

Praying for Fortitude with Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

Use this complete prayer service with Chapter 5, Section 4 of Your Life in Christ. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- a prayer journal, or sheets of blank notebook paper and pens
- image of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati pulled up on a projector or printed out (if desired) found here <https://brandonvogt.com/pier-giorgio/>

Prayer Introduction

Fortitude is one of the moral virtues that give you courage in difficulties and constancy in pursuing good. Fortitude is also one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that is perfected in Confirmation. It can be difficult to face the many types of peer pressure you might experience, but seeking out good examples of fortitude is one way to strengthen this virtue in you.

One saint who lived not long ago was Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, a man who lived out the Beatitudes with much courage. Frassati, who died at the age of twenty-four, was a young Italian man who held both friendship and his faith in the deepest regard. His committed prayer life and service to the poor were often an impetus for his friends to join him, whether on the side of mountain or in the streets of Turin. He had both a streak of orneriness and piety that was magnetic to those around him. Though he died young, his funeral was attended by thousands who came to love his magnitude of heart and faith.

Opening Prayer

Leader: (Have the students stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross.)

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All: Lord, grant me a fullness of the gift of fortitude that I might reach for the heights of holiness. Help me to aspire to greatness, and not fear failure, as Bl. Pier did. Open my heart to the joy of the Gospel, that I might desire holiness for myself and all those around me. I ask this through the intercession of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Reader 1: A reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew (Mt 5: 13-16).

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader 2: Lord, let us be salt and light for the world.

All: Salt to season, and light to shine. That they may see our good deeds and glorify God.

Reader 2: Bl. Pier set his light on lamp stand to be Christ’s joy.

All: Bl. Pier, pray for us that we might imitate your example of joyful courage.

Reflection on Bl. Pier Giorgio

Leader: (Have the students sit.) Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in 1901, to wealthy parents in Turin, Italy. His father ran a popular paper and was later an Italian senator, *Your Life in Christ: Foundations in Catholic Morality*

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and his mother was a painter. His father was an atheist, and his mother was only minimally Catholic. Yet, Pier, even from a young age, found truth and goodness in his faith. Though he struggled in school, often needing extra help to pass exams, he tried his best.

Pier was known to be a leader in his group of friends, who were called by the tongue-in-cheek name *Il Sinistri* "the Sinister Ones." They would go on arduous mountain-climbing expeditions, with Pier often leading the rosary as they climbed. He would often fall back unassumingly to be with those struggling at the back. Pier would urge his friends forward saying, "the higher you go, the more you can hear the voice of Christ." Pier agreed that everyone who joined in the praying while climbing would get his boots greased by himself.

Pier received Holy Communion almost daily, often inviting and taking friends who would otherwise have never gone. Not many of his friends or family knew that he would visit the poor of Turin every single day. When asked why he said, "'It's to Jesus I go. Jesus comes to me every morning in Holy Communion and I repay him in a very small way by visiting the poor. All around the sick and all around the poor I see a special light which we do not have.'" He would often skip family vacations so he wouldn't leave his poor friends alone. When asked why he rode third class on trains, he would answer, "Because there is not a fourth."

He contracted polio at the age of twenty-four, which struck him very swiftly. He died just five days afterward. His last note was written in concern for a family to which he had promised medicine. At his funeral, his family was shocked to see thousands of mourners, many from Turin's lower classes. These people, in turn, were amazed to discover the true identity of their longtime benefactor.

Reader 3: Bl. Pier wrote:

"We, who, by the grace of God, are Catholics, must not squander the best years of our lives as so many unhappy young people do, who worry about enjoying the good things in life, things that do not in fact bring any good, but rather the fruit of immorality in today's world. We must prepare ourselves to be ready and able to handle the struggles

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we will have to endure to fulfill our goals, and, in so doing, to give our country happier and morally healthier days in the near future. But in order for this to happen we need the following: constant prayer to obtain God's grace, without which all our efforts are in vain; organization and discipline to be ready for action at the right moment; and finally, we need to sacrifice our own passions, indeed our very selves, because without this sacrifice we will never achieve our goal."

Questions for Personal Reflection

Leader: (Have students get out their prayer journals and pens. After each question allow time for them to write responses.) What did you hear in Bl. Pier's story that inspired you?

How did Bl. Pier show both courage and humility to be an unassuming example to those around him?

What did Bl. Pier do that brought people closer to God? What can you do to follow his example?

How did Pier exemplify a life of both prayer and virtue? What is one concrete thing you can do to pray more? What is one concrete thing you can do to help others in need?

Closing Prayer

Reader 4: Gracious Father, you gave Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati joy in meeting Christ in the sacraments and in serving the poor and sick. Through his intercession may we also walk in his path of courage, happiness, and generosity, being salt and light to our world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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