

August 2024

PRAYING WITH *the Holy Father*

Monthly Intention Lesson Plan developed for
Middle School and High School Students



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
UNITED STATES | CANADA APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

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IN HONOREM PRINCIPIS APOSTOLICI V. B.

August 2024

For Political Leaders



Opening Prayer

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross
- Prayer: The Daily Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.

Introduce Intention

The Intention

- For August, the Holy Father invites us to pray with him for political leaders
- We pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and for the common good, especially caring for the poor and those who have lost their jobs.

The Pope Video

- If time allows, watch the Pope Video produced for this month.
- The video is available at <https://thepopevideo.org/>

Sacred Scripture

- Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 or Romans 13:1-7

Note: Invite one of your students to read the scripture entry.

Reflection

by Fr. Bill McCormick, S.J., editor at America Magazine

“Put not your trust in princes” could be the political motto of Christians. Indeed, the central events of our faith surround the execution of God the Son by the very empire that lent its name to the “peace” of the time: the Pax Romana.

And yet we find ourselves living in the world where politics matter. As tempting as it can be to turn away in disgust from political life, we know that such passivity makes us complicit in injustice. Thankfully, phrases like “integral human development” and the “common good” are priceless gifts of our tradition meant to direct our attention to a fundamental fact: humans are made to live together. And the Gospel matters for how we live together.

Moreover, the saints offer a cornucopia of models for sharing the Gospel in the public square. As such, August is a beautiful time to pray for our political leaders. During it we celebrate martyrs like St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) and St. Maximilian Kolbe, who remind us that our final happiness will not be found in this life, and great teachers and pastors like St. Augustine of Hippo who wrote profound works on the challenge of Christian discipleship during times of upheaval. Then there’s the fine example of Saint Louis, King of France. And at the center of the month comes the solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady, the glory of which is a foretaste of Heaven, that toward which all things tend.

Perhaps, then, during this ordinary time, relatively quiet both liturgically and politically, we can ask God to soften the hearts of our leaders, that they might be men and women like the great saints. And, in the process, we might find that He softens our hearts, too.

Saint Connection

St. Thomas More is a model of political leadership and service to the common good. Share his life, particularly his commitment to justice and faith amidst political challenges.

- Advocated for reforms to help the poor and improve the legal system.
- Known for his famous words, "I die the king's faithful servant, but God's first."
- Executed in 1535 for his unwavering faith and principles, becoming a martyr for the Catholic Church.

Discussion

Encourage students to reflect on how political decisions impact communities. Allow them to share their thoughts aloud.

- How can political leaders care for the most vulnerable in our communities?
- How can we be like St. Thomas More in our daily lives, especially in how we treat others and use our leadership qualities?

Extension Activities:

- Have students write a prayer for political leaders or create posters illustrating ways leaders can serve their communities.

Closing Prayer

- Prayer:

Father, we thank you for the example of St. Thomas More and ask for his intercession for our political leaders. May they be guided by your wisdom and serve with humility. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- End with the Sign of the Cross.