

August 2025

# 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

Produced for the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

in collaboration with St. Joseph Ministries

# August 2025

## For Mutual Coexistence



## Opening Prayer

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

Father, here I am. I know you are always with me. I place my heart in the Heart of your Son, Jesus, who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist each day. May your Holy Spirit make me His friend and apostle, available for His mission of compassion. Take, Lord and receive all of my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings this day -all I am and possess- in communion with my brothers and sisters in the Pope's prayer network. With Mother Mary, I pray for the mission of the Church, for our bishops, and for the Pope's intention this month. Amen.

## Introduce Intention

### The Holy Father's August 2025 Intention

- Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons.

### The Pope Video

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

# Reflection

**Fr Phil Hurley SJ** began as the new National Director of Pope's Prayer Network USA on July 1. Recently he served as university chaplain at Loyola University Maryland. Previously, Fr. Phil was pastor at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church in Raleigh, NC. He is a founding member of the Jesuit Tracks music collective.

As a Young Jesuit I spent one summer in northeastern India, a few hours by train outside of Kolkata, near the Bangladeshi border. In this part of the world, there are people of many different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The institution where I volunteered for those weeks houses multiple services for people with Hansen's disease – traditionally known as leprosy. It is a Catholic institution, and a number of Christians, including priests and religious, were working there. On the staff of nurses, caretakers, drivers, and among the patients, there were also Hindus, Muslims, and people of traditional local animist religions.

It's no secret that for many years there have been tensions between these groups in this region of the world. Sometimes, violent tensions. And oftentimes with motivations that are more political than properly speaking religious. Yet, at this medical center dedicated to caring for the poorest of the poor, and the sickest of the sick, I experienced a beautiful mutual coexistence and collaboration among a very diverse group of people.

Of course, many of us need not travel across the world to see and experience the reality of people succumbing to the temptation of confrontation amidst ethnic, political, religious, or ideological differences. Often, we need to look only as far as the daily news, or even our own neighborhoods.

So let us pray with the holy father this month, by the power of the Holy Spirit and God's love and grace, for the gift of peaceful and fruitful mutual coexistence - in our world, and in our own lives and communities.

# Sacred Scripture

- Read Ephesians 4:31-32 or Romans 12:17-18

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

## Saint Connection

Saint Josephine Bakhita (1869–1947) is a powerful witness to the August intention. Born in Sudan and sold into slavery as a child, she endured suffering at the hands of many different people. Yet, after gaining her freedom and becoming a Catholic sister, she forgave her captors and lived a life of prayer, service, and hospitality to all, regardless of ethnicity or background.

- St. Josephine's story teaches us the value of forgiveness, compassion, and recognizing the dignity of every person, no matter their background or belief.
- Her life as a Canossian Sister in Italy showed that coexistence is possible, even between those with very different histories, when we choose love over confrontation.
- Reflect on how her example can inspire us to build bridges and overcome divisions in our own communities.

## Discussion

Encourage students to reflect on the August intention. Allow students to share their thoughts aloud.

- What are some ways you have seen people choose dialogue instead of confrontation?
- How do you personally handle disagreements about religion, politics, or beliefs in your own life?
- What actions can each of us take to become peacemakers and bridge-builders in our communities?

## Extension Activities:

- Invite students to research an example of peaceful coexistence in history or current events and share with the group.

# Closing Prayer

- Prayer:
  - Lord Jesus, You called us to love one another, even those who are different or disagree with us. We ask for the grace to seek peace and understanding in our communities, to reject confrontation and division, and to build a world where all people may coexist in mutual respect. May we follow the example of St. Josephine Bakhita, choosing forgiveness and compassion each day. Grant us the courage to be instruments of Your peace. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross