

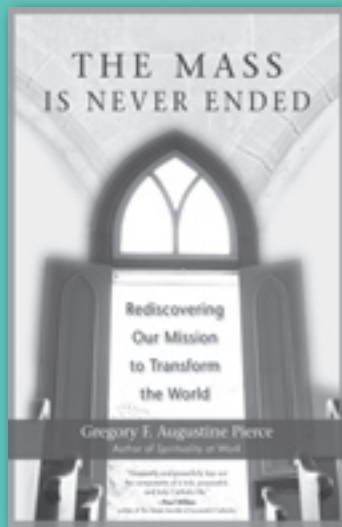
# SPIRITUAL BOOK NEWS

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SPIRITUAL BOOK ASSOCIATES

## OCTOBER 2007 SELECTION



### THE MASS IS NEVER ENDED *Rediscovering Our Mission to Transform the World* Gregory F. Augustine Pierce

*This is a beautiful, powerful book. Its simplicity and brevity can be deceiving, though. When you begin to realize that you are called to mission, and how the Mass can be celebrated from the perspective of the dismissal—for mission!—your outlook on life will be changed. Gregory Pierce has given the church a real gift in these pages!*

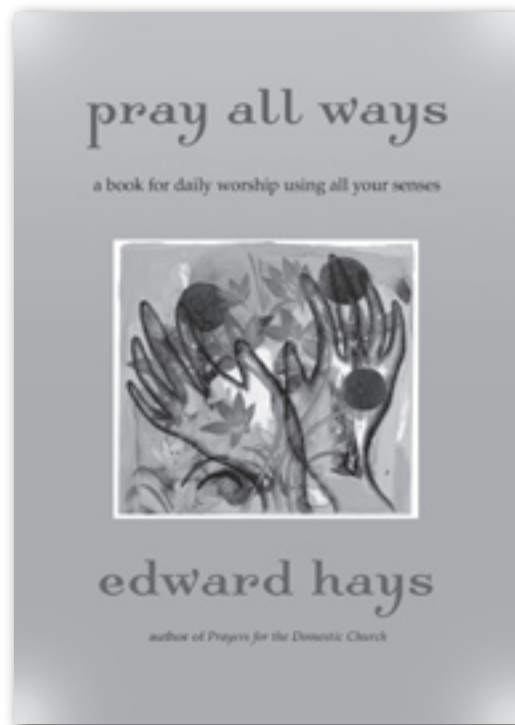
**STEPHEN BEVANS, S.V.D.**

Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

“**I**te, missa est.” “Go, we are sent forth.” Both profound and practical, and at times entertaining, *The Mass Is Never Ended* reminds readers of the meaning of the Mass and urges Catholics not to lose sight of its purpose during our everyday lives. Pierce outlines the basics of a spirituality of work, leaving readers with a renewed appreciation for the beauty and wisdom of the Mass.

ISBN: 9781594710698  
128 pages / \$10.95

## FEATURED SELECTION SEPTEMBER 2007 SELECTION



### PRAY ALL WAYS

*A Book for Daily Worship Using All Your Senses*  
Edward Hays

*There are few people who consistently give us both depth and breadth—while never closing that clever and humorous edge—as Ed Hays. If a holy man is one who does not take himself too seriously, then Ed is such a man. Fortunately, he always takes God and his readers very seriously!*

