

St. Louis Review

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Prayers for Hunters.

By Father Mitch Pacwa.

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Blessing from a priest:

By the intercession of St. Hubert, patron saint of hunters, may you always honor God the Creator, who set man in dominion over all the animals.

May the Lord God make you an honorable hunter who respects fellow hunters, the animals, and all creation.

May He keep safe you and all who share the field or the forest.

May He make all hunters proud of their kill, generous with their meat, and thankful in all circumstances.

May God bless you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A Novena in honor of St. Hubert, patron saint of hunters, for Oct. 26 to Nov. 3:

Prayer to be an honorable hunter-

By the grace of God may I always honor, thank and adore the Lord God who created the animals and saw that each species was good. Let me love the God who made humans in His own image and likeness and set them over the whole world, to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth (Gen 1:26). By my honorable conduct as a hunter let me give a good example and teach new hunters principles of honor, so that each new generation can show respect for God, other hunters and the animals, and enjoy the dignity of the hunt.

Prayer for honest hunt-

Lord, may I make an honest count of game, respecting the legal limits of game in order to preserve the balance of life and death among the animals. May I so love the truth that I

always give an honest recounting of the hunting stories while keeping them interesting to my friends. May I also listen to my friends' stories with enjoyment and without envy.

Prayer against selfishness-

Lord, I do not need to take every animal in the forest, nor must I take the best or nothing. Guide me to seek the best and to accept what I get. May I never take more than my limit and let me always help maintain the balance of nature in relationship to the environment and the numbers of animals there. Keep me aware of the needs and desires of other hunters while I always try to hunt at my own best skill.

Prayer for conservation of natural resources-

Lord God, You have put all things under man's dominion. Guide us to take the animals that need to be culled for the preservation of their species and the rest of the ecosystem. Let me always respect the animals I have hunted. Never let me torment them, mock them, or made them objects of ridicule. When I take an animal's life let me always maintain respect for the wonder of its existence and the importance of its meat to those who need it for sustenance.

Prayer for safety-

Pray for the good sense to care for my weapon and to carry it and fire it responsibly. Pray for the animals, that the shots are clean and do not cause unnecessary suffering to the animal.

Prayer for successful hunt-

Lord, I pray that I may take down the game in as painless a way as possible. May I recognize my limits and take the shots I know I can make, not taking a shot that risks maiming or wounding an animal unnecessarily.

Prayer of thanksgiving for the hunt-

Lord, I thank You for the opportunity to go out on the hunt. I thank You for the time alone to think and reflect on life. I thank You for the time with hunting friends, enjoying good fellowship, good stories, meals and drinks. Thank You for the beauty seen during the hunt and for the game taken and shared. I thank You especially for a safe hunt for myself and for all the hunters who share the field.

Prayer to share the fruit of the hunt-

Lord, I am so blessed to be able to hunt and I appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me. Yet I know that so many others are in great need. Give me the grace to share

the food of the hunt not only with my family and friends but also with those who have greater need: the hungry and the poor. May my sharing with them be one small part of my continuing care for your poor. As they ask You, Father, for their daily bread, use me as one small instrument to help provide it to them.

Prayer to hunt for souls, like St. Hubert-

Lord, you spoke to St. Hubert and converted him to You during a stag hunt. You changed him into a hunter of souls, yet you continued to use his skills as a hunter to open minds to your Gospel. I ask that you make me into a hunter of souls above all other hunting activities. May I look for the opportunities to speak of You and Your salvation. Let the hunting camp itself be a place that uplifts the soul. May my time alone be an opportunity to pray and listen to You. May all the actions of the rest of my life be a constant hunt for You, for the opportunities you give me to evangelize, and to target the souls most in need of Your love.

Jesuit Father Mitch Pacwa is a speaker, author and host of EWTN TV and radio programs, including "EWTN Live," a weekly call-in show, and "Threshold of Hope." Father Pacwa hunts for food and donates most meat to the poor.