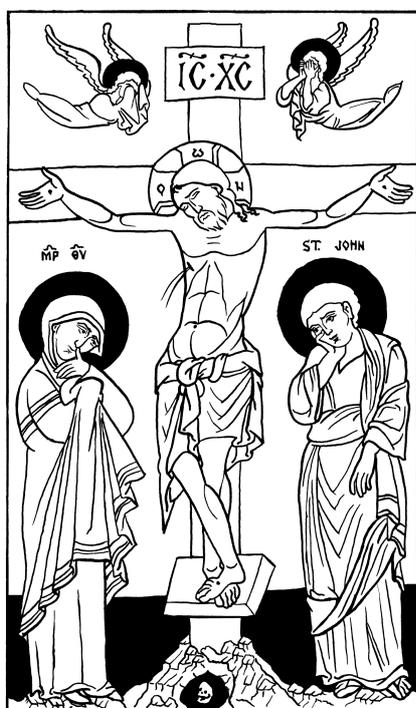


Praying at Home

*A resource for those praying at home
as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic*



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Introduction

I am acutely aware of the pain and anxiety which many are experiencing during this testing time for our nation and for our world. The necessary suspension of public worship at this the high point of the Church's year has led to a heightened sense of loss for so many of us.

We should always remember, though, the Church's treasures remain available to us – at a distance but still as potent and meaningful as ever. The ancient pattern of the prayer of the Church involving the daily recitation of the Eucharist and the Office (which, according to current practice, often means Morning and Evening Prayer) can and will continue. We should participate in that in whatever way we can, while remaining mindful always of the restrictions which are in place.

Those of us with access to the texts of the Eucharist and the Office – in either hard copy or on-line – can follow from home the scriptural readings and prayers for the day and can repeat the familiar words of the liturgy which in themselves will provide great comfort. For the more digitally enabled, there will be opportunities to follow live streamed Eucharists from around the country and beyond.

Whatever the resources available to us, we can most certainly make a daily Spiritual Communion which is a worthy and fulfilling act at this troubled time. This has been the Church's ancient practice at times when receiving Holy Communion has not been possible.

When we pray from home, we are uniting our prayers with those of our brothers and sisters from around the world who face similar challenges. Indeed, going beyond that, it is an opportunity to deepen our prayer lives and draw closer to God, especially as we approach Holy Week and Easter. The rich symbolism and stark messages of this period of the Church's year provide ample scope for us all to reflect on our lives, and on the lives of those we love, and to give thanks to God.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have called on us to be rooted in prayer at this time and that is exactly what we should do.

So, with all that in mind, I offer you this booklet as a resource which you might find useful at this time. It does not seek to replace anything else you might have; it is simply offered with love as something which you might wish to make use of as part of your daily prayer life, including a Spiritual Communion.

It may be that you want to set aside time for prayer at certain times of the day. Perhaps you could ask what time your parish priest is saying the Eucharist and/or the Office in private and unite yourself in prayer with him and your fellow parishioners at that time each day.

I assure of my prayers during this testing time.

+ TONY WAKEFIELD

The Rt Revd Tony Robinson
Bishop of Wakefield
Chairman of the Council of Bishops
The Society of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda

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Morning prayers

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

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
For the living God. (*Psalm 42*)

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen (*Common Worship*)

You might like, at this point to read a section of one of the Gospels and spend some time thinking about what God is saying to you through this passage.

Intercessions:

A time of prayer where you can pray for all those who are affected by the current situation. Pray for the world; for the Church; for our country and Government; for our doctors, nurses and emergency services; for your family, loved ones and friends; for those who are lonely or anxious; for the sick and dying; for the departed; and do not forget to pray for yourself and your own needs and concerns.

Finish your intercessions by saying the Lord's prayer.

Eternal God and Father,
by your power we are created
and by your love we are redeemed:
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to you
in love and service of one another;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Midday prayers

It is the tradition of the Church to pray the 'Angelus' at midday. This is a chance for us to pause, reflect on Our Lady saying 'yes' to God and the wonder of the incarnation and the birth of Jesus. During Eastertide, this changes to the 'Regina Caeli' as we rejoice with Mary at the Resurrection.

The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary, full of grace etc.....

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done unto me according to Your Word.
Hail Mary, etc...

And the Word was made flesh,
And dwelt among us.
Hail Mary, etc...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord, Your Grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the incarnation of Christ, your Son by the message of an angel,
so by His passion and cross we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.
Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Regina Caeli (during Eastertide)

Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia.
He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia.
Pour for us to him thy prayer, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
For the Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

O God, by the Resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, you have brought joy to the whole world: grant that, by the help of his mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life; through Christ the Lord. Amen

Evening prayers

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

Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,
and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (*Psalm 141*)

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your mercy come down upon us
to cleanse our hearts
and set us free to sing your praise. Amen (*Common Worship*)

You might like, at this point to read a section of one of the Gospels and spend some time thinking about what God is saying to you through this passage.

Intercessions:

A time of prayer where you can pray for all those who are affected by the current situation. Pray for the world; for the Church; for our country and Government; for our doctors, nurses and emergency services; for your family, loved ones and friends; for those who are lonely or anxious; for the sick and dying; for the departed; and do not forget to pray for yourself and your own needs and concerns.

Finish your intercessions by saying the Lord's prayer.

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Common Worship*)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Night prayers

The tradition of the Church has been to reflect on the day that has passed before we go to sleep. A chance to think about the good things that have happened to us and to give thanks to God for those; but also a time to think over the times when we have failed God and fallen short and to ask God for his forgiveness and strength to start again tomorrow.

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

Look back over the past day:
Who have I wronged or hurt in any way?
What have I thought that is wrong?
What have I said that is wrong?
What have I done wrong?
What have I failed to do?
What do I want to give thanks to God for?

Holy God
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us:
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord bless us and watch over us;
the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us;
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.
Amen.

An act of Spiritual Communion

At this time, when our churches are closed for public worship, we will not be able to receive Holy Communion physically, which will be a painful thing for many of us. The tradition of the Church has been for people to make a Spiritual Communion when they are prevented from receiving Holy Communion. St Thomas Aquinas says in this we should have “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him”. You can pray this prayer as often as you like, but most specifically at the time when you would normally be present at Mass.

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament.
I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.
As though you have already come,
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.
(*Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament*)

Or

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the bread of life and the one true vine.
I believe that you are truly present
in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
I seek you. I worship and adore you.
Since I cannot receive you
in the eucharistic bread and wine,
I pray that you will come into my heart and soul, that I may be united to you,
by your all-powerful and ever-present Holy Spirit. Let me receive you, and be nourished
by you. Become for me the manna in my wilderness, the bread of angels
for my very human journey through time,
a foretaste of the heavenly banquet,
and solace in the hour of my death.
I pray all this, trusting that you yourself are
our Life, our Peace, and our everlasting Joy. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Walsingham

Walsingham has a special place in many of our hearts, and like all of our churches, the Shrine Church is closed for public worship. But its pattern of prayer continues, and the Shrine clergy are praying for us and asking Our Lady of Walsingham to pray with us and for us. This is the particular focus of Shrine Prayers, which happens at 6pm each evening and continues to happen. There, at the window of the Holy House, the Rosary is prayed and intercessions from around the world are placed at Our Lady's feet. Please do pray for the Shrine, that God will uphold it and its ministry of prayer at this testing time.

O Mary, recall the solemn moment when Jesus,
your divine son, dying on the cross,
confided us to your maternal care.
You are our mother, we desire ever
to remain your devout children.
Let us therefore feel the effects of your
powerful intercession with Jesus Christ.
Make your name again glorious in the shrine
once renowned throughout England by your visits,
favours, and many miracles.
Pray, O holy Mother of God, for the
conversion of England,
restoration of the sick, consolation for the afflicted,
repentance of sinners, peace to the departed.
O blessed Mary, Mother of God,
Our Lady of Walsingham, intercede for us.
Amen.

O Lord God, word incarnate,
Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on us.

The following prayer is the Church's oldest prayer to Our Lady written after the Council of Ephesus in 431AD.

Mother of God, we fly to you, our shade and shelter on our pilgrim's way.
Look kindly on our prayers, and turn not from us in our time of need.
But free us from the dangers that beset us radiant and holy Virgin.
Amen.

Prayers for those affected by the Coronavirus pandemic

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

(The Church of England)

God of healing and hope,
in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear.
Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are
vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger.

Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit
bring out the best not the worst in us.

Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other,
and of the strength that comes from being one body in you.

Through Christ our wounded healer.

Amen.

(The Rev'd Dr Sam Wells Vicar of St Martin's in the Field)

A prayer for those in authority

Loving God, in Christ Jesus, the servant of all,
you call us to the service of others.

Grant to those who govern the community
the skill to recognise its urgent needs
and the strength to pursue the common good.

Endow us all with patience and courage,
that we may care for the suffering,
feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and sustain the needy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(The Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops in England and Wales)

Other prayers for use

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

(from St Patrick's Breastplate)

Be present, Spirit of the living God,
and renew us in our pain and grief, so that we,
who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may rest upon your eternal changelessness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.

Then, Lord, in thy mercy,
grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest,
and peace at the last. Amen.

(St John Henry Newman)

God of all care and compassion
you take us through deep waters
but never abandon us in the storm;
we walk in the dark
but you never leave us without light.
Be with us in the night of our anxiety
and in the day of our over-confidence
so that we may keep faith with each other
as you have kept faith with us
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Stephen Oliver)

Almighty God, Father of mercies,
in his earthly life your Son Jesus Christ went about doing good,
healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people:
Comfort, heal and sanctify those who suffer in body, mind or spirit:
Grant to all doctors and nurses, and to all who tend the sick,
skill, sympathy and patience;
bless all who labour to prevent suffering,
make them instruments of your healing love,
and continue through them your loving purposes among us,
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for all the
benefits you have won for us, for all the pains
and insults you have borne for us. Most
merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we
know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

(St Richard of Chichester)

Be mindful, Lord of your people, for whose sake our Lord Jesus
Christ, when betrayed, did not hesitate to yield himself into the hands
of his enemies and undergo the suffering of the Cross:
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God,
world without end. Amen.

O God of unchangeable power and light eternal,
look kindly upon the wonderful mystery of your Church,
and by the tranquil operation of your perpetual providence,
carry forward the work of human salvation:
and let the whole world feel and see,
the things which were being cast down are being raised up,
and the things which had grown old are being made new,
and all things are returning to perfection,
through him in whom they have their source,
even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(An ancient prayer for Easter)