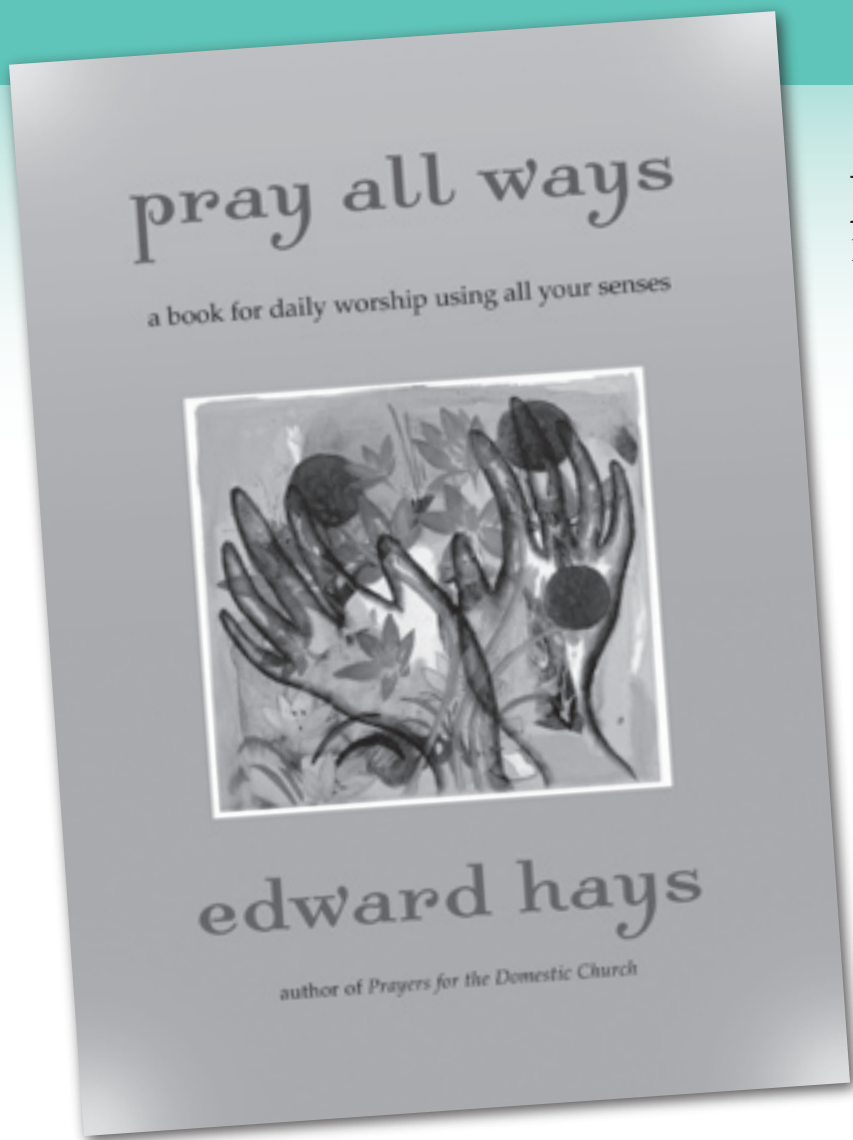
**RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M.**

Center for Action and Contemplation  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**T**his new edition of Edward Hays's pioneering book on prayer offers a unique interpretation of the biblical command to “pray always” as a call to pray creatively, at all times, and in every circumstance. Learn how to pray with your eyes and nose, your taste buds and hunger pains, and your hands and feet.

ISBN: 9780939516810 / 224 pages / \$12.95





## PRAY ALL WAYS

Edward Hays

*Pray All Ways* was first published in 1981. In this new edition, Ed Hays continues to invite us to enter into a dialogue with him about the many ways we can pray. Prayer, we are encouraged to discover, can involve any and all of our senses, actions, and occasions. Prayer can also happen anywhere at any time. Prayer of all sorts leads us to act in faith. In other words, prayer recommits us to act in this world as the body of Christ. And our actions on behalf of others can provide more spiritual fodder for our prayer. Our actions become our faith lived out, making our entire lives an unending prayer. This is not some new age version of prayer. The third century theologian Origen explains in his work entitled *On Prayer*, “One prays without ceasing who combines prayer with necessary works, and suitable activities with prayer, for the virtuous deeds or the commandments one has fulfilled are taken up as part of one’s prayer. Only in this way can we take the saying ‘Pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess 5:17) as being possible, if we can say that the whole life of the saint is one mighty integrated prayer.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



EDWARD HAYS, a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Kansas City, is the co-founder and a moving spirit of Forest of Peace Publishing. He is the author of over thirty best-selling books on contemporary spirituality. Many bear his own art. He has also served as director of Shantivanam, a Midwest center for contemplative prayer, and as a chaplain of the state penitentiary in Lansing, Kansas. He has spent extended periods of pilgrimage in the Near East, the Holy Land, and India. He continues his ministry as a prolific writer and painter.

