

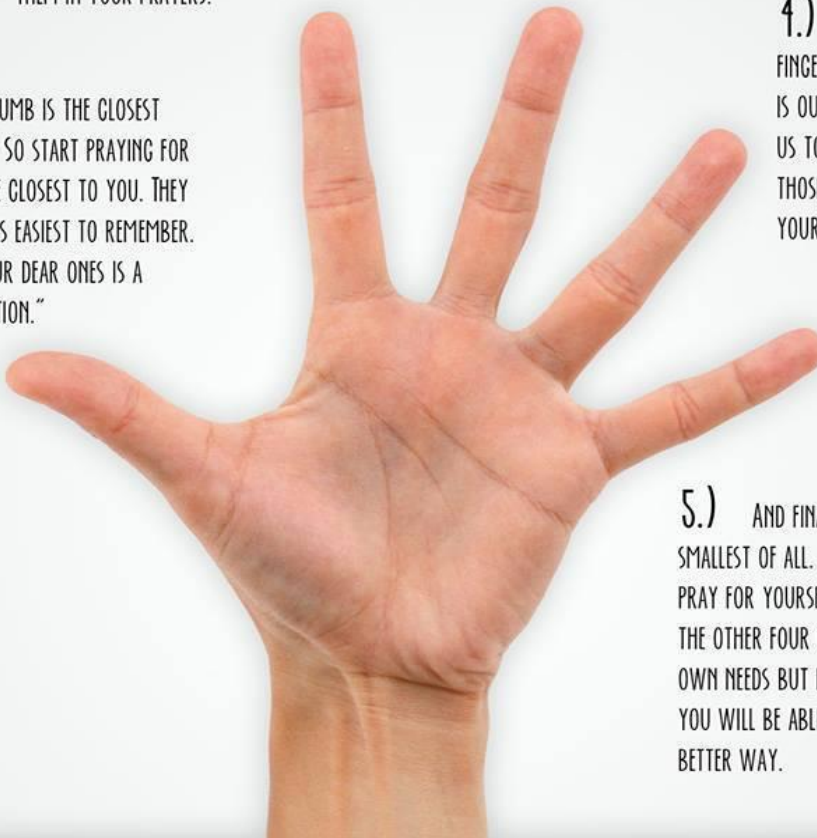
POPE FRANCIS' FIVE FINGER PRAYER

1.) THE THUMB IS THE CLOSEST FINGER TO YOU. SO START PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO ARE CLOSEST TO YOU. THEY ARE THE PERSONS EASIEST TO REMEMBER. TO PRAY FOR OUR DEAR ONES IS A "SWEET OBLIGATION."

2.) THE NEXT FINGER IS THE INDEX. PRAY FOR THOSE WHO TEACH YOU, INSTRUCT YOU AND HEAL YOU. THEY NEED THE SUPPORT AND WISDOM TO SHOW DIRECTION TO OTHERS. ALWAYS KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS.

3.) THE FOLLOWING FINGER IS THE TALLEST. IT REMINDS US OF OUR LEADERS, THE GOVERNORS AND THOSE WHO HAVE AUTHORITY. THEY NEED GOD'S GUIDANCE.

4.) THE FOURTH FINGER IS THE RING FINGER. EVEN THAT IT MAY SURPRISE YOU, IT IS OUR WEAKEST FINGER. IT SHOULD REMIND US TO PRAY FOR THE WEAKEST, THE SICK OR THOSE PLAGUED BY PROBLEMS. THEY NEED YOUR PRAYERS.



5.) AND FINALLY WE HAVE OUR SMALLEST FINGER, THE SMALLEST OF ALL. YOUR PINKIE SHOULD REMIND YOU TO PRAY FOR YOURSELF. WHEN YOU ARE DONE PRAYING FOR THE OTHER FOUR GROUPS, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR OWN NEEDS BUT IN THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE, AND ALSO YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PRAY FOR YOUR OWN NEEDS IN A BETTER WAY.

It is becoming increasingly clear that our Pope Francis is a pope who, as [Stephen White put it](#), smells like his sheep. He is a man of his people, and a father who communicates to his people in a fashion that they seem to like.

More evidence of this is a means to prayer that the Holy Father authored when he was still the Archbishop in Argentina. It is a lovely way to pray, and it showcases Pope Francis' sense of simplicity, his priority for family, his love for the poor and also his recognition that prayer is powerful.

Readers may already know the prayer. It has been around for a while, but several sources are saying that it was written by Cardinal Bergoglio. I should note as well that it was attributed to him well before he became Pope Francis.

This is a simple way to prayer that even kids can get. And it gives a whole new meaning to giving our political leaders your middle finger. (Sorry...couldn't resist.) But it is eminently practical, and it is certainly grounded in the Catholic tradition. Indeed, what I like most about it is the end. By praying for others we can begin to see our own needs in greater perspective. It is an important lesson, one that pops up in Catholic Social Teaching quite often.

A Five Finger Prayer Guide

1. Thumb: Family and Friends

Your thumb is the finger that is closest to you. Start by praying for the people in your life who are closest to you. Pray for your family and friends. Pray for your parents, your grandparents, your sisters and your brothers, your aunts, uncles, cousins, and closest friends.

2. Index Finger: Teachers

The finger next to your thumb is the index finger. We use this finger for pointing. Pray for the people who point you in the right direction. Pray for your teachers, coaches, catechists, tutors, priests, and anyone else who teaches you.

3. Middle Finger: Leaders

Your middle finger is the tallest finger. For this finger we pray for the leaders of our country, our world, and our Church. Pray for the pope and his continued leadership of the Church. Pray for the leaders of our country to have the wisdom and judgment to lead us well.

4. Ring Finger: Sick and Poor

Our ring finger is our weakest finger. We can't move it without the help of our other fingers. For this finger, pray for the sick who need help and healing. Pray for the poor and suffering who need God's comfort and help too.

5. The Pinky Finger: You

Finally, for the smallest finger of all, pray for yourself. Jesus taught us to be humble so we pray for ourselves last with our pinkie finger. Place your greatest needs before God in prayer.