

Prayer at Home



Sixth 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 Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;
proclaim to the ends of the earth:
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

Let us open our hearts to hear God's Word:

Lord Jesus, you died for our sins. **LORD, HAVE MERCY.**
Christ Jesus, in the spirit you were raised to life. **CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.**
Lord Jesus, you do not leave us orphans. **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

Faithful God,
Who love us in Christ Jesus,
Send your spirit of truth to dwell within us,
That we may reject what is false,
Live by the commands of Christ,
And be true to the love you have shown us.

Through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who lives and reigns with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

Amen.

First Reading

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 65:1-7, 16, 20

R. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Cry out with joy to God all the earth,

O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds! **R.**

'Before you all the earth shall bow;
shall sing to you, sing to your name!'

Come and see the works of God,
tremendous his deeds among men. **R.**

He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the river dry-shod.
Let our joy then be in him;
he rules for ever by his might. **R.**

Come and hear, all who fear God.
I will tell what he did for my soul:
Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer
nor withhold his love from me. **R.**

Second Reading

1 Peter 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

John 14:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord said: I will not leave you orphans.

I will come back to you, and your hearts will rejoice.

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 14:15-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth
whom the world can never receive
since it neither sees nor knows him;
but you know him,
because he is with you, he is in you.
I will not leave your orphans;
I will come back to you.
In a short time the world will no longer see me;
but you will see me,
because I live and you will live.
On that day
you will understand that I am in my Father
and you in me and I in you.
Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them
will be one who loves me;
and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,
and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

The second reading begins with: "Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have." Given everything that has happened over the last few months, has this Easter season left us with more hopeful hearts? It is difficult to be hopeful when there is so much grief around. Hope is not the same as optimism; Easter isn't some vague aspiration that everything will be ok in the end. On the contrary, Easter says that we must face every human reality – good and bad – with a faith that holds that God is present, in the midst of every uncertainty, not leaving us to our own devices, and that God is bringing something new out of every disaster. Optimism says, "Don't worry. Everything is ok." Hope says, "There are things that I am afraid of. There are things that I worry about. And they may happen to me, but, in reality, they are not the disaster that they appear to be. God is with me and I know that God will act in some unexpected way." Easter is the triumph of hope, so let us take that into the rest of the year, whatever the rest of the year might hold.

The gospel begins with: "Jesus said to his disciples, 'If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever...'" Jesus' commandments are his pattern for living, so that we, in turn, might live *with* and *for* others. Following this pattern is the best way to find contentment and fulfilment. But Jesus doesn't leave us to do it all by ourselves. This "Advocate" is sometimes given another name, "the paraclete". It means "someone that we call to our side." So this is

the continuing gift of the Easter season: we have an advocate, someone who is at our side – someone who is *on our side* - to be the source and companion of our hope and our acts of love and concern for others.

The season of Easter has almost come and gone for another year, albeit an Easter Season with a difference. But Easter continues every time we gather for prayer, every time we listen to the Word of God, every time we choose to hope, every time we move beyond ourselves and towards the needs and wounds of others. May we be challenged by the first words of these readings today: "Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them." Our calling is to proclaim Christ, crucified and risen. May we also find comfort in the final words of the gospel today: "Those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love them and show myself to them." May we be shown Christ in the face of those who are in need; and may those who are in need recognise in us, the loving, hopeful Easter face of Jesus' disciples.

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: The Liturgy of the Word reminds us that Jesus sends us an Advocate to plead our cause. Confident in this presence we place our prayers before God and one another.

For the Church; that in this time of separation, our communities might be inspired to be visible signs of Christ's presence and proclaim his Gospel.

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 lost their employment or are struggling with financial need; that they may sense that God is with them through the support of those around them. **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 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.

Almighty ever-living God,
who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ,
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal gift
and pour into our hearts the strength of your saving love.
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.