DAILY PRAYER 2020

Sunday Year A • Weekday Year II

A book of prayer for each day of the liturgical year.

J. Philip Horrigan
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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-61671-461-1
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Rejoice always. 
Pray without ceasing. 
In all circumstances give thanks, 
for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Welcome to Daily Prayer 2020, Sunday Year A and Weekday Year II! This edition of the well-loved prayer book provides a familiar order of prayer for each day of the liturgical year, from the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2019, through December 31, 2020. Readings from the daily Mass are provided, and the prayer texts and reflections are connected to the liturgical time, solemnities, feasts of the Lord, and the memorials of the saints. The prayers on these pages will inspire and bring you to a deeper appreciation for the Word that is proclaimed and for Eucharist that is shared in the liturgical life of the Church.

The Order of Prayer
Daily Prayer 2020 follows a simple order of prayer: it begins with an opening verse with the Sign of the Cross, followed by a psalm, a reading from the daily Mass, a brief reflection, the Prayer of the Faithful, the Lord’s Prayer, a closing prayer, and a closing verse with the Sign of the Cross. This order remains consistent for each day of the liturgical year, allowing its repetition to become part of your daily rhythm and routine.

Daily Prayer 2020 is organized by liturgical time, and the Psalter is located in the back of the book (pages 398–425). Everything you need is conveniently contained in this resource. Refer to the table of contents for easy reference.

DAILY HEADING
Daily Prayer 2020 is easy to use. A heading is provided for each day of prayer so you will always know where you are and what you should pray. The heading includes the date and the name of the liturgical observance. Typically, optional memorials are not celebrated in this edition of Daily Prayer 2020; however, if celebrated, the optional memorial will be noted in the heading. The liturgical observances are those according to the norms prescribed by the Secretariat of Divine Worship.

OPENING AND CLOSING VERSCILE WITH SIGN OF THE CROSS
The order of prayer begins each day with the Sign of the Cross and a verse, or opening verse. The verses are taken from the refrains proper to the Responsorial Psalms from the Mass; antiphons from The Liturgy of the Hours and The Roman Missal; verses from the Acclamation before the Gospel (Lectionary for Mass); and lines from Scripture, especially the psalms.

PSALMODY
The psalms are an important part of Catholic prayer. As poetic readings from Sacred Scripture, the psalms reflect upon God’s saving work in various ways—praise, thanksgiving, and lamentation. The psalms in Daily Prayer 2020 have been selected for their liturgical significance. Psalms for Advent implore God’s return; psalms for Christmas
Time shout for joy; psalms for Lent evoke the need for God’s mercy and forgiveness; psalms for Easter Time give praise for his glory and salvation; and psalms for Ordinary Time give thanks for all that is good. For many of the Marian solemnities and feasts, the psalm has been replaced by the Canticle of Mary. This canticle is included on page 423.

READING
Each day of prayer includes a reading from the daily Mass. This enables further reflection upon the Word of God proclaimed during the Eucharistic celebration (Mass)—the source and summit of our faith. On some days, excerpts, not the full text, from the Scripture passage have been selected. The Gospel is used for each Sunday, solemnity, and feast of the Lord.

REFLECTION
The author for this year has provided insights for meditation and reflection. These reflections guide the reader to a deeper relationship with God, neighbor, and self.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER
Universal Prayer, sometimes referred to as the Prayer of the Faithful, is a prayer of the baptized who, through Christ, voice their concerns to God regarding the Church, the world, the oppressed, local needs, and other concerns. Thus, the prayers in this book connect the individual and small faith groups to the universal Church and those in most need of God’s love and mercy. Although specific prayers are provided in this resource, others may be added.

THE LORD’S PRAYER
Jesus taught us how to pray. It is fitting to follow the Universal Prayer with the Lord’s Prayer, for it encapsulates the humility and reverence we give to our God—and neighbor—while asking for his mercy and forgiveness.

CLOSING PRAYER
The closing prayer follows the form of the traditional Collect. This prayer “is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 54). Essentially, this prayer “collects” our daily prayer, the prayers found in this book, and those of our hearts and minds, those as individuals or groups, into one Trinitarian prayer, concluding with our assent of faith in the response “Amen.”

Using the Book
This resource may be used by individuals, families, or prayer groups; on retreats; to begin meetings or catechetical sessions, formational and youth ministry events; or as prayer with the aged, sick, and homebound. The prayers may be used at any time during the day, and given this book’s convenient size, it is easily transported to meet various prayer needs and situations.

The order of prayer may be prayed silently or, especially for group prayer, prayed aloud. If used for prayer gatherings, it might be helpful to designate someone to open the prayer, lead the Prayer of the Faithful, begin the Lord’s Prayer, and to conclude the prayer. Select an additional volunteer to proclaim the reading. Allow the faithful to read the psalm together either as an entire group, or divide the stanzas among the faithful with alternating recitation.
Feel free to adapt these prayers for specific needs—intercessions (or petitions) may be added, music may begin and conclude the service, and the psalm response to the Universal Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer may be chanted or sung.

Other Uses for Daily Prayer

*Daily Prayer 2020* also may be used in other situations or for various needs.
- Use the Prayer of the Faithful during the Mass. The prayers have been written in accordance with paragraphs 69 and 70 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Since this book contains prayers for each day of the liturgical year, you may use the intercessions for every day of the year for Mass.
- Use the included reflections as homily sparkers and catechetical tools.

Customer Feedback

*Daily Prayer 2020* is the seventeenth edition of an annual publication; *Daily Prayer 2021* is already being prepared. Because it is an annual, it can be changed from year to year to become a better tool for your daily prayer. As you use this book and adapt it for yourself, you may have ideas about how it can be made more useful for your prayer. Feel free to email us at DailyPrayer@LTP.org.

About the Author

Rev. J. Philip Horrigan is a presbyter of the Archdiocese of Kingston, Ontario. He has a graduate degree in theology (MTh, 1994–95) from the Institute for Spirituality and Worship at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, CA. In June 1997 he received his doctorate of ministry (DMIN, liturgical studies) at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and was appointed the director of the newly formed Department for Art and Architecture in the Office for Divine Worship, Archdiocese of Chicago, a position he held for twelve and a half years. In this capacity he acted as a liturgical consultant/resource person for all the new church building and renovation projects for the Archdiocese, and chaired the Diocesan Commission on Church Art and Architecture. He is an adjunct faculty in the Word and Worship department at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. Since 2009 he has developed his ministry as a liturgical design consultant and maintains a number of consulting projects in Canada and the United States, both with Roman Catholic and Lutheran congregations. He is a frequent presenter at conferences and workshops on various topics related to the building and renovation of worship spaces, as well as issues on the liturgical environment, the history and components of liturgical design, sacramental theology, the spiritual and ecclesial dimensions of liturgical ministries, and the pastoral implications of liturgical rituals, documents, and praxis. He has written a number of articles for liturgical publications and his particular interest is understanding and exploring the relationship between ritual space and ritual event.
Friday, May 1, 2020
Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker

† Lord, give success to the work of our hands.

Psalm 119(B) page 417

Reading Colossians 3:12–16
Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one Body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Reflection
In the verses prior to today’s reading, Paul lists a number of virtues that describe a disciple of the Lord. Then he says, “Over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.” This text is a favorite choice for wedding ceremonies. Paul reminds us that it was love that motivated and defined the ministry of Jesus. His unconditional concern for everyone, no matter their state or status in life, was remarkable. The follower of Jesus is called to that same way of living. Paul concludes by stating that only a thankful heart is a loving heart.

Prayers others may be added
Filled with your love, O Lord, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

For an end to the hatred that separates people of different cultures and creeds, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For minorities in every nation that suffer unjust laws, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For couples who are preparing for marriage, may their love be rooted in the Lord, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For families, through the intercession of St. Joseph, to remain bound together in love, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

Loving and eternal God, you have set before us holy women and men, like good St. Joseph, to care for those whom you have created. Grant us the kindness of your servant Joseph that we might live wisely under his patronage and come at last to the fullness of eternal life in the company of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Lord, give success to the work of our hands.
† O Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

Psalm 19

Reading

John 6:60–69

Many of the disciples of Jesus who were listening said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, “Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.” Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father.”

As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer walked with him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?” Simon Peter answered him, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”

Reflection

Jesus has a conversation with his disciples about the difficult teaching he has offered. His teaching has centered on his statement “I am the living bread that came down from heaven” (Jn 6:51). Jesus is attentive to their concern and when he asks if they wish to leave his company, Simon Peter answers “Lord, to whom can we go?” (Jn 6:68, NRSV). There are many of Jesus’ teachings that we might find hard to accept, teachings about forgiveness, about love of neighbor, about praying for one’s enemies. Yet Jesus understands and still invites us to be his follower. In faith we profess with Peter, Lord, “[y]ou have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68).

Prayers

Filled with your love, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those who have faltered in their faith, may they be encouraged by the witness of others, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who are disillusioned by the leadership in the Church, may they be patient and forgiving, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For parents who are anxious for the spiritual well-being of their children, may they not lose heart, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For a renewal of faith in ourselves as we confront the hard teachings of the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Merciful and loving God, you have raised up courageous defenders of the faith like St. Athanasius who boldly defended the divinity of Christ. Call forth from your Church, devout men and women who will be brave prophets to bring your word of life into the world today. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

† O Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.
† The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Psalm 23

Reading

John 10:1–6

Jesus said “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.” Although Jesus used this figure of speech, they did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

Reflection

There are several aspects associated with the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In today’s reading, Jesus portrays himself not as the shepherd but as the gate, the door to the sheepfold, the place where the sheep are housed and protected. It was customary for the shepherd to sleep in the entrance of the sheepfold to provide security for the sheep against predators or thieves. Jesus’ self-portrait assures us of his unconditional love for us. What better comfort could we have than his promise that he has come among us so that we

“might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10)?

