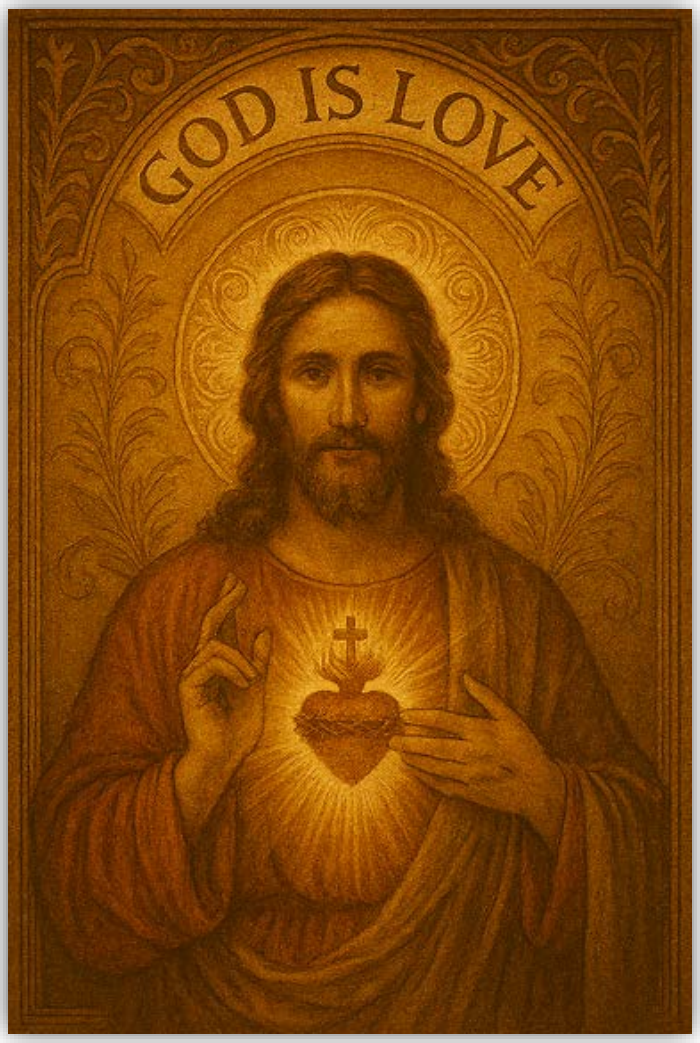
Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
We thank You for the gift of Your Word,
which has reminded us today
that You are Love itself
and that whoever abides in love abides in You.
As we leave this time of prayer,
fill our hearts with the courage to love one another
with patience, kindness, and mercy.
Let Your perfect love cast out all fear
and guide us to be witnesses of Your presence
in our families, parishes, and communities.
May the Spirit strengthen us
to remain rooted in Christ,
so that our lives may reflect
the love we have received from You.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Living the Word *(Actio)*

This week, take time to prayerfully consider the areas of your life where fear or worry is preventing you from trusting God. Once identified, surrender these fears and worries to God's perfect love and ask Him to cast out the fear and worry that has taken hold of you.

Identify two concrete steps you can take this week to abide more deeply in God's love and try to be faithful about putting them into action each day.



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