

saint mary's press

life
can be a
wild
ride

More Prayers
by Young Teens

Edited by Marilyn Kielbasa



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Preface

Life Can Be a Wild Ride is the second collection of prayers by young teens published by Saint Mary's Press. The invitation for the first book of prayers, *Looking Past the Sky*, elicited over fourteen hundred submissions. The invitation for this second book resulted in over two thousand prayers from young teens in parishes and schools throughout North America.

Once again, the most difficult aspect of editing this book was choosing only about 10 percent of the prayers that were submitted. Thankfully, I had help from high school and college students who each read and rated about five hundred prayers. I made the final decisions based on their ratings while trying to achieve a balance between various factors: school and parish, boys and girls, themes, parts of the country, and so forth. Still, the opinions and comments of the young consultants was an invaluable starting point, and I am grateful to the following people for taking the time and energy to help out:

- Rob Brajkovich, Whiting, IN, Saint Mary's University
- Eli Bremer, Winona, MN, Saint Mary Parish
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- Ann Hansen, Spring Valley, MN, Saint Mary's University
- Jana Rozek, Winona, MN, Saint Mary's Parish
- Katie Stangler, Waseca, MN, Saint Mary's University

I regret that so many prayers had to be put in the "no" box. I am painfully aware that each prayer came from deep inside the heart of the young person who wrote it. If you are reading this and your prayer (or your student's prayer) is not among the 235 that were chosen for this book, please know that it is probably not because of the quality of the prayer. It may be because the prayer was one of the eight hundred prayers of thanksgiving that came in, or because it was the fourth really good prayer from your class or group. Fortunately, God doesn't have a "no" box. God hears and accepts every prayer from

every person without giving a thought to balance, representation, word count, or page limits.

Like its predecessor, *Life Can Be a Wild Ride* is a collection of prayerful thoughts that run the gamut of human emotion and experience. It includes timeless reflections on painful losses, joyful celebrations, the struggles and gifts of relationships, questions about the future, the limitations of human understanding, and the day-to-day journey with God. The book also includes young teens' prayers about more timely topics as well: school violence, abortion, divorce, depression, and wartime atrocities are among the concerns that are voiced within these pages.

I am grateful to the teachers, catechists, DREs, youth ministers, and administrators who coordinated the efforts of their students and sent in their best efforts. Each day, you provide opportunities for young people to acknowledge and embrace their encounter with God. Your work is not easy, but it is quite clear that you make a big difference in the life of young people. Your efforts are applauded and appreciated. Thank you.

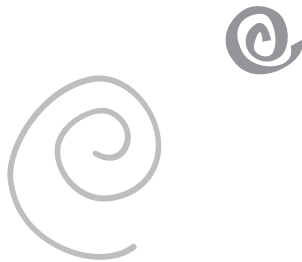
I am also grateful to each young person who wrote a prayer for *Life Can Be a Wild Ride*, whether or not it was sent in or selected for the book. You are God's work. You are making God's Reign a reality. You are a gift to the world. You are our cherished hope for the future. Thank you.

Marilyn Kielbasa
Editor



Part 1

**God Is in the
Good Things**





Oh, God, you have blessed me with more than I could ever find the words to thank you for. I appreciate the good health that you bring to my family and me day after day. I cherish the friendships that you give me the ability to nourish. I am grateful that you blessed me with two loving parents, and I love you for continually strengthening the bond between my sisters and me.

God, you help me time and again through the pain and strife in my life. And regardless of the wrongdoing I may render, you stand by me through it all. I worship you with all my heart and soul, and I'll forever keep my faith in you. Amen.

*Angela Donizetti
Holy Family School, Norwood, NJ*



Dear God,
I thank you for blessing me with such a glorious and fulfilling life with loving parents. I thank you for my wonderful personality and charm.