Prayers

others may be added

With Easter joy, we pray:

• Risen Lord, hear our prayer.

That those chosen to be leaders in our country act with integrity and justice, we pray: • That the shepherds of the Church be faithful in their ministry of service, we pray: • That teachers and parents safeguard the innocence of their children, we pray: • That all those who are suffering find comfort in Jesus the Good Shepherd, we pray:

Our Father . . .

We are your flock, O God, and trusting in your unconditional providence, we seek to walk with your Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Be with us on our journey to the abundant life of your kingdom, where you live and reign with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.
† The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing that I lack.

Psalm 23

Reading [John 10:11–16] Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

Reflection
The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is continued in this reading from John. As in the reading from yesterday, Jesus portrays himself as the shepherd who protects his flock from harm. Then Jesus tells his listeners, who assume that they are his only flock, that there are many others that he cares about and that he will also shepherd. His love for them also comes from the Father, who desires that all who follow the Son be one people. We consider ourselves members of the Lord’s followers, but we must never exclude others whom God also loves.

Prayers

In your loving kindness, O God, hear us:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

For the people of God who are exploited and persecuted by unjust leaders, we pray: ♦ For those who have lost faith in the shepherds within the Church, we pray: ♦ For all who seek safety in their communities and acceptance in their home, we pray: ♦ For those who need comfort and sympathy in the midst of the hardships of life, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

O God of compassion, you gave us your Son to shepherd us and to lead us into the fullness of life with you. Give us the grace to follow his teachings and to live faithfully in communion with him who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing that I lack.
† Let us rejoice and be glad.

Psalm 24

Reading

Acts 11:19 – 23

Those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose because of Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but Jews. There were some Cypriots and Cyrenians among them, however, who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The news about them reached the ears of the Church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to go to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart.

Reflection

The martyrdom of Stephen gave rise to a new fervor among the believers. Many people, besides the Apostles, became evangelizers and the word of the Lord spread to new places and into the hearts of many converts to Christianity. People like Barnabas were filled with joy at this development and this led to even more activity in the Lord’s name. The believers saw all this as the work of the Holy Spirit. These foundational events in the early Church should fill us with joy and thanksgiving for they have brought us the heritage of our faith.

Prayers

In your loving kindness, O God, hear us:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That the Lord’s word spread to all nations and be received with great joy, we pray: ◆ That the word of the Lord always renew the life of the Church, we pray: ◆ That those who proclaim and preach the Word of the Lord inspire us to live its message, we pray: ◆ That those who are ill and those who are lonely or anxious find comfort in the word of the Lord, we pray:

Our Father . . .

Your Word, O God, has come to live among us through the incarnation of your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that your Word find a home in our hearts, shape every work of our days, and give you glory both now and forever. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Let us rejoice and be glad.
† I will praise the Lord among the nations.

Psalm 33
page 402

Reading
John 12:44–46
Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me believes not only in me but also in the one who sent me, and whoever sees me sees the one who sent me. I came into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me might not remain in darkness.”

Reflection
Throughout John’s account of the Gospel, he portrays Jesus in his relationship with the Father. In today’s reading, Jesus emphasizes that this relationship shines through all his words and his entire mission. Jesus adopts the identity given him by John the Baptist: he is the light that has come into the world to show forth the Father who will bring salvation to all people. This mission of Jesus continues into our day and into our lives. He is the light that shows us the way to the Father; he is the word that never fails to be our daily bread.

Prayers

In your loving kindness, O God, hear us:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

That people of every language may know the richness of the Word of God, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That the Christian Church always be a sign of the merciful Word of God, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That the Word of God be a source of comfort and strength for those who are ill, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That we let the Word of God rest in our hearts that we might know its wonder and its joy, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

God of the ages, you have sent down your word upon us in every generation. Open our minds to receive the power of that same word, that it might bear fruit in our lives and give you the glory you so richly deserve. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

† I will praise the Lord among the nations.
† Forever I will sing of the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 148

Reading

When Jesus had washed the disciples’ feet, he said to them: “Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, / The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me. / From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

Reflection

Today’s reading takes us back to Holy Thursday and the account of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper. Having acted as a servant in that gesture, he leaves them with a teaching on the equality of persons. The traditional separation between the servant and the master, he tells them, is not the way they are to regard each other, or anyone else for that matter. The only one who is greater than all is God; and it is God who has sent him and it is God whom he serves. When disciples serve each other they imitate the one whom God has sent.

Prayers

In your loving kindness, O God, hear us:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That those in positions of leadership serve with humility and kindness, we pray to the Lord:

◆ That those who have been called to serve in the Church do so with compassion for all, we pray to the Lord:

◆ That those who act as confessors and counsellors be hospitable toward those who seek their comfort, we pray to the Lord:

◆ That those who live alone know that the Lord does not forget them, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .

Gracious God, hear us when we call upon you and let us know your loving care over our lives.

Grant that we may serve you with faithfulness and endurance all the days of our life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† Forever I will sing of the goodness of the Lord.
† I am the way, the truth, and the life says the Lord.

Psalm 25

Reading

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Reflection

Jesus offers his disciples comfort and encouragement as he prepares for his impending death and Resurrection. It seems they still do not understand what will become of them when Jesus returns to the Father. He assures them that they will have a place in the Kingdom of the Father; indeed, he will prepare a place for them. Thomas is unsure how they will find their way, but Jesus offers the response that we have come to know as a great comfort for our own spiritual life: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Jesus never abandons us.

Prayers

In your loving kindness, O God, hear us:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For peace among nations so that no one may be abandoned or forgotten, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For open doors and open hearts in our communities of faith, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For ministers of pastoral care who bring comfort to those who are hospitalized, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For anyone who lives in fear, and for those who do not know where to turn, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Almighty and ever living God, you have always brought comfort to your people in their distress. Hear again the prayer of your faithful and grant to us the assurance of your unbounded providence as we follow your Son to our eternal home, where he lives and reigns with you, in the unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† I am the way, the truth, and the life says the Lord.
† Sing to the Lord a new song.

Psalm 33  page 402

Reading  John 14:7–14
Jesus said to his disciples: “If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” James said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will be greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.”

Reflection
The relationship between Jesus and the Father is so intimate as to be called an in-dwelling of one in the other. They are one. This is a profound mystery; yet we have some sense of it when we think of someone whom we dearly love and who loves us in return. It is as though we are one in heart and mind; we might even call ourselves soul mates, so intense is our awareness of each other. The amazing thing about Jesus’ teaching is that he dwells in us in this same way. Jesus is so “into” our being that we even do the works that he does.

Prayers  others may be added
In your loving kindness, O God, we pray:
◆ Lord, hear our prayer.
For refugees and victims of oppression in our world, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For those churches that offer sanctuary to those who fear for their livelihood, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For those waiting for surgery, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For all who have died from natural disasters, and for those who mourn them, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Good and gracious God, keep all those you have created in the embrace of your merciful love. Instill in us a spirit of hope that we might never lose heart but remain steadfast in our communion with your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Sing to the Lord a new song.
† O sing a new song to the Lord,  
for he has worked wonders.

Psalm 65  
page 406

Reading  
John 14:1–6

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Reflection

When we were young, we asked our parents or our teachers, “Where is God?” This is the question from Thomas in today’s Gospel. As adult believers, we have come to understand that the “where-ness” of God is not so much God’s private address but an “awareness” of God that is about presence. The message of Jesus to the disciples is that God dwells within the household of believers just as Jesus is in their midst. Divine presence is a household of many dwelling places, many rooms. In other words, God is big enough to live in the whole community of believers, wherever they are.

Prayers  

With Easter joy, we pray:

◆ Risen Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who volunteer for Habitat for Humanity projects, we pray: ✦ For faith communities that offer food and shelter for those without a place to live, we pray: ✦ For our neophytes who continue to explore the mysteries of their faith, we pray: ✦ For all mothers, that they be blessed for their love and their grace, we pray: ✦

Our Father . . .

God of joy,  
you enliven our Easter faith as we continue to live in communion with your Son, who calls us to eternal glory in your kingdom. Grant that as we believe in the words of the Gospel, we may imitate the works of his love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

† O sing a new song to the Lord,  
for he has worked wonders.
† Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Psalm 91  

Reading  
Acts 14:8–13
At Lystra there was a crippled man, lame from birth, who had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking, who looked intently at him, saw that he had the faith to be healed, and called out in a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet.” He jumped up and began to walk about. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they cried out in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in human form.” They called Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes,” because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, for he together with the people intended to offer sacrifice.

Reflection
As Paul and Barnabas continue to preach and gain followers for the Lord, they encounter successes and challenges. Many have come to believe because of their healing and their preaching. But some see them as being gods “in human form,” and Paul corrects them. Paul is very aware that his power to heal and to evangelize comes from God “who made heaven and earth” (Acts 14:15), and he wants the crowds to give the glory to God. Often successful leaders, even those in the Christian community, are tempted to think that good things happen solely because of themselves.

This reading reminds us that we owe the credit to the Lord.

Prayers others may be added
Filled with your goodness, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those who spread the good news of God’s salvation, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For those who are preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For catechists and teachers who hand on to others the treasures of the Scriptures, we pray to the Lord: ◆
For those who proclaim the Word of God in our Sunday assemblies, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

God and Father of the Word made flesh, you have sent men and women in all ages to spread the Good News of salvation. May your word take root in the hearts of all who hear, and bear fruit in the lives of all who follow your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

† Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.
† Sing praise to God, all you who fear God.

Psalm 103

Reading

After [the disciples] had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.” They appointed presbyters for them in each Church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished. And when they arrived, they called the Church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Reflection

Paul and Barnabas meet resistance in their mission, and Paul uses the opportunity to encourage the believers. He reminds them that they will encounter hardship in their life of faith but that they will be able to persevere. Later, Paul will remind them that the Holy Spirit will give them the strength to stand up to opposition, and that their suffering will be in imitation of the suffering of Christ. Today, followers of Christ have many opportunities to connect their suffering to that of Christ. We do not carry our cross by ourselves; the Lord accompanies us with grace and hope.

Prayers

Filled with your goodness, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations put a stop to the persecution of religious minorities in their countries, we pray: ◆ That advocates for justice in the Church speak out against unjust laws, we pray: ◆ That those who suffer not lose hope and find comfort in the kindness of others, we pray: ◆ That those who are victims of violence and war find security and shelter, we pray: ◆

Our Father . . .

Almighty and loving God, come to the aid of your people in these days. Bestow the spirit of courage on those who work for peace and justice that they may persevere in their mission and bring glory to your name. Through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Sing praise to God, all you who fear God.
Let us go rejoiceing to the house of the Lord.

Psalm 122

Reading

Acts 15:1–6

Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved.” Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and presbyters about this question. They were sent on their journey by the Church. . . . When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the Church, as well as by the Apostles and the presbyters, and they reported what God had done with them. But some from the party of the Pharisees who had become believers stood up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Mosaic law.”

The Apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter.

Reflection

Today’s reading introduces the controversy in the early Church over the question of circumcision prior to Baptism for the Gentiles. Paul and his colleagues believed that circumcision was not necessary for those who wanted to become Christians. Peter had the opposite opinion. After a discussion among the Apostles and the presbyters, it was agreed that circumcision was not necessary for conversion to Christianity. Paul argued that God can choose anyone, including the Gentiles, for God does not make distinctions between people. Would that everyone would take this teaching to heart in our own time!

Prayers

Filled with your goodness, O God, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations work to resolve the tensions between religious groups, we pray: ♦ That the Christian Church increase efforts to reach out to people of other faiths, we pray: ♦ That ecumenical efforts might be more visible in our own communities, we pray: ♦ That couples of different beliefs find ways to pray together and support each other, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

God of all creation, you are the source of unity among all peoples. Hear our cry for unity and peace that all you have created might live in harmony and give you glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Let us go rejoiceing to the house of the Lord.
† Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever.

Psalm 115 page 414

Reading Acts 1:15–17, 21, 23–26

[Peter] said, “My brothers and sisters . . . Judas was numbered among us and was allotted a share in this ministry. Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us . . . become with us a witness to his resurrection.” So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place.” Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the Eleven Apostles.

Reflection
Matthias is selected to join the company of the Apostles. After the death of Judas, the Eleven decided that his position should be filled and “the lot fell upon Matthias.” The qualification for an Apostle was that he would have accompanied Jesus in his ministry and been a witness to his Resurrection. Matthias became a martyr for his faith. His choice by the other Apostles was the result of their prayer to the Lord, thus indicating that Matthias was chosen by God. As witnesses to the Risen Lord in our own ministries we too have been chosen by God to proclaim the good news of the Resurrection.

Prayers others may be added

Filled with your goodness, O God, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who have risked persecution and even death for proclaiming their faith in God, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For young people who volunteer for programs that bring relief to poor communities, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For all those who are discerning a call to a life of ministry in the Church, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For all who have died and for those who mourn them, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .

God, in all generations you have called forth witnesses to be your presence in the world. Through the intercession of St. Matthias, may we be bold and faithful disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever.
I will give you thanks among the peoples, O Lord.

Psalm 65

Reading

John 15:12 – 16

Jesus said to his disciples: “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.”

Reflection

Jesus’ instruction to his disciples focuses on the heart of their relationship. It is a tender moment as he tells them that he truly regards them as friends. They are not servants, because he shares with them everything that he has received from the Father. We often think of the first disciples, and even ourselves, as having chosen Jesus; but he tells them and us, no, “I . . . chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.” What an awesome grace to have been chosen by the Lord to do his work. And his work is stated in three simple yet powerful words, “love one another.”

Prayers

Filled with your love, O God, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

For people of every language and creed, may they live in God’s abiding love, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For new members of the Church, may they be welcomed with loving arms, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For those in our midst who are ill, may our prayers give them comfort and hope, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For those who have died and who now rest in the eternal love of the Father, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .

Loving and eternal God, the sacrificial love of your Son, Jesus Christ, has given us the promise of eternal joy. May our proclamation of your love for all your people bring us at last into the eternal communion we so earnestly desire. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

I will give you thanks among the peoples, O Lord.
† Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Psalm 115  

Reading  

John 15:18–21  

Jesus said to his disciples: “If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you, ‘No slave is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me.”

Reflection  

Jesus offers a dire warning to the disciples: they will be hated and persecuted because of their association with him. When John uses the word world he doesn’t necessarily mean the whole world, or all the people of the world, but those who will not accept Jesus as being from God. It is sad that even in our world today people are persecuted because of their faith. Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others are subjected to violence because they profess a faith that is different than others. We cannot stop praying and working for unity and respect.

Prayers  

Filled with your love, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That there be an end to religious persecutions in every nation, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That interfaith efforts help to eradicate hatred and prejudice, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That those who work for justice and equality of persons be encouraged in their endeavors, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That those who are ridiculed for their faith find the strength to forgive, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

Eternal and merciful God, you desire that all peoples be as one, and all divisions be healed in your name. May your commandment to love one another inspire men and women to bring a new world into being and proclaim a new time of peace among all people. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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

Psalm 104

Reading

[Jesus said to his disciples]: “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

Reflection

Some of the most heart-wrenching images that appear after natural disasters or in the midst of war are those of children. They are victims of natural disasters, armed aggression, famine, and human neglect; they are orphans. When Jesus uses this image in the Gospel, it tells us that he understands the anxiety of the human family. Like a solicitous parent, he consoles his disciples, assuring them that he will not abandon them in their fear and anxiety. He promises them, and us, that he will remain among us in a new way. Together we continue to shape his mission by our lives.

Prayers

With Easter joy we pray:

◆ Risen Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations make greater efforts to protect all victims of war and natural disasters, we pray to the Lord: ◆

That relief agencies be given the necessary resources to provide shelter and safety for children who are victims of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord: ◆

That Christian communities maintain their resolve to protect the unborn, we pray to the Lord: ◆

That parents, guardians, and adoptive parents know the blessings of the Lord in their vocation, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

In your great love, O God, you have gathered the people of the world as a parent embraces a child with loving kindness. Grant to us, your children, an ever deeper fidelity to your commands that we might live with a spirit of reverence for all the brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

◆ Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.
Monday, May 18, 2020
Easter Weekday

† Your hand saves me, O Lord.

Psalm 65

Reading

John 16:5–11

Jesus said to his disciples: “Now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I told you this, grief has filled your hearts. But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation: sin, because they do not believe in me; righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; condemnation, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.”

Reflection

Each day we wake up with the blessing of an Advocate who accompanies us on our journey. In truth, sometimes we only seek counsel when we are in trouble. Christ sent us this guide to be there for all our needs. It is valuable to remember that we share with God all the parts of our life and that the Spirit is always with us.

Prayers

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<th>Others may be added</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trusting in the Spirit, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ Lord, hear our prayer.</td>
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<td>♦ May Church leaders always seek the Spirit’s counsel, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ May special interests not cloud the judgment of elected officials, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ May young people be kept free from harm, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ May those recovering from disasters find relief, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ May the sick be healed, we pray:</td>
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<td>♦ May the grieving find comfort, we pray:</td>
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Our Father . . .

O God, you give us your Spirit, that we may have life to the fullest. Through your guidance, may we always call upon your wisdom to lead us safely into the journey before us, where you live and reign with our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Your hand saves me, O Lord.
† Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to God.

Psalm 63  page 405

Reading  Acts 16:25–31
About midnight, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God as the prisoners listened, there was suddenly such a severe earthquake that the foundations of the jail shook; all the doors flew open, and the chains of all were pulled loose. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted out in a loud voice, “Do no harm to yourself; we are all here.” He asked for a light and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.”

Reflection
After being tortured, Paul and Silas are imprisoned. This marks a low point in their mission. Later, when Paul talks about his many hardships in the name of preaching Christ crucified, he knows of what he speaks. But he is not yet finished with his work. As a result of an earthquake, he and Silas are set free. In biblical accounts an earthquake is usually a sign that there is a theophany, a revelation by God. The reader is aware that divine intervention saves Paul; the work of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ is not thwarted by human obstacles.

Prayers others may be added
Filled with your Spirit, O God, we pray:

♦ Lord hear our prayer.

That those who preach the Gospel be encouraged by Paul’s ministry, we pray to the Lord. ♦ That those who are imprisoned for their beliefs one day be given justice and freedom, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That prison chaplains and prison personnel be compassionate in their work, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That advocates in every nation speak out against the death penalty, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .
Merciful and eternal God, inspire men and women in our time to speak your word of salvation without fear.
May what they sow in the hearts of people bear fruit, and bring glory to you until the end of time.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

† Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to God.
† I will praise you, Lord, among all the nations.

