

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

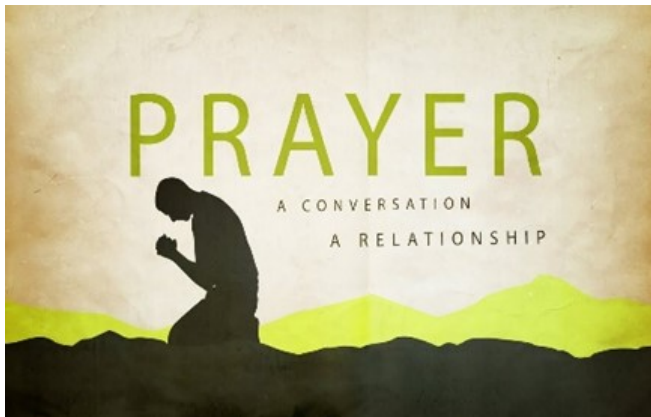
Lord, my heart has prompted me to seek your face, I seek it, Lord;
do not hide from me. *Entrance Antiphon*

'Father ... I have given them the teachings you gave me.' *Gospel*

This is the prayer of Jesus: that his believers may become one as he
is one with the Father. *Communion Antiphon*

Eternal Father,
reaching from end to end of the universe,
and ordering all things with your mighty arm:
for you, time is the unfolding of truth that already is,
the unveiling of beauty that is yet to be.
Your Son has saved us in history by rising from the dead,
so that transcending time he might free us from death.
May his presence among us lead to the vision of unlimited truth
and unfold the beauty of your love.
Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to explore further:
Acts 1: 12–14; Psalm 26 (27); 1 Peter 4: 13–16; John 17: 1–11



'Father, eternal
life is this:
to know you the
only true God,
and Jesus Christ,
whom you
have sent.'
Gospel

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Seventh Sunday of Easter
Year A
24th May 2020

All these joined in continuous prayer ...

In this time of worldwide fear and uncertainty, we are called to a deepening faith in our Lord, our stronghold and hope. As Christians, we also try to be a beacon of light for our fellow human beings.

The **First Reading** picks up the early Christian story immediately after Jesus's ascension: Mary the mother of Jesus, his disciples and extended family gather in the upper room to await in prayer the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The **Gospel** also takes us back to a special place, the room where the Last Supper took place. Here Jesus prays, making known to his disciples – and to us – the name and teachings of the Father. Eternal life is to know the Father and Christ and their intimate relationship together.

The **Psalms** exudes trust and confidence in the God of the living; it inspires us to seek the Lord's face and get to know him.

In the **Second Reading**, Peter gives his community encouragement as they endure challenges and hard times. He assures them of a special blessing if they live the values of Christ.

As the Easter Season draws to a close, we might pray together: 'Lord, we believe you are indeed our light, help and stronghold in these dark times. May your Holy Spirit comfort us all; and may our relationship of loving trust with you deepen.'

Opening Prayer

Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord,
so that we, who believe that the Saviour of the human race
is with you in your glory,
may experience, as he promised, until the end of the world,
his abiding presence among us.

First Reading Acts of the Apostles 1: 12–14

After Jesus was taken up into heaven, the apostles went back from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, to Jerusalem, a short distance away, no more than a sabbath walk; and when they reached the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James. All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

As I prepare to pray, I may feel a desire to answer God's call to me, to walk with him into stillness, into silence. I deliberately allow myself to rest, and wait. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me be fully present.

Once I am ready, I read this short passage reflectively. As I try to listen intently with my whole heart, I may be drawn naturally to reflect more deeply on a particular phrase or scene.

I do not rush ... for God is in no rush!

I may use the God-given gift of my imagination to take me into an encounter within the scene depicted in the text. Where am I drawn?

Perhaps it is to the Mount of Olives, seeing Jesus being taken into heaven?

How does this experience speak to me in these life-changing times?

Do I feel that Jesus is leaving me alone here on earth, or am I perhaps drawn into a deeper encounter with him?

Or it may be that I want to join Mary and the disciples in expectant, attentive, hope-filled prayer in the upper room – whether as one of the disciples or as myself.

What do I notice about Mary, grace-filled mother of Jesus, as she prays?

What do I experience as I join in their continuous prayer, waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit, bringer of divine light?

In words and silence, I have a conversation with the Lord.

When I am ready, I slowly end my prayer.

Gospel John 17: 1–11

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; and, through the power over all mankind that you have given him, let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him.

And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do. Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with the glory I had with you before ever the world was. I have made your name known to the men you took from the world to give me. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now at last they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you; for I have given them the teaching you gave to me, and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you, and have believed that it was you who sent me.

I pray for them; I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they belong to you: all I have is yours and all you have is mine and in them I am glorified. I am not in the world any longer, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.'

I prepare for my prayer time slowly, becoming aware of my body, mind, heart; bringing whatever arises to the Lord. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me pray with a listening, humble heart.

When ready, I savour and linger over these profound words of Jesus, relishing their divine wisdom, letting them resonate within my being. I may not want to read the whole passage at once; I can return to it later.

Perhaps I find myself conversing with God; being drawn into a deeper relationship with the Father and the Son as revealed to me through Scripture.

Perhaps I become aware that God desires to share his life and the wonder of his glory with me now, especially in these difficult days.

Once again, I speak with the Lord, either in words from my heart, or silently, allowing spontaneous feelings to arise from within.

When I am ready, I mark the end of my time with the Lord with a gesture (such as the sign of the cross) or my own prayer. Maybe I note what has been significant during this time, and can later share this with a friend.