

**Praying the Christmas Prayers of the Mystics**  
(by Joe Colletti, PhD)

Mysticism is a passionate love affair between the mystic and God. Such passion has been expressed in prayers by mystics that are known to us today. The language is often intimate, sweet, and tender. In his "nativity prayer," St. Bernard of Clairvaux affectionately prays

"Caress us with Your tiny hands,  
embrace us with Your tiny arms  
and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet cries."

St. Gertrude the Great, in her prayer entitled "Greetings to the Child Jesus," is equally sweet, tender, and intimate as she opens with

"Hail, most loving little Jesus, sweetest love, far above all created love!  
I greet Thee, and in the desires of all Christendom I embrace Thee.  
Hail, most charming little Jesus, noble Child of Nazareth,  
full rose of Jericho, blooming flower from Heaven!  
Draw our hearts to Thyself and refresh them with Thy sweetness."

You are encouraged to pray these prayers with the same tender, sweet, and intimate spirit expressed by these mystics.

**Nativity Prayer of St. Bernard of Clairvaux**

Let Your goodness Lord appear to us, that we  
made in your image, conform ourselves to it.  
In our own strength  
we cannot imitate Your majesty,  
power, and wonder nor is it fitting for us to try.  
But Your mercy reaches from the heavens  
through the clouds to the earth below.  
You have come to us as a small child,  
but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts,  
the gift of eternal love  
Caress us with Your tiny hands,  
embrace us with Your tiny arms  
and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet cries.

**-St. Bernard of Clairvaux-**

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## Greetings to the Child Jesus

Hail, most loving little Jesus, sweetest love, far above all created love!

I greet Thee, and in the desires of all Christendom I embrace Thee.

Hail, most charming little Jesus, noble Child of Nazareth,  
full rose of Jericho, blooming flower from Heaven!

Draw our hearts to Thyself and refresh them with Thy sweetness.

Hail, most lovable little Jesus, living Bread of Bethlehem, innocent Lamb of Jerusalem,  
newly-born King of Judea! Receive us into the number of Thy chosen servants.

Hail, most beautiful little Jesus, watchful Shepherd of the heavenly sheep,  
beloved fellow-Brother of all the children of men,  
delicate flower planted by the Holy Spirit  
in the virgin heart of Mary, bright daybreak rising  
out of the dark night to the joy of the whole earth!

Drive away from us the darkness of sin.

Glory and praise be to Thee, tender, sweet little Jesus!

From the depths of my heart I pray and adore Thee  
because for the love of me and of all mankind

Thou wert willing to lie in the manger  
and to suffer such great poverty and misery.

I thank and adore Thy tender limbs and

Thy tender hands and feet, and I praise the inexpressible love  
which didst draw Thou forth from the bosom of the Heavenly Father,  
down to a poor and miserable stable.

Glory and praise be to Thee, noble little Jesus!

I greet and praise Thee with the same fervent love  
with which Thy mother loved and praised Thee so intensely.

Glory and praise be to Thee, most beloved little Jesus, sweet delight of eternal bliss.

I greet and praise Thee with the same love  
which madst Thou leave Heaven and become a poor Child.

Glory and praise be to Thee, most precious little Jesus,  
joy and honor of Thy Heavenly Father!

I thank Thee through Thine Own sweet Heart  
which Thou hast revealed to the whole world through Thy birth.

I greet Thee over and over again, most beautiful little Jesus,  
sweetest delight of the Father's Heart,  
refreshment of sick souls.

I offer to Thee my own heart for Thine eternal glory and service.

**-St. Gertrude the Great-**