Psalm 118  

Reading  

Acts 17:15, 22–28  

Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said: “You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything. He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us.”

Reflection  

Paul’s sermon at the Areopagus, in ancient Athens, is a powerful example of his oratorical skills and his belief in Jesus Christ. Paul invites his listeners to accept the God of Jesus Christ as the “unknown God” named in their shrine. His words awaken a new faith in many of them and they come to believe in the Christian God, in whom “we live and move and have our being.” How often our own faith is inspired by the words of others, especially when those words carry the conviction of the speaker. We should be inspired by the conviction of Paul in our own ministry.

Prayers  

Filled with your Spirit, O God, we pray:  

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.  

That the word of God may inspire preachers in the Church, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That the word of God find a home in our own spiritual journey, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That the word of God bring comfort to those who are ill and those who are lonely, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That the word of God be proclaimed with great fervor by lectors in our churches, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .  

You sent us your Eternal Word, O God, in the person of Jesus Christ. Sustain your Church in your goodness that we might remain faithful to the words that he has given us and come to know the truth of your revelation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† I will praise you, Lord, among all the nations.
Thursday, May 21, 2020
Easter Weekday or the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

† Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds.

Psalm 98

Page 412

Reading

Mark 16:15–18

This reading is taken from the Ascension of the Lord, Year B.

Jesus appeared to the Eleven and said to them: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Reflection

Today’s reading is Mark’s account of the Ascension of Jesus into heaven. As with the other Gospel accounts, Mark includes Jesus’ commission to “go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” This is a tall order for the disciples of the time; but he assures them that they will do many of the things that he has done. This commission is a work in progress for the disciples of today, including you and me! This may seem like a daunting task for us, but Jesus puts his faith in us, and that should give us great courage for what we need to do.

Prayers

Filled with your spirit, O God, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are persecuted for preaching the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For bishops and pastors who must proclaim the saving power of the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For missionary communities of men and women, that they may not lose hope in their ministry, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For ourselves, that the word of God will be our source of hope and healing, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

In your plan of salvation, O God, you have sent your word upon creation like the rain upon the earth. In due time you sent your Son to be the Word made flesh and to send forth disciples to spread your word to the ends of the earth. Grant that we may be faithful to his mission and bring eternal glory to your name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

† Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds.
Friday, May 22, 2020
Easter Weekday

† All you peoples clap your hands; shout to God with gladness.

Psalm 148

Reading

John 16:20–23

Jesus said to his disciples: “Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy. When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you.”

Reflection

Jesus exhorts his disciples to be steadfast in their commitment as his followers. He uses the analogy of childbirth to encourage them to be patient and to not let hardship overwhelm their hope. Those who set their sights on the joy that awaits them when Jesus returns will be rewarded with great joy. This is a good teaching for us when we sometimes lose heart in our spiritual life. Jesus does not abandon us, even when we endure a sense of despair in our prayer life or our ministry. He is our faithful and constant companion.

Prayers

Filled with your spirit, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That those who labor for the welfare of people who live in refugee camps not lose heart, we pray:◆ That care givers and guardians of those who suffer from dementia be steadfast in kindness and patience, we pray:◆ That those who live with serious illness and chronic pain know that the Lord cares deeply for them, we pray:◆ That we trust the tender compassion of the Lord when we are overwhelmed with demands on our daily life, we pray:

Our Father . . .

In your infinite compassion, O God, you have taken us into your protective care and instilled in us a spirit of hope. Let us know the courage of Jesus, who, like a shepherd, walks with us through our trials and our sorrows into your loving embrace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† All you peoples clap your hands; shout to God with gladness.
All you peoples clap your hands; shout to God with gladness.

Psalm 118

Reading

A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent speaker, arrived in Ephesus. He was an authority on the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord and, with ardent spirit, spoke and taught accurately about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the Way of God more accurately. And when he wanted to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. After his arrival he gave great assistance to those who had come to believe through grace. He vigorously refuted the Jews in public, establishing from the Scriptures that the Christ is Jesus.

Reflection

We get a glimpse of the growth of the early Christian community in today’s reading. There must have been countless incidents that were not recorded describing the amazing developments of the faith among the peoples and regions of that first century. What astonishing things unfolded because of the perseverance and the convictions of so many believers like Paul, Priscilla, Aquila, and others. Surely in our own lives there have been people whose faith inspired us and showed us the way to follow the Lord. Think of them today, and thank the Lord for their love.

Prayers

Filled with your spirit, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For those Christians who must live in fear of persecution for their faith, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For Church leaders who speak out against the politics of power and violence, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For minorities in our midst who seek to be welcomed and respected for who they are, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who are subjected to insults and prejudice for their way of life, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

In your unbounded providence, O God, you sustain your people with an everlasting faithfulness. Grant that we may never abandon your life-giving commandments, but always accept the salvation won for us by your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

All you peoples clap your hands; shout to God with gladness.
† All you peoples clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness.

Psalm 47

Reading Matthew 28:16–20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Reflection

The solemnity of the Ascension can be understood as the end of the earthly ministry of Jesus and the beginning of the community of believers that we know as the Church. The description of Jesus’ return to the Father, in the first reading from Acts and in the Gospel, is set in the company of the disciples. Jesus’ instruction to the disciples today is to continue his work and his teachings to all nations. This divine mission continues to this day. We too are the messengers of that mandate. We are not alone in this work. Jesus assures us that he is with us always, “until the end of the age.”

Prayers others may be added

With Easter joy, we pray:

◆ Risen Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations put an end to religious persecutions, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who spread the Gospel in their missionary ministries be courageous, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who were baptized in this Easter season always be faithful to the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For baptismal preparation teams, that they find fulfillment in their ministry, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Almighty and eternal God, you have received the Risen Lord into your eternal glory.

Grant that we who are called to continue his mission in this world may be faithful to his commands and come one day to share in that same glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† All you peoples clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness.
† I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.

Psalm 27

Reading

Acts 19:1–7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior of the country and down to Ephesus where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They answered him, “We have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” He said, “How were you baptized?” They replied, “With the baptism of John.” Paul then said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Altogether there were about twelve men.

Reflection

Paul continues his ministry throughout the region and evangelizes among those who have been baptized by John the Baptist. Although they have heard of Jesus, they have not yet been confirmed in their faith; Paul invokes the Holy Spirit to come upon them that they might be true disciples of the Risen Lord. This action of Paul is often regarded as laying the foundation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, a later development in the life of the Church.

The gift of the Holy Spirit impels us to put our faith into action by bearing witness to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Prayers

Trusting in your love, O God, we pray:

◆ Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.

For the newly baptized, that they remain strong in their faith, we pray:

◆ For those who are beginning their journey of faith, that they find welcome in our midst, we pray:

◆ For sponsors and those who are spiritual companions, that they be filled with the Spirit, we pray:

◆ For all the baptized, that they be joyful disciples, we pray:

Our Father . . .

Eternal God, let the power of your Holy Spirit fill our hearts and minds that we might be faithful witnesses of your abiding love and worthy bearers of your tender mercy to all those who seek your presence. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.
Tuesday, May 26, 2020  
Memorial of St. Philip Neri, Priest

† I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.

Psalm 23  
page 399

Reading  
John 17:1–5
Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.”

Reflection
Chapter 17 of John’s account of the Gospel is often referred to as the priestly prayer of Jesus. His words are addressed to the Father; he prays for his disciples, the ones the Father gave him. It is one of the most beautiful passages in John’s Gospel, portraying the tender and personal feelings of Jesus for his followers. We could adopt Jesus’ thoughts for ourselves, seeing ourselves as those that the Father has placed in the company of his Son, chosen to be his followers, his friends. When Jesus says, “I pray for them,” we can imagine that he prays also for us. What a wonderful blessing.

Prayers  
others may be added

Trusting in your love, O God, we pray:

◆ Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.
That in imitation of St. Philip Neri we have a special care for those who are poor, we pray: ◆ That our faith be a sign to others of the love of the Lord, we pray: ◆ That we never fail to offer prayers of gratitude for the grace that God bestows on us, we pray: ◆ That those who suffer in body or in spirit may be consoled by our compassion, we pray: ◆

Our Father . . .

We place our trust in you, O God, and seek your eternal mercy in the purposes of our life. Grant also to us the courage to care for all your people whom you have sent into our life that we might be a sign to them of the divine friendship you have given to us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

✝ I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.
I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.

Psalm 27

Reading

John 17:11b–19

[Jesus prayed, saying:] “I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the Evil One. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them so that they also may be consecrated in truth.”

Reflection

Jesus prays for his chosen disciples as a parent would pray for his or her children. He prays that they be protected “from the Evil One” when he returns to the Father. This is Jesus’ prayer for us. We are in the world, chosen and sent to continue the work that Jesus did in obedience to the Father. We don’t often think of Jesus praying for us; we are busy praying for ourselves. But when we think of Jesus holding us in prayer, as he did his first disciples, we find a new courage to live as his disciples today.

Prayers

Trust in your love, O God, we pray:

Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.

That peace and harmony be restored to nations at war, we pray: ♦ That victims of violence be given justice and mercy, we pray: ♦ That those who suffer because of their gender or their beliefs find protection, we pray: ♦ That those who have died will enjoy the eternal peace of the Father, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

O God of tenderness and mercy, do not let us stray from your commandments. Keep us in the divine friendship that you have bestowed upon us through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord.
† Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Psalm 30  

Reading  

John 17:20–26

Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying “Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.”