# READER'S GROUP GUIDE

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRAYER

Paul writes in Thessalonians that we are to “pray without ceasing.” But how? Outside of Mass, we generally pray individually according to our own individual needs and practices. Since Vatican II there has been an explosion of resources for individual prayer—meditative, contemplative, reflective, and scriptural. These types of resources accompany a shift in our understanding of God. As the contemporary liturgist Nathan Mitchell describes the change, we no longer see God as a “mythical trickster” and prayer is no longer a way to avoid his traps. Prayer is not a useful tool for bargaining, but a ‘useful’ time of quiet, of solitude, of ‘sitting still and doing nothing’ in the presence of mystery.” Such private individual prayer often helps us develop a deeper personal relationship with our God. It can serve to open our hearts to hear God’s will for us. Reflection on scripture and the spiritual writings edifies us. Through personal private prayer we speak to God and hear God speak to us. But should this be the primary or even only way to pray outside of Mass? A look at the early church can give us some insight.

From the earliest times Christians engaged in private prayer, taking their cue from Jesus who retreated into private prayer on occasion, such as in the garden at Gethsemane. The Christian church as early as the third century, and even going back to the first century, gathered

together at morning and evening to pray as a community. Such prayer was based on praise and intercession rather than instruction, although instruction sometimes followed morning prayer. The community, including the full participation of the laity, clergy, and religious, prayed as the body of Christ for the glory of Christ. This prayer became known as the Liturgy of the Hours. In the monastic tradition it became more focused on scriptural reflection, recitation of all the psalms (the entire Psalter), and prayer at as many as seven, eight, or nine times a day. A monk could conceivably spend eight to ten hours in prayer each day!

However, in the cathedrals and churches of the cities, the tradition was rooted firmly in marking the beginning and the ending of the day as sacred through praise and intercession of the community as the church. Ritual, ceremony, physical prayer, participatory styles of song and prayer, psalms appropriate to the time of day, and intercessions were hallmarks of this style of prayer. Cathedral prayer involved praying with the whole body—music for the ears and the voice, incense for the nose, candles and rituals for the eyes, and procession and physical movements for the body. We learn from the third century nun Egeria that at the end of the service at that time, those in attendance went forward to receive a personal blessing at the hand of the bishop—prayer for our sense of touch.

This cathedral style of communal prayer did not seek to inform, educate, or mitigate, but rather was prayer for the sake of praising our God. How do we now praise our God, communally and individually? How do we mark our days as sacred? How do we pray always? Individual prayer at appointed times alone cannot be the answer for the Christian. Private prayer must lead us to communal worship, action and a renewed sense of prayer. It must lead us to seek God more deeply in our daily lives, whatever they may be and however “holy” they may or may not seem.

All is sacred in Christ; our task is to recognize and commemorate the sanctity. Praying always is the way in which we do this, and Ed Hays argues for praying ALL ways. He serves as a guide to making one’s whole life a prayer in our busy, time-crunched society. We cannot literally pray set prayers at all times, as some monks have attempted to do in the past. Set prayer times can have a place even for 21st century Christians, but we do not have to limit prayer to that alone. Prayer should allow us to see the ways we can make our lives a prayer at all times, which means all ways. Doing the dishes, running errands, lending a neighbor a hand—all of these can be seen as holy acts and can be carried out in that spirit.

What keeps me from grasping the ever-present holiness of my daily life?

## WHEREVER TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED...

### SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP USE

Use the Questions for Discussion and Reflection as you see fit, either in your faith-sharing group, in your personal journaling, or with your spouse or friend. Groups should not neglect their use in journaling;

a journal can be a useful tool for those in groups as well as for those reading on their own. Group leaders should have these questions and others ready for group discussion and sharing. All are

encouraged to pose their own questions of themselves and others to make the discussion more meaningful. Deeper faith is always a goal of faith sharing groups—let it be your guide for discussion.



## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

As you read, interact with the text: Write in a journal, scribble in the margins, muse aloud to a friend. As you do so, keep some of the following questions in mind.

- Virtues for Unending Prayer: Patience—Simplicity—Compassionate service. How am I doing with these virtues? Am I prepared for this journey?
- Which was the most surprising reflection?
- Which was the most challenging idea about prayer for me? Why?
- Being a Christian is a counter cultural activity. How do you see that idea weaved throughout this book, and what ramifications does that idea have?
- What images stick with me, and how have I or will I integrate them into my faith journey?
- Do I see time as gift from God, and what do I do with that gift?
- Look for the common themes in these reflections of letting go of ego to focus on relationship; a holistic view of life and prayer; integration as the path to a “holy” life.

- How has my prayer life changed? How has my conception of what prayer life is changed?
- How has this book helped me find the creative place where I can find God in the midst of polarities—joy and suffering, leisure and work, interior and exterior, etc.?

### Chpt. 1—A Natural Spirituality

God created humankind, including human nature. What does this idea mean for my understanding of human nature—is it good, or not so much? God is the creator of the earth and all its creatures, plants and minerals. What does this idea mean for my relationship with the rest of nature?

Do I feel at home in my body and in my soul?

### Chpt. 2—Praying With the Eyes

What difference does it make when I open my eyes during prayer? How does it feel? How is the experience of prayer different? Do I feel conspicuous?

### Chpt. 4—Praying Through the Nose

Think about praying with our noses—fragrance and breath. What role does fragrance have in my life? In my prayer?

### Chpt. 5—How to Pray With Our Feet

What places are special to me? What do I experience when I visit them, and do I ever think of those visits as pilgrimages?

What kind of pilgrimage is my life journey?

### Chpt. 6—Play as Prayer

Am I free of my self or ego when I am engaged in recreation? Is my recreation truly play, and if not, how can I make it so?

### Chpt. 8—Suffering—the School of Prayer

What fruits have I allowed my suffering to bear? At points in my life, have I sought suffering, accepted suffering, or avoided suffering? Looking back, was my response appropriate to the kind of suffering—fruitful or unnecessary?

### Chpt. 10—Simplicity and Prayer

Which approach to simplicity speaks to me most loudly? Which questions posed in this chapter do I need to spend more time with?

### Chpt. 14—The Prayer of Napping

Play and napping are seen as wastes of time for adults by contemporary society. How do I reclaim them as holy activities?

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST



← [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)

[www.gratefullness.org](http://www.gratefullness.org) ➤

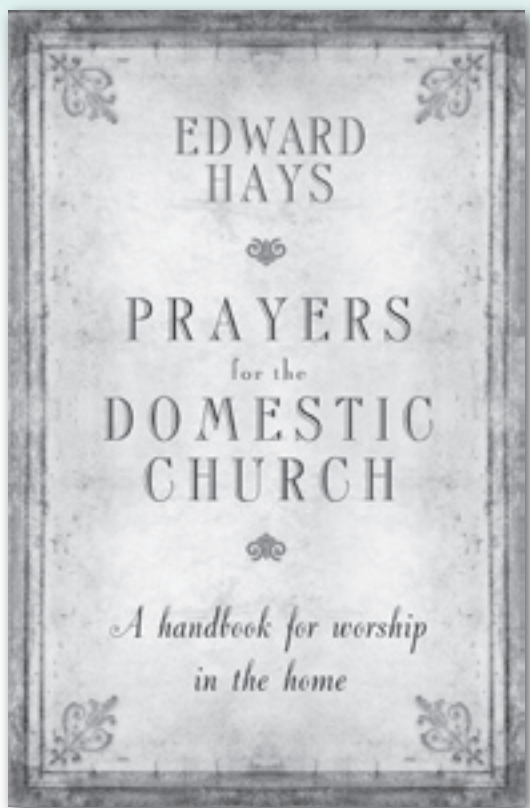


← [www.worldprayer.org](http://www.worldprayer.org)

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