*Meagan M. Rodkey
Saint Luke Parish, Carol Stream, IL*



If I could **count all the stars** in the sky, **multiply them by infinity**, and then **add one**, the number still wouldn't compare to how much you love and care for the world. Thank you, God, for everything you have given me and all that I will receive from you in the future. I especially thank you for your everlasting love and kindness.



*Jessica K. Flanagan
Saint Mary Parish, Durand, IL*

Lord, thank you for this **marvelous morning.**

Bless the birds that go soaring.

Help the day not to be boring.

Lord, thank you for this **wonderful day.**

Help me to follow your way.

Listen to me when I pray.

Lord, thank you for this **beautiful night.**

Bless me with all your might.

Help me remove all my fright.



*Eighth grade religious education class
Saint Benedict Parish, Duluth, GA*



Dear Daddy,

Thank you for the past, the present, and the future. Thank you for the sunrise. It's like your smile greeting me with a chance to start all over. Thank you for the sunset. It lets me know I can start again tomorrow, learning from my mistakes.

Thanks for parents who have "been there done that," and who, from their experiences, try to keep me from harm. (Okay, I'm not always grateful, but please help me to be.) Thanks for words, that they may be used to glorify your name. Thanks for giving me special gifts, that I may give them back to you.

I love you Daddy! You're my first love, my best friend, and my favorite teacher.

Your precious child,

Deanna

*Deanna M. Jones
Saint Ann School, Bartlett, TN*

Thank you, God, for this day.
Thank you for protecting me and letting me live for another day.



Lord, my life is for you.

Amen.

*Heidi Alexandra Fontenot
Saint Patrick Parish, Baton Rouge, LA*



God,
Aloha again from me, Michelle Ciesielski.
I just wanted to say thank you.
Thank you for me.
Every bit of me. Not just bits and pieces.
Thanks for the good, the bad, and the ugly.
Thanks for my New York accent, my big cheek bones, and the
way I play basketball (even though I stink at it).
Thanks for my sense of humor; without it I don't know what I
would do.
Thanks for the way I talk to people.
Thanks so much for my writing ability. Sometimes I think it is
the only talent I have (even though I know it isn't).
Thanks for my no-sing voice and the way I handle public
embarrassment.
Thank you for my last name that no one can spell or
pronounce except my close friends.
Thank you for my beliefs molded from the lessons I have
learned.
Thank you for me.
All of me. Michelle Ciesielski.
The girl who has little dilemmas, but no crisis except for her
messy room.
Thanks so much.

*Michelle Ciesielski
Saint Agnes Cathedral Parish, Springfield, MO*



God in heaven,
Thank you for my eyes,
 so I can see this glorious world you've created.
For my nose,
 so I can smell the flowers you planted on that creation day.
For my mouth,
 so I can stand up for what I believe in.
For my ears,
 so I can hear the sweet singing of the birds in the early
 morn.
For my hands,
 so I can do work for myself.
For my feet,
 so I can carry myself from one place to the next.
For the love that you show me,
 so I may feel wanted.
For my heart,
 so I may love others the way you love me.
For my life,
 so I can live every day to please and serve others.
Amen.

*Ashley M. Rachubinski
Seton Catholic Middle School, Menasha, WI*

Dear God,

Thank you for everything you have given me.

Please help me **to do good in life,**
and help me to be the best I can be. Amen.



*Erica Johnson
Saint Mary Parish, Kalamazoo, MI*





God, I'm calling upon you to tell you thanks. You helped me through a hard time in my life, and because of you I now have a smile on my face every day.

I have new friends that help me when I'm down.

I have no reason to be mad.

I know you love me, and so do a lot of others.

I know I'll never feel the way I did again
with you by my side.

Thanks again. I love you.

Brandi Wildhaber

Immaculate Conception School, Jefferson City, MO

God, thank you **very, very, very** much for anything
and everything you have ever done for me.

