

Compline with Anglican Prayer Beads

Symbolism

The Anglican Prayer Beads are made up of twenty-eight beads divided into four groups of seven called “Weeks.” In both the Jewish and Christian traditions, the number seven represents spiritual perfection and completion. Between each week is a single bead, called a “Cruciform Bead” as the four beads form a cross. The invitatory bead between the cross and the wheel of beads brings the total to thirty-three, the number of years in Jesus’ earthly life.

How to Pray with Prayer Beads

There is not a “right” way to use the prayer beads. You can experiment to find an approach fitting for you and/or your season of spirituality.

To begin, hold the Cross and say the prayer you have assigned to it, then move to the Invitatory Bead. Then enter the circle of the prayer with the first Cruciform Bead, moving to the right, go through the first set of seven beads to the next Cruciform Bead, continuing around the circle, saying the prayers for each bead.

It is suggested that you pray around the circle of the beads three times (which signifies the Trinity) in an unhurried pace, allowing the repetition to quiet your mind and open your heart to God.

By praying through the beads three times, including the cross at the beginning or the end, the person at prayer reaches the total of one hundred touches, the total number of touches of the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope. A period of silence should follow the prayer, for a time of reflection and listening.

Begin praying with the Anglican Prayer Beads by selecting the prayers you wish to use for the cross and each bead. Practice them until it is clear which prayer goes with which bead.

Find a quiet place and allow your body and mind to become restful and still. After a time of silence, begin praying the prayer beads at an unhurried, intentional pace. Complete the circle of the beads three times.

When you have completed the round of the prayer beads, end with a period of silence, allowing yourself an extended opportunity to center your being in God. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and presence of God.

Closing your Prayers

After three circuits around the prayer beads, you may finish with the following or use whatever prayers you choose:

Last time through:

Invitatory Bead

The Lord’s Prayer

The Cross

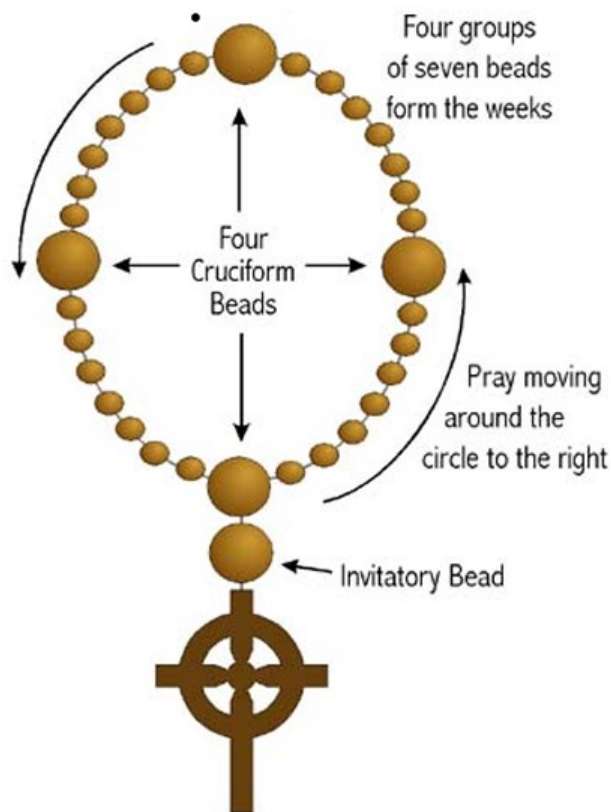
I bless the Lord.

Or, in a group setting:

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Text from *A Guide to Praying with Prayer Beads* from St Andrews Longmeadow



The Cross

May the light of God surround us.
The love of God enfold us.
The power of God protect us.
The presence of God Watch over us.
Now and forever more
Amen.

The Invitatory

Celtic Version of the Lord's Prayer

Holy One beyond all names
Eternal Wellspring
May love rise again in us today
With food for every table
Shelter for every family
And reverence for every life.
Forgive us our failings in love
And free us from all falseness
That the light of our souls may shine
And the strength of our spirits endure
For Earth and all its people
This day, tonight, and forever.
Amen

-John Philip Newell, Earth & Soul

The Cruciforms

For the quiet that surrounds us
and your promise of peace deep within us
thanks be to God.

The Weeks

The stillness of God be ours this night.

Last time through:

Invitatory Bead

Keep watch, dear God,
with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord Christ;
give rest to the weary,
bless the dying,
soothe the suffering,
pity the afflicted,
shield the joyous;
and all for your love's sake. Amen.

The Cross

Glory be to you,
Life of all life.
Renew us this night in the depths of sleep,
set free our dreams of the unknown.
Safeguard this time of resting,
O God, enfold us in the darkness of the night.
Amen.