Reflection

Jesus’ prayer that they all may be one speaks of a profound union between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples. This spiritual communion is so intimate and intense that it constitutes an abiding presence. It means that Jesus desires that we be so consumed by an awareness of his love for us that it is as though he truly lives within us. And that is precisely what we believe: that the Lord abides within us in the same mysterious way that he abides in the Father. Every Eucharist is a celebration of this amazing truth.

Prayers  others may be added

- Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.

For a new unity among people of different cultures and creeds, we pray to the Lord: - For union within the Christian churches, that they be faithful to the prayer of Christ, we pray to the Lord; - For reconciliation within families that have been injured by ill-will, we pray to the Lord: - For comfort and peace for those who are in palliative care, we pray to the Lord: -

Our Father . . .

In your loving providence, O God, you desire that all your people should find their way to union with Christ, your Son. Give to us a vigorous faith that we might never lose hope of one day entering the communion of the kingdom, where you live and reign, with Jesus Christ, your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.
† Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Psalm 63  

Reading  

John 21:15–17

[Jesus] said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Reflection

The question that Jesus asks Peter three times, “do you love me?” is one that haunts us in our journey of faith. It might be the most important question we need to answer as people of faith. Each time Peter’s response is affirmative, though we know that there were times when it wasn’t clear that Peter was sure of his loyalty to Jesus. We’ve known those moments in our own life. Yet, Jesus never gives up on us. He keeps asking for our love; he keeps trusting that we will say yes. Forgive us, O Lord, for the times we said no.

Prayers

Trust in your love, O God, we pray:

✦ Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders in our communities find ways to provide for those who are most vulnerable, we pray: ✦ That Christian Churches reach out to other congregations in a spirit of love and respect, we pray: ✦ That those who live alone and those who are hospitalized be lovingly cared for, we pray: ✦ That those who mourn the loss of loved ones hear a loving word to comfort them, we pray: ✦

Our Father . . .

Almighty and merciful God, grant us the grace to see in everyone your spirit of goodness. May our gestures of compassion echo your tender care and bear witness to the undying love that Christ has for us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.
Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Psalm 103

Reading

John 21:20–22

Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, “Master, who is the one who will betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said to him, “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me.”

Reflection

This reading is something of a self-portrait of John by John! John is the only one referred to as the “one Jesus loved” among the Twelve, and that phrase only occurs in John’s own Gospel. If there was any “sibling” rivalry among the Apostles it wasn’t Jesus who encouraged it. He surely loved them all equally, as he loves us with the same kindness. John makes an astonishing statement about the extent of Jesus’ ministry: the whole world could not contain the books it would take to describe it. Maybe we are the ones who write those books with our lives.

Prayers

Trust in your love, O God, we pray:

Gracious Lord, hear our prayer.

That civic leaders be attentive to those who have scarce resources for their daily lives, we pray: ♦ That pastoral leaders in the Church make sure that resources are accessible to everyone in need, we pray: ♦ That those who are recovering from surgery, or in treatment for cancer, find relief in their suffering, we pray: ♦ That parents who mourn the loss of a child in death find comfort and peace, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

God, source of true love, you are our rock in times of distress and our strength in times of weakness. Pour out your love upon us that we might spread the love of your Son, Jesus to all those we encounter, and lead them to your eternal home where you live and reign, with Jesus Christ, your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.
Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Reading  

John 20:20b–23

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Reflection

We could say that the Resurrection is about us looking at the work of God. Pentecost is God looking at us through the gift of the Spirit. Pentecost means that we cannot stand looking up to the heavens, like the disciples at the Ascension. Pentecost means that it is time to engage life and to shape the Kingdom of God; to put flesh and bones, hands and feet on the teachings of Christ. Pentecost means that each of us possesses gifts that come from the Spirit and together those gifts enrich and build up the Body of Christ in the world.

Prayers  

With faith-filled hearts we pray:

◆ Come, Holy Spirit.

To all those who need courage to be disciples of the Lord, we pray:  ◆ To all those whose lives are in the service of our parish community, we pray:  ◆ To all young people preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we pray:  ◆ To all health care workers who use their gifts to give hope to the sick, we pray:  ◆

Our Father . . .

May your gift of the Spirit, O God, continue to enflame our hearts, that we might bring your peace and justice to the whole world. Instill in people of every language and creed a commitment to live justly and a desire to be one with you and with your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.
† In you, my God, I place my trust.

Canticle of Mary

Reading

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

Reflection

In 2018 Pope Francis designated the Monday after Pentecost as the feast of Mary, Mother of the Church. This is a fitting title for Mary who was present with the disciples of the Lord on that first Pentecost. Since Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Church, it is only fitting that Mary, the woman of the new covenant, be honored as the mother of a new community of believers, the Church. Just as Jesus entrusts his mother to John, a faithful follower, so the Church is entrusted to her to imitate her humble and generous fiat.

Prayers

Trust in the goodness of God, we pray:

♦ Lord, hear our prayer.

That the Church always be a community of faithful believers, imitating the example of Mary, we pray: ♦ That those who hear God’s word follow Mary’s example to live it joyfully, we pray: ♦ That those who suffer in mind or body find comfort through the intercession of Mary, we pray: ♦ That all mothers turn to Mary for strength and inspiration, we pray:

◆ Our Father . . .

In every age, O God, your word has come to us through your messengers, and in our time that same word has come to dwell in our midst through the obedience of Mary, Mother of the Church. Grant that we may be open to the words of her Son, and in hearing his word, live it fully and faithfully. Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who, lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† In you, my God, I place my trust.
† In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

Psalm 89

Reading

Mark 12:13 – 17

Some Pharisees and Herodians were sent to Jesus to ensnare him in his speech. They came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion. You do not regard a person’s status but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or should we not pay?” Knowing their hypocrisy he said to them, “Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at.” They brought one to him and he said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They replied to him, “Caesar’s.” So Jesus said to them, “Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.” They were utterly amazed at him.

Reflection

Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees and the Herodians when they try to trap him over paying the census tax. If he had said not to pay it, he would have been in trouble with the civil authorities. If he had said to pay it, he would have angered the Jewish community who regarded Caesar as an oppressive dictator. Paying taxes then was as contentious as it is now! For Jesus it is a question of priorities. We need to live in society and keep its laws. But our true loyalty is to God who deserves the fullest measure of our love and our livelihood.

Prayers

others may be added

Trusting in the goodness of God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That government leaders distribute resources justly to all their constituents, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That the Church use her resources to alleviate the conditions of those who are poor and homeless, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That we be generous in our support of those whose resources are scarce, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who are unemployed or underemployed not lose heart, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

God of mercy, come to the aid of your people when they struggle with the hardships of life. May the generosity of your love lead more and more believers to be grateful for their blessings, and be generous in charity toward others. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.
† To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Psalm 92  page 410

Reading  Mark 12:18–27

Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and put this question to him, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us, If someone’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first married a woman and died, leaving no descendants. So the second brother married her and died, leaving no descendants and the third likewise. And the seven left no descendants. Last of all the women also died. At the resurrection when they arise whose wife will she be? For all seven had been married to her.” Jesus said to them, “Are you not misled because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled.”

Reflection

The question by the Sadducees concerning the status of married relationships after death allows Jesus to offer an important teaching about the resurrection. The question about the woman and her seven husbands, all brothers, borders on the ridiculous, but Jesus responds on a serious note. Jesus simply says that after the resurrection everything changes. Human categories and boundaries are no more. The relationships of this life are not irrelevant; surely we will meet our loved ones in heaven. But the relationships of this life will be even more amazing in the company of God, and the communion of saints.

Prayers  others may be added

Trusting in the goodness of God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For all married couples, that they continue to live in the joy of their marriage vows, we pray:◆ For those who are preparing for Marriage, that they look forward to the grace of the sacrament, we pray:◆ For those husbands and wives who are care givers for their spouse, we pray:◆ For widows and widowers who mourn the loss of a loved one, may they find comfort in the promise of the resurrection, we pray:

Our Father . . .

In your loving kindness, O God, you have bestowed on husbands and wives the grace of love and the promise of presence in their lives. May their lives be devoted to living in faithfulness and charity with each other in all the joys and hardships of life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

† To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Psalm 139

Reading

Mark 12:28–31

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Reflection

The scribes were well known for their knowledge of the law and the Jewish people had many laws that they were expected to observe. The question about which is the first “of all the commandments” is a good question. Jesus’ answer puts the many prescriptions in perspective. His answer has become known as the two great commandments, or as one with two parts. Jesus teaches that loving God leads automatically to love of neighbor; one cannot be faithful to the first without being faithful to the second. To do this, Jesus adds, is to be close to the kingdom of God.

Prayers

Trusting in your goodness, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations enact laws that are just for every citizen, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That Church leaders establish priorities that give special attention to those who do not have a voice, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That our own parish be a place of charity and hope for every member, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That minorities in our midst be respected and included as our neighbors in Christ, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

God, creator of heaven and earth, you have created us in your own image and made us to be equal in your sight. Grant that we embrace the unique differences of all peoples and always strive to live in communion with all our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Teach me your ways, O Lord.
† Praise the Lord, my soul.

Psalm 148

Reading

2 Timothy 3:14–17

Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Reflection

Paul frequently speaks about suffering in his mission and how it is his way of imitating the suffering of Christ. He exhorts his listeners to accept suffering for the same reason, and as a way to grow strong in their faith. When he reminds them of his own hardships, as he does in today’s reading, he says that suffering is a way to holiness and ultimate union with the Lord. None of us is particularly fond of suffering. But it is a fact of life and it is more bearable when we can see it as a way to be in communion with the Lord.