Nicholas Mangione

Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Watervliet, NY



I am thankful for technology that helps us do things right,
That makes our lives easy, and fills our homes with light.
I am thankful for the weather, that spreads beauty all around,
That causes leaves to grow on trees, and snow to fall to the
ground.

I am thankful for my family and friends, who fill my life with
love.

I am thankful for my God, who watches me from above.

I am thankful for the moon, the stars, the sun, the sky, the shade.

But Jesus, most of all I'm thankful for the sacrifice you made.

Nicholas V. Romeo

Saint Clement Mary Hofbauer School, Baltimore, MD



Thank you, O God, for all that you have given us.
We are grateful, though sometimes we fuss.
Thank you for the earth, the land, and the sea.
But most of all, God, thank you for me.
Thanks for our families who help us when we're feeling sad.
Thanks for our friends who comfort us in the midst of bad.
Thank you for the special talents that we can share.
But most importantly, thank you for letting us love and care.
And even after thanking you a million times,
Somehow, it is just not enough.

Jessica DellaRose
Our Lady of Hope/Saint Luke School, Baltimore, MD

God,
You are always there for me when I need you.
For that, ***I thank you.***
You have always listened to me. For that, ***I thank you.***
You have always watched over me. For that, ***I thank you.***
You have created me and watch me grow.
For life, I thank you.

Marianne Delehanty
Holy Family School, Norwood, NJ



Dear God,
I know that Jesus spent his life giving and giving and never
asked for anything in return. God, you have given me so many
things that I often forget to thank you. Please help me to notice
and to use the gifts and talents you gave me correctly, and not
take them for granted.

Isolt Garcia
Saint Clare of Montefalco School, Chicago, IL

Thank you, God, for this day.
The events that occurred are long gone away.
Yet *the memory stays*, and *I hold it tight*
As I drift asleep into the quiet night.

Jennifer L. Kernan
Saint Denis/Saint Columba School, Hopewell Junction, NY



As I looked around me through day 'til night,
I had the desire to sit down and write.
The world seemed hopeless and the people, unclear.
So I uncovered these things which were veiled in despair and
fear.

I felt the sun's glowing warmth. I saw the sea-sparkling blue.
I heard the heavens' whispering winds, and then I thought of
you.

I remembered all those days, and how you held me close.
When I was feeling so far down were the times you cared the
most.

It took me quite a while, God, to realize you are truly by me.
But now I want to thank you for your patience when my faith
was oh so blurry.

Dear God, I want to thank you for my loving family and friends,
Who have sheltered me through everything, always there 'til
the very end.

God, I'd like to thank you for my favorite gift of all.
It's the gift of love you've blessed me with that overwhelms me
at the slightest call.

Thank you for your wonders, and thank you, God, for you,
For I have learned your love is always,
And I thank you, I truly do.

Chelsea Wisdom
Saint Paschal Baylon School, Thousand Oaks, CA



Thank you, God, for life.
 But why is there cancer and disease that can take life away?
 Thank you, God, for family.
 But why are some children orphans?
 Thank you, God, for strength.
 But why are there children who never have a chance to walk?
 Thank you, God, for a house and food.
 But why are some people homeless and hungry?
 Thank you, God, for your love.
 Everyone has that.

*Caitlin Joosten
 Saint Vincent de Paul School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI*



Dear God,
 Thank you for the glowing moon, and for the bandit raccoon.
 Thank you for the colorful trees, and for the yellow bees.
 Thank you for the green grass, and for the slippery bass.
 Thank you for the twinkling stars, and for the swirly planet of
 Mars.
 Thank you for the glistening lakes, and for the gobbling jakes.
 Thank you for the different rocks, and for the sly red fox.
 Thank you for the shimmering sun, and for all the wonderful fun.

*Owen Gellings
 Saint Matthew School, Campbellsport, WI*



Lord God, thank you for *love* within our hearts.
 Lord God, thank you for *gifts* within our hands.
 But most of all, Lord God, thank you for *life* within our souls.

