

## The Prayer before the Crucifix

Most High,  
glorious God,  
enlighten the darkness of my heart  
and give me  
true faith,  
certain hope,  
and perfect charity,  
sense and knowledge,  
Lord,  
that I may carry out  
Your holy and true command.

## Oratio Ante Crucifixum Dicta

Summe,  
glorioso Deus,  
illumina tenebras cordis mei  
et da mihi  
fidem rectam,  
spem certam  
et caritatem perfectam,  
sensum et cognitionem,  
Domine,  
ut faciam  
tuum sanctum et verax mandatum.  
Altissimo  
glorioso Dio,  
illumina le tenebre de lo core mio  
et dame  
fede drecta,  
sperança certa  
e caritade perfecta,  
senno et cognoscemento,  
signore,  
che faça  
lo tuo santo e verace commandamento.  
Amen.

While Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventure characterize the early years of Francis's life as a struggle to discern God's will, the author of *The Legend of the Three Companions*, according to two manuscripts, summarizes Francis's yearnings in this simple prayer and places it on his lips as he kneels before the Crucifix of the crumbling church of San Damiano in Assisi. The prayer may have been influenced by the liturgical opening prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy. This version of the prayer is based on the simple text found in the majority of Latin manuscripts. As it became more popular, the prayer was embellished and lost some of its simplicity.

Written by Saint Francis of Assisi (1205/1206) [www.franciscantradition.org](http://www.franciscantradition.org)