

PRAYER
365

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CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Sunday Prayers	1
Monday Prayers	35
Tuesday Prayers	71
Wednesday Prayers	107
Thursday Prayers	145
Friday Prayers	185
Saturday Prayers	223

*To Debra,
my partner in life and in prayer,
to whom my heart was drawn the first time I heard her pray,
and whose prayers have sustained me for more than three decades*

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2009, I adopted a discipline of writing a prayer every day. This book is a collection of a year's worth of those prayers.

Prayer is, on the one hand, a personal matter. There is no one "correct" way to pray, so this offering of prayers is not meant to offer a model of how to pray. These prayers come out of my experience, out of my life, and out of my pilgrimage. I share them with the hope that they will somehow connect with your life as many friends have affirmed they have connected with theirs. Hopefully there is enough commonality in human experience that my prayers will prove helpful in leading you to pray as you need to pray and in the way you pray best.

Prayer is, on the other hand, a communal matter. Jesus did, after all, teach us to pray to "Our Father" and not to "My Father." One reason I love praying the Lord's Prayer or the Psalms or other ancient prayers in a worship service is that not only are all of us who are gathered in that place praying together, but we are also praying with many others who are praying those prayers. Indeed we are praying with all those who have gone before us and who will come after us. Such praying connects us with the communion of saints. Perhaps, in a small way, those who choose to pray the prayers in this book will find in the knowledge that others are praying them, too, a meaningfully enlarged sense of Christian community. I hope so.

A word is in order regarding the organization of the prayers in this volume. The prayers are divided into sections by days of the week. The book begins with 52 prayers for Sunday, then moves to 52 prayers for Monday, and so on through the final section that contains 52 prayers for Saturday. So, you can begin using the prayers at any time during the year. If you begin at some other time than the beginning of the calendar year, though, you should be aware that certain prayers are somewhat seasonal in nature. Therefore, it would be best to begin reading at the place in the year corresponding to the point in the year when you begin reading. In

other words, if you begin using the prayers in the book on the Sunday of the 26th week of the year, begin with Sunday 26, then go to Monday 26, then Tuesday 26, and so on. When you arrive at Saturday 25, you will have gone all the way through the prayers.

While the book is not arranged according to the Christian year, some note is made of it. The prayers for Friday 51 and Saturday 51 are Holy Week prayers, respectively. If you choose to read these prayers on the holy days in a year in which these holy days do not correspond to the days as numbered in this volume, some simple swapping will allow you still to have a prayer to read for each day.

Michael L. Ruffin
Season of Lent, 2012