



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heavenly Father,
Send your Holy Spirit
to open our minds and hearts.
With your grace,
grant us understanding of Your
gifts of human sexuality, marriage,
children, and family
according to Your divine plan.
Grow in us the virtues of chastity,
prudence, temperance, justice,
and fortitude.
Deepen our faith, hope, and love
so that we can love You and
our families and neighbors
as You love us!

Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture slowly, and if possible, out loud, two or three times.

(John 20:1–2, 11–18)

On the first day of the week,
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early in the morning,
while it was still dark,
and saw the stone removed from the tomb.
So she ran and went to Simon Peter
and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them,
“They have taken the Lord from the tomb,
and we don't know where they put him.”

Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping.
And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb

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and saw two angels in white sitting there,
one at the head and one at the feet
where the Body of Jesus had been.
And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”
She said to them, “They have taken my Lord,
and I don't know where they laid him.”
When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there,
but did not know it was Jesus.
Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?
Whom are you looking for?”
She thought it was the gardener and said to him,
“Sir, if you carried him away,
tell me where you laid him,
and I will take him.”
Jesus said to her, “Mary!”
She turned and said to him in Hebrew,
“Rabbouni,” which means Teacher.
Jesus said to her,
“Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.
But go to my brothers and tell them,
‘I am going to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God.’”
Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples,
“I have seen the Lord,”
and then reported what he told her.



Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, call upon the Holy Spirit to help you reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- ❖ **What word or phrase caught my attention?**
- ❖ **What did the word or phrase “say” to me?**
- ❖ **What comforted me?**
- ❖ **What challenged me?**

During this NFP Week where we celebrate God's gifts of married love and the gift of life and learn about the ethical methods of Natural Family Planning, ask a few more questions:

- ❖ **How can I nurture a more generous and open heart?**
- ❖ **Do I share God's love with others—even the stranger?**
- ❖ **Do I understand and embrace the Lord God's truth about the nature of human sexuality, marriage, and children?**



Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

- ❖ **What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?**
- ❖ **Is my heart open to the Lord's grace?**

Now, sit in silence and let the Holy Spirit speak to you.



Prayer (*Oratio*)

Praise the Lord and bring your concerns and petitions to Him.

After your conversation with the Lord, pause and be still in His presence. Allow yourself to love Him and receive His love.



Closing Prayer

Conclude your prayer with following psalm taken from today's readings (Psalm 63:2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9):

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.

Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be
satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Lord help me to love like You!

Amen.



Resources

Church teaching on love and human sexuality:

This webpage summarizes Catholic teaching
<https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning/love-and-sexuality>

Humanae vitae: This papal document (encyclical) of the Catholic Church explains the nature of married love and the gift of life

https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

Married Love and the Gift of Life: This document of the U.S. bishops summarizes Church teaching on marriage, procreation, and responsible parenthood. See

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/Married%20Love%20Final%20Text%20Nov06%20for%20Website%20-%20Copy.pdf>

Natural Family Planning (NFP): Where to learn about the ethical methods of NFP and to learn a method see <https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning>



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