*Kevin D'Amico
 Saint Charles Parish, Boardman, OH*

Thank you for the **a**nimals that are rare.
Thank you for the **b**eauty of everything out there.
Thank you for the **c**olors of fall and the **d**ecisions of all.
Thank you for the **e**arth from beginning to end.
Thank you for my **f**amily and my very special friend.
Thank you for the **g**rass and the **h**ope of my class.
Thank you for the **i**slands and the weed and the **j**unk we don't
need.

Thanks for the **k**ids of the future.
Thank you for the **l**ife from a culture.
Thank you for the **m**aple trees and their bark.
Thank you for **N**oah and his ark.
Thank you for **o**ceans though not near for all
and especially for **p**igs in the stall.
Thank you for the **q**uiet from others.
Thanks for **r**espect from our sisters and brothers.
Thank you for the **s**hapes, the sky, and clouds that are white.
Thank you for the **t**alents that are right.
Thanks for the **u**niverse that's ours.
Thanks for the **v**ines that climb for hours.
Thank you for the **w**atermelons that are fat and thin,
and thank you for **X**anthein.
Most of all thank you for **y**our unconditional love that's the
best,

And for our **z**eal and **z**est!

*Amanda Knapp
Holy Family Junior High School, Elmira, NY*





Thank you, God, for the grass and the trees; thank you for the cool summer breeze.

Thank you, God, for my mom and dad; thank you for the cat I had.

Thank you, God, for the clouds in the sky; thank you for my Grandma's peach pie.

Thank you, God, for my fat, little dog; thank you for the cows and the hogs.

Thank you, God, for my educated teachers; thank you for my very smart preacher.

Thank you, God, for the clothes on my back; thank you for my shoes that are black.

Thank you, God, for my guardian angel's wings; thank you for everything.

*Hanna Radel
Saint Michael Parish, Kingsley, IA*



Thank you, God, for the little things
that often come our way.

The things that we take for granted,
Don't remember to say when we pray—
the unexpected courtesy,
the special, kindly deeds,

A helping hand reached out to us
at a time we are in need.

Oh, make us aware, dear God,
of small daily graces

That come to us with joyful surprises
From never-dreamed-of places.

*Brittany Carlon
Saint Charles School, Boardman, OH*



Thank you, God, for letting me see your glory through nature. I see you in the majesty of the mountains. I feel your warmth and love in the rays of the sun. I see you in the sunset reflected on the waters of the ocean. I feel your spirit when the wind blows my hair into my face, and I thank you. I see you through all of your people. I see them laughing, playing, jumping, and crying. Through your good people I learn what you expect of me and learn to be good myself. Thank you, oh God, for the great many gifts you have given me. You have blessed me, and I am truly thankful. Amen.

*Alisan Follingstad
Saint Thomas More School, Kansas City, MO*

Gratitude fills my spirit.
My God cares for me like a flower in a garden.
God is my armor in a battle that keeps me safe.
My great protector, thank you!
Glory to Yahweh, the generous one.

I cannot stop singing songs of praise and thanks.
God surrounds me with people,
who wrap me in their love.
My God is always near,
like the warm sun on a summer day.
The Great One comes to my aid with wisdom.
Glory to Yahweh, the generous one.

My heart is overflowing,
I fall to my knees.
Sheltering Father, my life is in your hands.
You shower me with your gifts,
and I praise your greatness.
Glory to Yahweh, the generous one.

*Erin Grady
Saint Norbert School, Paoli, PA*

Dear God,

I look at myself today, and I see how you made me.

You didn't make me the most self-controlled.

You didn't make me the smartest.

You didn't make me the best at sports.

You didn't make me the kindest.

You didn't make me famous.

You didn't make my ideas stop being the lamest.

But you made me, ME, and for that I thank you, God. Because I don't want to be anyone else but who I am. Amen.

Teresa Prince

Saint Robert Bellarmine School, Omaha, NE



Thank you for the sun, and the rain.

