

Prayer at Home



Fifth Sunday of Easter (Yr A)

Gather with family or on your own. Place an opened Bible on a table. Light a candle, white if possible, and place a crucifix and some flowers beside it and a bowl of water.

Begin with:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Antiphon: O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

Risen Lord, you are the way that leads to the tender embrace of God.
LORD, HAVE MERCY.

Paschal Lamb, you are the truth who reveals the compassion of God.
CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.

Word made flesh, you are life who proclaims the joy of the Kingdom of God.
LORD, HAVE MERCY.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Opening Prayer

We have beheld your glory, O God,
in the face of Christ Jesus your Son.

Enliven our faith,
that through Christ we may put our trust in you.
Deepen our faith,
that in Christ we may serve you.
Complete our faith,
that one day we may live with you
in that place which Christ prepares for us,
where he lives and reigns with you now and always in unity of the Holy
Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

First Reading

Acts 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They elected seven men filled with the Spirit and wisdom.

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.' The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 32:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.

Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;
for praise is fitting for loyal hearts.
Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp,
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs. **R.**

For the word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love. **R.**

The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:4-9

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

John 14:6 (JB)

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord;
no one comes to the Father, except through me.
Alleluia!

Gospel

John 14:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house;

if there were not, I should have told you.

I am now going to prepare a place for you,

and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said:

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you know my Father too.

From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?

'To have seen me is to have seen the Father,
so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself:

it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.

You must believe me when I say

that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;

believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

'I tell you most solemnly,

whoever believes in me

will perform the same works as I do myself,

he will perform even greater works,

because I am going to the Father.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

In *The Sound of Music*, the nuns sing, "What do you do with a problem like Maria?" If Rodgers and Hammerstein had written a musical about the gospels, they might have Jesus bursting into song at this point with "What do you do with a problem like Thomas and Phillip?"

Thomas shows that he is struggling with what Jesus is saying – he will famously demonstrate after the resurrection that he will only put his faith in things that he can see and touch. As Jesus speaks about going away, Thomas asks a reasonable question, "We don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus rather enigmatically replies, "I am the way, I am the truth and I am life."

When Jesus uses "I am" – I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the light of the world; I am the vine, and so on – he is associating himself with Israel's God. When Moses ask God for a name, God simply replies, "I am who am."

When Jesus uses "I am" expressions, he is using God-talk to talk about himself. When Jesus answers Thomas, he's not being elusive, he directing us towards Mystery – that is, those things that we know by heart, but can't quite express or put into words.

Then Phillip decides that it's time to put forward his own rational proposition: "Just show us and we will believe." Thomas may not be hearing Jesus, but he's certainly listening to Phillip, because Phillip's words are a preview of what Thomas will ask after the Resurrection.

So today's a gospel of two questions: "Jesus, how do we know the way?" and "Jesus, why don't you make things more obvious?" Jesus doesn't spend too much time dealing with these two questions, but these are questions that generations of believers have spent a great deal of time pondering since these first disciples.

Unfortunately for us, there is no direct answer to either of these questions. Faith is the way. It's the only way. And the only thing that is obvious is that faith is about taking one step at a time – holding on to the belief that all these single steps lead somewhere; and that the steps that we take in life aren't isolated but weave together into a whole story; a narrative of our life. And faith is about believing that, even in isolation, we don't walk not our own, but in company; that we are surrounded by a holy nation of fellow travellers.

But it is Christ himself who is the great pathway for the pilgrim. He is the way. Jesus didn't just clear the way – he is the way we walk: The road, the path, the pilgrim's trial. He is the truth – that is, this pathway is the right path. Faith is about taking one step at a time, and we need to keep taking these steps on this path that is Christ. And Jesus is also the life. That is, this pathway that we walk, this pilgrimage that we are on, is life itself. Life is where we encounter Christ, and we encounter Christ every step of the way. He is the path, he is the direction, he is this moment.

To answer Thomas and Phillip's question, we discover the way by taking one step at a time.

Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
At the words that follow, up to and including 'the Virgin Mary', all bow.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Bless yourself making a cross with some water from the bowl.

Prayers of Intercession

INTRODUCTION: Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Let us place all our trust in him that he intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father.

For the Church; that in this time of separation our communities might be inspired to be visible signs of Christ's presence. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For peace in this Easter Season; that Christ's words of peace to his disciples will calm our anxieties and fears. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those who have difficulty discerning and hearing God's invitation in their lives; that they maybe be lead to faith by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For our dispersed communities during this Easter Season; that we will discover a renewed sense of connection and communion with one another. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For our mothers on this Mother's Day; that they who gave us live may be rewarded for their love and find peace and joy in the fullness of God's eternal home. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those suffering in mind or body during this Easter Season, particularly those affected in any way by the coronavirus; that the Resurrected Christ, who bore the wounds of all humanity, may touch their lives with renewed courage and hope. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

For those who have died, especially those who have died alone this Easter Season; that they may come to know the joy of the Easter feast. **RISEN LORD, HEAR US.**

Almighty and all-merciful God,
lover of the human race, healer of all our wounds,
in whom there is no shadow of death,
save us in this time of crisis;
grant wisdom and courage to our leaders;
watch over all medical people
as they tend the sick and work for a cure;
stir in us a sense of solidarity beyond all isolation;
if our doors are closed, let our hearts be open.
By the power of your love destroy the virus of fear,
that hope may never die
and the light of Easter, the triumph of life,
may shine upon us and the whole world.
Through Jesus Christ, the Lord risen from the dead,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

***Holy Mary, health of the sick, pray for us.
St Joseph, guardian of us all, pray for us.***

Placing our faith in the power of the cross and trusting that we are united to all Christians, in all times and in all places, on this sacred day we dare to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Let us pray.

Look with kindness upon your people, O Lord,
and hold us close to you.
Lift our hearts in hope that we all may share
in the future glory of the new heavens and the new earth.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing Prayer for Mother's Day

God of love,
listen to this prayer.

God of Holy People
of Sarah, Ruth and Rebekah;
God of holy Elizabeth,
mother of John,
of Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus,
bend down Your ear to this request
and bless our mothers on this day.

Bless them with the strength
of Your Spirit, they who have taught their children
how to stand and how to walk.

Bless them with the melody of Your love,
they who have shared how to speak, how to sing and how to pray to
You.

Bless them with a place at Your eternal dinner table,
they who have fed and nurtured the life that was formed within
them while still helpless but embraced in their love.

Bless them today,
now, in this lifetime,
with good things, with health.

Bless them with joy, love, laughter
and pride in their children
and surround them with many good friends.
May they who carried life in their womb be carried one day
to Your divine embrace:
there, for all eternity,
to rejoice with their family and friends.
May those women who have never borne children,
share their maternal gifts and know the joy of nurturing love.

This blessing and all graces, we pray,
descend upon the mothers of our families:
*Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Lord God,
Strength of the weary, medicine of the weak,
Be near to us as we call on you.
May you be our nourishment during this time
and renew us daily in your love.

May God bless us, keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.