Prayers

Trusting in your goodness, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those who are persecuted for their faith, may they find safety and peace, we pray: ◆ For those who have fled from their homelands because of violence, may they find safe refuge with others, we pray: ◆ For those who live with chronic pain and those recovering from surgery, may they be granted healing, we pray: ◆ For all who have died, may they now rest in the eternal peace of the angels and saints, we pray: ◆

Our Father . . .

O God of unconditional mercy, you always desired only goodness for your people. Hear the cry of those who suffer and bestow on them your tender kindness, that they may know your love and find some measure of comfort as they share in the suffering of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Praise the Lord, my soul.
† I will sing of your salvation, O God.

Psalm 27

Reading  
Mark 12:41–44

[Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributions to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.”

Reflection

The meagre offering of the widow impels Jesus to admonish the Temple leaders for their exploitation of the poor and the vulnerable. The Temple was the conventional place for healing and for teaching the laws about loving God and neighbor. But there is a disconnect in the actions of the scribes, as Jesus notes in the first verses of this reading. The treasury was also the receptacle for donations that were allotted to the poor. Thus the donation of the “poor widow” has a double teaching: she devoutly follows the law to donate to the Temple, and willingly gives “all she had” for others.

Prayers  others may be added

Trust ing in your goodness, O God, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations enact policies that protect the poor from exploitation and shame, we pray: ◆ That the Church be the first to provide resources to the poor, the homeless, and the refugee, we pray: ◆ That working parents find ways to maintain a healthy family life, we pray: ◆ That those who direct agencies of social service be encouraged in their mission, we pray:

Our Father . . .

Gentle and merciful God, we entrust to your providence all who need strength and hope in times of hardship. Guide our own efforts to bring them some measure of hope in their struggle and a sense of purpose in their daily life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† I will sing of your salvation, O God.
† Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Psalm 118

Reading

John 3:16 – 18

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Reflection

The Scriptures reveal that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be understood apart from their unity. To be in a relationship with God is to enter a relationship with all that God is and all that God does. Our union with God is a union of concern for all God has created. We are initiated into that union at Baptism, and at that moment we no longer exist in isolation but are joined with the communion of saints; we become members of a body that we dare to name the Body of Christ. Every time we invoke the Trinitarian God we affirm this truth.

Prayers

On this holy feast, we pray:

◆ Faithful God, hear our prayer.

For the whole world that has received the saving power of God, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For the Church that has received the help of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For teachers and catechists who lead others to faith, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For ourselves, that today we renew our commitment to be faithful disciples, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

God our Father, you have sent your Son into the world for the salvation of all people; and through the power of the Holy Spirit, you have lifted up all nations to your glory. Grant that every believer bear this good news to the ends of the earth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
† Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 145  

Reading  

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, / for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. / Blessed are they who mourn, / for they will be comforted. / Blessed are the meek, / for they will inherit the land. / Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, / for they will be satisfied. / Blessed are the merciful, / for they will be shown mercy. / Blessed are the clean of heart, / for they will see God. / Blessed are the peacemakers, / for they will be called children of God. / Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, / for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. / Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you / and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. / Rejoice and be glad, / for your reward will be great in heaven."

Reflection  

The Beatitudes are one of the most familiar and beloved texts in the New Testament. Matthew places them near the beginning of his Gospel as a way to frame the entire teaching mission of Jesus. Whenever we ask a blessing upon someone we are really making an act of faith; we ask because we believe in God. Our request for a blessing is saying that we believe that there is room for God in every aspect of life. The blessings that Jesus pronounces in this reading are assurances that those he names will discover that God is truly in their life.

Prayers  

Filled with hope, O God, we pray:

♦ Loving Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those who are advocates for justice and peace in the world, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For pastoral care ministers who bring comfort to those who mourn, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For health care workers who accompany the sick in their time of healing, we pray to the Lord: ♦ For all those who have asked us to hold them in prayer, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

In the eternal goodness of your salvation, O God, you have sent the Lord Jesus to bless your people with a spirit of compassion and hope. May all those who seek the blessedness of your kingdom come one day to eternal glory with your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
† Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 139  

Reading  
Matthew 5:13–16
Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your heavenly Father.”

Reflection
Jesus used two domestic images to teach the disciples about their mission. Salt adds flavor to food and light dispels the darkness. Jesus is emphatic. He doesn’t say that they might be, or could be, but “You are the salt of the earth.” “You are the light of the world.” This puts a global perspective on both his teaching and the mission of the disciples. It’s true that we are salt and light in our little corner of the world; but every time we bring the light and flavor of the Gospel into the world we live up to Jesus’ trust in us.

Prayers

Filled with hope, O Lord, we pray:
◆ Loving Lord, hear our prayer.
◆ That the work of relief agencies in war-torn nations bring safety to those citizens, we pray:
◆ That the Church always be a light for those who struggle with their faith, we pray:
◆ That students who volunteer for missionary endeavors this summer find joy in their efforts, we pray:
◆ That the deceased members of our family and our community know the fullness of eternal light, we pray:

Our Father . . .
Almighty and ever living God, we give you thanks that you have called us to be disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Bestow on us the courage to always bring the light of his compassion to the very ends of the earth.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

† Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Psalm 145

Reading Matthew 5:17–19
Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

Reflection
On several occasions during his ministry, Jesus clashed with the religious leaders over the Law of Moses. They accused him of not keeping the law; he criticized them for making the law a burden on the lives of devout Jews. In this reading he makes it clear that he is not abolishing the law but intending to give a new way to understand it. The law was meant to help people to know God, not to make their devotion a hardship. This insight helps us to view the commandments as positive directions for right living; they free us to be faithful disciples.

Prayers others may be added
Filled with hope, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Loving God, hear our prayer.
For those who govern, may they enact laws that serve and protect all citizens, we pray:◆ For Church leaders who are shepherds of God’s people, may they be compassionate in their service, we pray:◆ For those who are victims of crime, may they find forgiveness in their hearts, we pray:◆ For undocumented residents of our communities, that they not lose hope, we pray:◆

Our Father . . .
God, you have made a covenant with your people, a covenant of love and fidelity. Grant us the strength to follow your commandments faithfully that we might come at last to enter the kingdom you have prepared for us.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.
† Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds.

Psalm 97  

Reading  Matthew 10:7–13
Jesus said to the Twelve: “As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. As you enter a house, wish it peace. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; if not, let your peace return to you.”

Reflection
The apostle Barnabas was a frequent companion of Paul on his missionary journeys. Barnabas, whose name means “son of consolation,” was known for his optimistic nature and it is said that he was martyred in Cyprus around AD 60. Barnabas took seriously the commission of Jesus in the Gospel to spread the good news to all he met. Jesus’ instruction has a certain urgency to it. Those who were sent to continue his ministry are to stay focused on doing good, unencumbered by material things. The same applies to us; the word of the Lord is our luggage!

Prayers  

Filled with love, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Loving God, hear our prayer.

That prosperous nations will do more to assist developing nations, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That leaders in the Church continue to imitate the apostles in its mission, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That through the intercession of St. Barnabas we be more devoted to the needs of others, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That we set aside material things and accept the riches of God’s word, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .

God of consolation, you have called men and women of every age, to bring the Good News of salvation into the world.
May the example of St. Barnabas, your holy apostle, inspire us to preach your word in all that we do so that your glory might be known to the end of time.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

† Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds.
† I long to see your face, O Lord.

Psalm 63

Reading  
Matthew 5:27–30
Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, *You shall not commit adultery.* But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have you whole body go into Gehenna.”

Reflection
Today’s reading is taken from chapter 5 of Matthew’s account of the Gospel, perhaps best known for the first few verses on the Beatitudes. In this section, Jesus wants his listeners to understand the law in a larger context. His statement that one should tear out an eye or cut off a hand if they cause sin should not be taken literally. He uses a rather dramatic example to teach how important it is to be faithful to the law. This should cause us to reflect on our own actions and choose to avoid those actions that cause hurt to others and jeopardize our own salvation.

Prayers  
*others may be added*
Filled with love, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Loving God, hear our prayer.

That civic leaders provide equal respect to every citizen, we pray to the Lord:
That bishops and pastors witness God’s mercy and love, we pray to the Lord:
That teachers and graduates find joy in the days of their summer recess, we pray to the Lord:
That all who are sick and suffering in our midst find comfort from our love for them, we pray to the Lord:

*Our Father*  
O God of mercy and love, you have always intended that we would know your commandments and live by them as faithful partners in your covenant. Grant that we might live in communion with all our brothers and sisters and with the Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† I long to see your face, O Lord.
† You are my inheritance, O Lord.

Psalm 1

Reading Matthew 5:33–37

Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow. But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the Evil One.”

Reflection

Jesus gives another example of how to understand a larger or wider notion of the law. The act of swearing is here understood as the making of an oath, which involved promising to be faithful to someone by invoking an outside source, like the heavens or the earth. All things belong to God, Jesus says, so it is God who changes things, not human beings. One isn’t even in charge of the hairs on one’s own head, today’s dyes and styles notwithstanding! The point is that God loves us so much that only God takes care of everything about our life.

Prayers others may be added

Filled with love, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Loving God, hear our prayer.