Thank you for the stars at night, and the snow in the winter.

Thank you for letting me have so many good days, and helping me through the bad days.

Thank you for teachers, who help me to be all I can, and thank you for those people who make my life challenging.

Thank you for my friends and family, and flowers.

Jesus, please help me to help those in need. Help me to be strong and to choose the better choice in life.

Please help me to love, even when I find it hard to.

Thank you for so many good things.

Thank you for giving me life.

Amen.

Jody Allsbrook

Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Buffalo, NY



I **love** to go outside and enjoy the green, beautiful trees and grass that you made. I **love** it when the leaves change colors to their brilliant reds, oranges, and browns. I **love** to rake all of the leaves up and jump in them.

Out of all the creatures and things you have ever made, I want you to know that I **love** my family. I **love** how they take care of me when I am sick. I **love** how they get so excited for me when I hit a home run or make a basket. I **love** how they comfort me when I am sad. God, thank you for everything!

*Toni Osborne
Holy Spirit Parish, Indianapolis, IN*



Thank you for raindrops on spider webs,
peanut butter and jelly sandwiches,
nightlights,
and the giggle of a two-year-old.

Thank you for bedtime stories
and rainbows, too.

Thank you for a kitten's whiskers,
a puppy's attempted growl,
and the coffee that keeps our parents going.

Thank you for basketball,
and every other little thing that makes the world go round.

Amen.

*Lindsey Tarbox
Saint Ann School, Bartlett, TN*



I thank you for the eyes I see with.
Without them I would be blind to your greatness.
I thank you for the ears I hear with.
Without them I would be deaf and not hear your praises.
I thank you for the lips I speak with.
Without them I wouldn't be able to speak your prayers.
I thank you for my family.
Without them I would be lonely.
I thank you for the house I live in.
Without it I would be cold.
I thank you for the food I eat.
Without it I would go hungry.
Most of all, I thank you for my life.
Without it I would not be alive in your presence.

*Megan Clarke
Holy Spirit Parish, Sioux Falls, SD*



God, thank you for our butter
And thank you for our bread.
We thank you for the pillow
On which we rest our head.
We thank you for the universe,
The living, and the dead,
Yes, *all the world thanks you,* God.
We thank you for the sun and clouds,
We thank you for the rain.
We thank you for our siblings,
Who sometimes are a pain.
For everything we have in life,
We thank you in your name.
Yes, *all the world thanks you,* God.

*Dylan Lamb
Annunciation School, Minneapolis, MN*



God,
You gave me eyes to see your miracles and lips to sing your
praise.
You gave me legs so I can dance and hands to do your work.
You gave me feet to walk in faith and a mind so I can pray.
You gave me ears to hear your voice and happiness to spread.
You gave me arms to help the poor and a heart to love the world.
You gave me everything I have, from my head down to my toes.
Without you I would be alone, afraid and meek and weak.
But having you in my life gives me hope to go on.
Thank you, God.

*Samantha Reed
Nativity School, Dubuque, IA*

Thank you, God, for creating us,
For giving us life,
For showing us your love.
Thank you for protecting us.



Thank you, God, for all of us in our class:
Brian, Courtney, Sean, and Melanie.
Thank you for our families,
the moon and the stars,
flowers,
the Internet,
and chocolate cookies.
Help us to do your will and be the best we can be.
Help us to be **best friends with you, God.** Amen.

*Special needs religious education class
Saint Benedict Parish, Duluth, GA*



Thank you, God, for what you've let me accomplish in life. You've given me so much, and most of it I really don't deserve. I have a loving family and a house filled with warmth. I have great friends, an excellent education, and much more. Many people are so unfortunate, and you have made me just opposite. Thank you, God, for the talents and gifts you have filled me with. Thank you, God, for what you've given me to make my life so beautiful!

*Lindsay Jo Bruns
Saint Boniface Parish, Garner, IA*

