

Constitution 3

Prayer

- 21.** God has breathed his very breath into us. We speak to God with the yearning and the words of sons to a Father because the Spirit has made us adopted children in Christ. The same Spirit who provides us with the energy and impetus to follow after the Lord and to accept his mission also gives us the desire and the utterance for prayer.
- 22.** Our thoughts are not easily God's thought, nor our wills his will. But as we listen to him and converse with him, our minds will be given to understand him and his designs. The more we come through prayer to relish what is right, the better we shall work in our mission for the realization of the kingdom.
- 23.** We pray with the church, we pray in community and we pray in solitude. Prayer is our faith attending to the Lord, and in that faith we meet him individually, yet we also stand in the company of others who know God as their Father.
- 24.** Before the Lord we learn what is his will to be done, we ask that no one lack daily bread, we dare to match forgiveness for forgiveness and we plead to survive the test. We desire that his name be praised, that his kingdom come and that we be his faithful servants in the planting of it.
- 25.** We find prayer no less a struggle than did the first disciples, who wearied of their watch. Even our ministry can offer itself as a convincing excuse to be neglectful, since our exertions for the kingdom tempt us to imagine that our work may supply for our prayer. But without prayer we drift, and our work is no longer for him. To serve him honestly we must pray always and not give up. He will bless us in his time and lighten our burdens and befriend our loneliness.
- 26.** When we do serve him faithfully, it is our work that rouses us to prayer. The abundance of his gifts, dismay over our ingratitude and the crying needs of our neighbors--all this is brought home to us in our ministry and it draws us into prayer.
- 27.** There can be no Christian community which does not gather in worship and in prayer. It is true of the church and true as well of Holy Cross. The Lord's supper is the church's foremost gathering for prayer. It is our duty and need to break that bread and share that cup every day unless prevented by serious cause. We are fortified for the journey on which he has sent us. We find ourselves especially close as a brotherhood when we share this greatest of all table fellowships.

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Prayer

continued ...

28. Though we are an apostolic congregation with attachments and responsibilities that draw us into other worshipping communities, we in Holy Cross also have the need, in some regular rhythm resolved upon in each house, to pray and worship together. It is especially fitting that we join in the two chief hours of the church's daily worship, morning prayer and evening prayer, and that we all free ourselves to take part. Beside the church's formal prayers we also have the benefit of sound popular devotions like those to the Mother of God.
29. The feasts of the liturgical year will unite some of us as a community but call others away. Our own feasts, however, should give all of us the occasions as a family to pray and celebrate together. Chief among these is the solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows, the day of remembrance in the entire congregation, for she is the patroness of us all. We celebrate also the solemnities of the Sacred Heart and of Saint Joseph, the principal feasts of the priests and the brothers. There are as well the feasts of our saintly predecessors in Holy Cross. As a congregation we have our own cycle of observances when we gather for professions, ordinations, jubilees and funerals.
30. Beyond the liturgy that convokes us into church and congregation, there is the prayer we each must offer to the Father quietly and alone. We contemplate the living God, offering ourselves to be drawn into his love and learning to take that same love to heart. We enter thus into the mystery of the God who chose to dwell in the midst of his people. His eucharistic presence is the pledge of that. It is especially appropriate then for us to pray in the presence of the reserved Eucharist. Each of us needs the nourishment of at least one half-hour of quiet prayer daily. We need as well to assimilate sacred scripture and reflectively to read books on the spiritual life. Members of Holy Cross will regularly meditate on these constitutions, which are a rule for their lives.
31. Each of us has the need to draw aside from his occupations and preoccupations every year for a retreat of several days undisturbed prayer and reflection. In that pause we aim at being solely attentive to the movement of the Spirit. We may see our life and our work in a fresh and brilliant light; we may find the conviction to respond to the Spirit and to change the course into which habit and convenience may have settled us. Prolonged prayer such as this can be intense enough to rekindle our love for and commitment to the Lord, which have a way of burning low. Likewise periodic days of recollection refresh our dedication.
32. It is not merely we who pray, but his Spirit who prays in us. And we who busy ourselves in announcing the Lord's kingdom need to come back often enough and sit at his feet and listen still more closely.