For lawgivers in our nation to attend to the needs of those who are poor, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For leaders of nations to work for justice, the protections of life, and safety for those who are most vulnerable, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For all members of our faith communities to continually grow in their love of God’s word, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For the Franciscan friars, that they continue the example of St. Anthony in their missions around the world, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Almighty and merciful God, you called Anthony of Padua to spread your word through his preaching and example of a holy life. Inspire us in our ministries, that we too might bring your word to all those who desire to know that you alone are their Lord and savior. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† You are my inheritance, O Lord.
I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

Lauda Sion  (Short Form) page 424

Reading  John 6:52–58
The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

Reflection
At every Eucharist we accept and commit to a Christlike relationship with all those who join us at the altar, and with all those we encounter in life. Our concern is different than the crowds who ask: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Our concern is how to give what we have and who we are to those who hunger and thirst for God. Our faith assures us that Jesus is the living bread for us; it is that same faith that sends us from Eucharist to be living loaves of love, bearers of justice and signs of compassion.

Prayers  others may be added
Nourished by your love, O Lord, we pray:

♦  Faithful God, hear our prayer.
That leaders of nations ensure that food be provided for those who are hungry, we pray: ♦ That those who have abundance share more generously with those who live with scarcity, we pray: ♦ That volunteers in food pantries and other agencies grow in knowledge of Christ, we pray: ♦ That extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in our parishes, witness the compassion of Christ, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .
Loving God, in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Son, we are nourished with eternal life. Grant that we may always cherish this wonderful gift of divine grace and come, one day, to enjoy the eternal banquet of your kingdom with Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.
† Hearken to my words, O Lord, attend to my sighing.

Psalm 145

Reading Matthew 5:38–42

Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, / An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. / But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.”

Reflection

Jesus’ teaching on the Law of Moses challenges the well-known saying “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” The original aim of this teaching was “to limit revenge . . . to an exact reciprocity (The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 643) so that punishment was not unjust. While the Mosaic Law rectified the wrongdoing, it didn’t change the wrongdoer or the wronged. Jesus is teaching a way of love and forgiveness. The grace in this new interpretation of the law is God’s grace to reconcile one another. With this grace, negative actions are transformed into acts of charity. “Going the extra mile” has become a modern day saying about extending charity toward others.

Prayers

In your kindness, O Lord, hear us:

◆ Gracious God, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations unite to put an end to violence in our world, we pray:◆ That the peace of Christ, through the Petrine ministry, might take root within our hostile world, we pray:◆ That the victims of violence find justice and security, we pray:◆ That we be willing to seek and to forgive when we are injured by others, we pray:

Our Father . . .

Compassionate God, we turn to you in times of distress for we are in need of your tender mercy. Bestow on us, in those times, the virtue of patience and the desire for reconciliation. Let your love embrace us that we might live in you and in Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Hearken to my words, O Lord, attend to my sighing.
† Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Psalm 51  page 404

Reading  Matthew 5:43–48
Jesus said to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, *You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.* But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Reflection
As Jesus finishes his teaching on the Law he saves the most difficult part for the end. To love one’s neighbor is one thing, but to love one’s enemies is another thing altogether. The added admonition to pray for those who are persecutors is not any easier. Jesus does not apologize for these hard sayings; he simply expects his followers to love without conditions or reservations. This kind of love makes us true children of the Father. This teaching is a lifelong process for us; it is the work of conversion and the path to holiness.

Prayers  others may be added

In your kindness, O Lord, hear us:

◆ Gracious God, hear us.
That political leaders unite their efforts to bring about peace in our world, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That Christians give bold examples of living in peace with people of other faith traditions, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That our own acts of kindness toward others be an example of the message of the Gospel, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That people of every language and culture be treated with equal respect, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

God of love and mercy, you sent Jesus Christ into the world for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of all peoples. Guide our efforts in bringing reconciliation to our communities and let our witness bring others to know and honor your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.
Wednesday, June 17, 2020
Weekday

† O Lord, it is good to give you thanks.

Psalm 65

Reading

Matthew 6:16–18

[Jesus said:] “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

Reflection

This Lenten reading (it is the Gospel text for Ash Wednesday) is a reminder to review our spiritual exercises. Jesus exhorts his listeners to reflect on the motives behind their pious acts of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. We know that these aren’t just good practices for Lent; they help us to grow in our spiritual life at any time. Jesus says that those who do these things so they can be noticed really don’t benefit from doing them. This prompts us to question: Why do we give alms, or pray, or fast? Such practices help us to keep in touch with the Lord.

Prayers

In your kindness, O Lord, we pray:

♦ Gracious God, hear us.

That we grow in the love of the Lord by our acts of charity, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That our eating habits remind us of the many who daily go without food, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That we have the courage to pray daily and deepen our faith, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That the elderly members of our faith community find strength in the witness of the baptized, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

Almighty and creator God, you provide for us on our journey of faith. Sustain us with your protection and keep us always in communion with your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† O Lord, it is good to give you thanks.
† Your works, O Lord, are justice and truth.

Psalm 19 page 398

Reading Matthew 6:7–15

Jesus said to his disciples: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This is how you are 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.

“If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”

Reflection

We have come to know the words of this reading as the Our Father. It is the quintessential Christian prayer; or in today’s terminology, it is the default prayer for all our needs and all occasions. At the heart of the prayer is a petition to the Lord for forgiveness. In this sense it is an act of faith: we truly believe in a God who loves us and forgives us. It is also a promise that we will in turn forgive those who have sinned against us. The final words of Jesus make it clear that both actions are integrally linked.

Prayers others may be added

In your kindness, O Lord, hear us:

◆ Gracious God, hear our prayer.

That civil leaders initiate forums for reconciliation between perpetrators and victims of crime, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That the Church continue to provide healing for the victims of abuse, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That families in need of healing find strength and courage in Christ, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That confessors, who bring the tender mercy of the Lord to penitents, rely on the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Merciful and eternal God, like a loving parent, you bring healing to our souls when we have sinned.

May that same compassion inform our efforts to bring reconciliation to all manner of division, that we might live in your embrace forever.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

† Your works, O Lord, are justice and truth.
† Bless the Lord, O my soul, all my being, bless his holy name.

Psalm 148

Reading

At that time Jesus exclaimed: “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”

Reflection

Jesus speaks about the intimate relationship he has with the Father. In human terms we might say that this is a relationship of the heart. It is a true communion between beings, one that is shaped by love and expressed in love. This is the relationship that Jesus desires for all who follow him. It is a special friendship that happens because, as Jesus says in another instance, you did not choose me, I chose you. These words overwhelm us; we can only respond with great love. His closing words are those of a true lover: “come to me, all you who labor, ... and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

Prayers

In your kindness, O Lord, hear us:

◆ Gracious God, hear our prayer.

That those called to be leaders in the Church love others as Jesus loved, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That parents and guardians instill in their children a joyful love of the Lord, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That couples who are celebrating wedding anniversaries give thanks for the love in their life, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That engaged couples be sincere in their commitment to love faithfully and forever, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Eternal and ever-living God, we give thanks for your boundless love in our life. May we be filled with undying gratitude for your gift of the Word of Life and for the sacraments of our salvation. Let our praise and thanks bring you glory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Bless the Lord, O my soul, all my being, bless his holy name.
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 128

Reading Matthew 6:24–27

Jesus said to his disciples: “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?”

Reflection

Although the words of Jesus appear, at first reading, to be rather lighthearted, they carry a profound message. Jesus tells his listeners that the providence of God is beyond their imagining. The tenderness of God’s love for the birds of the air and the flowers of creation is undisputed. But God’s concern for the well-being of God’s people is unbounded. Jesus exhorts his listeners not to worry about material items and comfort. Our consumerist society constantly reminds us how much stuff we need. Jesus tells us we need only one thing: the kingdom of God.

Prayers

In your kindness, O Lord, hear us:

◆ Gracious God, hear our prayer.

That nations with great surplus of resources may share more generously with those who live with scarcity, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That the Church place its resources at the service of those who struggle to provide for the well-being of their families, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That those who are anxious about their health find comfort in the love of the Lord, we pray to the Lord: ♦ That all who have died find rest in the eternal peace of God, we pray to the Lord: ♦

Our Father . . .

Loving and generous God, you have bestowed on us all that we need to know and to love you. May we always seek to love you above all things and in serving you alone in this life, come to enjoy eternal life with Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.
Lord, in your great love, answer me.

Psalm 63

Reading Matthew 10:28–33

[Jesus said to the Twelve:] “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

Reflection

It seems to be part of human nature to fear the unknown. As a child, it might have been the darkness; as an adult it may be any unfamiliar event or task that is in our future. Jesus addresses the Twelve as a parent might console a child. He encourages his followers to put their trust in his word and in his friendship for them. He assures them that the Father’s love is as tender as that for a sparrow, and as deliberate as knowing the number of hairs on their head. Strange comparisons, but we are that precious in the sight of God.

Prayers others may be added

In your love, O Lord, we trust as we pray:

◆ Faithful God, hear our prayer.
That leaders of nations enact policies that protect the most vulnerable, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That parish communities provide special care for those who live with disabilities, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who live with fear for their well-being, and for those who care for them, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That fathers in our community and in our families be blessed with joy and fulfillment in their vocation, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

O God, eternal Father, you have always given courage and strength to those who are fearful and never turned them away from your mercy. May we never forget your kindness and the unconditional love you have bestowed upon us through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Lord, in your great love, answer me.
† Lord, in your great love answer me.

Psalm 136  page 420

Reading  Matthew 7:1–5
Jesus said to his disciples: “Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove that splinter from your eye,’ while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother’s eye.”

Reflection
Jesus’ teaching in today’s reading has found its way into our popular discourse. It’s about judging others without first recognizing our own failings. The image of the splinter and the wooden beam is pretty graphic, and like many of Jesus’ sayings, it doesn’t need much explanation. When we judge another person’s behavior we place ourselves in a precarious position. None of us is perfect, and Jesus tells us to make sure our own behavior is virtuous before we presume to judge another. Even then we should refrain from judgement, and instead offer to help the person change for the better.

Prayers  others may be added

In your merciful presence, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Merciful God, hear our prayer.

For all those who are persecuted, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For children who are victims of violence on our streets, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who have been bullied in their school or in their workplace, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For survivors of sexual abuse, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .
Merciful God, you are full of love and compassion, we turn to you in our times of distress seeking your comfort and your peace. Give us the courage to change our hearts so that we can live more fully in communion with each other and with the Lord Jesus, who lives and reigns with you, in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Lord, in your great love answer me.
Tuesday, June 23, 2020
Weekday

† My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Psalm 63  page 405

Reading  Matthew 7:6,12–14
Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces.

“What do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the Law and the Prophets.

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.”

Reflection
Today’s reading is a collection of sayings from Jesus’ teaching to the disciples. It includes what is often called the Golden Rule: “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.” The truth of this directive is so encompassing that Jesus says it “is the Law and the Prophets.” The assumption of this saying is that we would only want good things for ourselves. The challenge for us is to not only want good things for others, but to actually bring about goodness for our brothers and sisters. This statement is a good spiritual mantra as we begin every day.

Prayers  others may be added

In one heart and mind, we pray:

♦ Merciful God, hear our prayer.

That peace efforts by world leaders be shaped by fairness for all parties, we pray: ♦ That the Church be a place of reconciliation for all those who feel unwanted in society, we pray: ♦ That those who suffer from long term illness find comfort in the goodness of others, we pray: ♦ That health care workers be attentive to both the body and spirit of their patients, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

Lord God, you have always desired what is good for our salvation.

May our every purpose express our gratitude for your goodness and lead us into union with Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
Wednesday, June 24, 2020
Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

† I praise you for I am wonderfully made.

Psalm 136

Reading

In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. [W]hen the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John.”

Reflection

The Nativity of John the Baptist follows the pattern of the Nativity of Jesus: there is a visit from a heavenly messenger, an unusual announcement about an impending birth, the seeming impossibility of such a birth, and the assurance that there is no need to be afraid. We know that John was to be the precursor of Jesus, who would announce a new time of salvation. The Church honors John because he is a model for every disciple. We too are heralds of the good news of Jesus Christ; our lives are intended to be a witness that Christ is our help and our salvation.

Prayers

As witness of your mercy, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Merciful God, hear our prayer.

That the Church be a steadfast witness to the presence of Christ in the world, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That all who preach the word of God do so with conviction, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who struggle with the demands of their vocation know that the Lord walks with them, we pray to the Lord: ◆ That those who are elderly find great joy in their later years, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Generous God, you have entrusted to us your message of salvation for the whole world. Grant that we may have the fervor and the conviction of John the Baptist, announcing the message of repentance with our lives. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† I praise you for I am wonderfully made.
Thursday, June 25, 2020
Weekday

† For the glory of your name, O Lord, deliver us.

Psalm 33

Reading Matthew 7:21, 24–27
Jesus said to his disciples: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

Reflection
We often make the observation that someone is “all words but no actions.” The other side of that comment is that there are those who listen to the advice of others then don’t act on what they have heard. Jesus addresses this human issue. The “words” he is talking about are his own words, his teachings that are intended to be first heard and then acted upon. The image of the house built on rock or on sand makes it clear that either blessings or disaster await those who either receive his words or ignore them.

Prayers

Before your mercy, O Lord, we pray:

♦ Merciful God, hear our prayer.

That the Church, the household of faith, be a sign of integrity to the world, we pray: ♦ That pastoral leaders perform their ministries with a firm love of the Lord, we pray: ♦ That those who suffer in any way find the grace to endure, we pray: ♦ That the youth of our community find faithful witnesses among us, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .

Almighty God, your wisdom has come to us through the ages as a word of mercy and justice. May we never tire of hearing your word, and never falter in being true to its wisdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

† For the glory of your name, O Lord, deliver us.
See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.

Psalm 138  page 420

Reading  Matthew 8:1–4
When Jesus came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And then a leper approached, did him homage, and said, “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean.” He stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, “I will do it. Be made clean.” His leprosy was cleansed immediately. Then Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.”

Reflection
Jesus’ instruction to the man who was healed of his leprosy has an underlying intention. The Temple was the conventional place of healing and the priests of the temple would assess a fee for their services. Jesus is letting them know that there is a new source of healing in the community, not centered in the Temple but in the power of God. Throughout his ministry Jesus never turned anyone away when they asked him to be healed or forgiven. His compassion gives us an amazing path to follow in our own spiritual journey.

Prayers  others may be added
Standing before you, O Lord, we pray:

♦ Merciful God, hear our prayer.
For all those who seek justice in their struggle against oppressive laws, we pray: ♦ For advocates, for refugees, and for immigrants, who seek to be heard by elected officials, we pray: ♦ For those who are undergoing treatments for cancer, may they not be discouraged, we pray: ♦ For those who volunteer at hospitals, may they be joyful witnesses for the Lord, we pray: ♦

Our Father . . .
O God of mercy and light, you have promised to be with us all our days, and to accompany us in times of light and darkness. May we be faithful to you and remain joyful in your presence, as we follow your will in all things. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.
† Lord, forget not the souls of your poor ones.

Psalm 139

Reading
Matthew 8:5–11

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully.” He said to him, “I will come and cure him.” The centurion said in reply, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come here,’ and he comes; and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven.”

Reflection

Today’s reading contains one of the sentences that has found its way into our liturgical vocabulary. We repeat the words of the centurion, with a slight variation, as we prepare for Holy Communion: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant (soul) will be healed.” Like the centurion, we make an act of faith, acknowledging that it is the Lord who can heal us. At the same time we praise the Lord who wants to enter our very being that we might be filled with goodness and grace.

Prayers
Others may be added

Before your mercy, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Merciful God, hear our prayer.

For all those who serve in the armed forces, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who lead us in the Eucharistic celebrations, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For all ministers of Communion, and for those who take Communion to the sick, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For all the children who have received Communion for the first time this year, we pray to the Lord:

Our Father . . .

Eternal God, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world for the forgiveness of sins through his death on the cross. As we receive his Body and Blood in the Eucharist, may we do so with a sincere and worthy heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Lord, forget not the souls of your poor ones.
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 89

Reading

Matthew 10:37–40

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

Reflection

At first glance, today’s reading seems a little harsh. Jesus seems to be saying that we should set aside love of parents and siblings or else we are not worthy of his love for us. The key word is more. Jesus exhorts us to place our love for him above all others, but not instead of others. In fact, when we read the Gospel carefully we discover that we come to love the Lord through others, and we love others because of the Lord. It is an integrated love affair that we have with the Lord; it is a wonderful grace that we cannot live without!

Prayers

With great love, O Lord, we pray:

◆ Faithful God, hear our prayer.

For families that struggle with providing for the basic necessities of life, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For all engaged couples who rejoice in their love as the Lord rejoices in them, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For marriage counsellors who work to bring reconciliation to couples in their relationship, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For single parent families, and for all those who have chosen to live a single life, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

Loving God, you have established a covenant of love with your people throughout the ages. Listen to our plea that we be faithful to your commands and attentive to the voice of your Son who calls us to love you above all things. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Forever I will sing of the goodness of the Lord.
† Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.

Psalm 122

Reading Matthew 16:13–19

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Reflection

On this feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, two great pillars in the early Church, we are grateful for their ministry and their commitment to the Gospel. Paul’s many letters to the fledgling Christian communities are still relevant; instructing and inspiring all who want to be faithful followers of the risen Lord. Today’s reading focuses on Peter and Jesus’ choosing him to be the leader among the Twelve. The Church has bestowed on Peter the title of the first shepherd of the universal Church. His successors have continued his mission, proclaiming Christ, the son of God, to the world.

Prayers others may be added

To God who calls us to be faithful, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For the pope and the bishops of the Church, we pray: ◆ For pastors and deacons who preach the word of God, we pray: ◆ For all those who are discerning a vocation of service in the Church, we pray: ◆ For those who have retired from active ministry, we pray:

Our Father . . .

Almighty and gracious God, you sent your Son into the world as the Good Shepherd and Savior of your people. May the example of Peter and Paul continue to inspire others to imitate the compassionate love of Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

† Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.
O Lord, your mercy is before my eyes.

Psalm 23

Reading Matthew 8:23–27
As Jesus got into a boat, his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. They came and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” He said to them, “Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?” Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. The men were amazed and said, “What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?”

Reflection
When Jesus calms both the turbulent sea and the fear of the disciples, he offers us a glimpse into our own life. Most of us have encountered “storms” of one kind or another in our life, some have made us anxious and fearful. We may have cried out, “Where is the Lord when I need him?” Jesus wonders why the disciples have so little faith; after all they have seen him heal many people, surely he would not let them perish. Neither will Jesus abandon us when we are afraid and anxious. The promise of the Lord, to be with us always, sustains us.

Prayers

To God who protects us from distress, we pray:

◆ Lord, hear our prayer.

For people who live in fear for safety in their own homeland, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who risk their life to escape from oppressive regimes, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who are anxious for the health of their loved ones, we pray to the Lord: ◆ For those who have died, may they rest in the peace of the Risen Lord, we pray to the Lord: ◆

Our Father . . .

In your abundant kindness, O God, you have called us into your friendship as a shepherd gathers the flock into safety. When we are anxious we seek your protection and your promise of everlasting love. May our gratitude bring you glory until we rest in you and in your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

O Lord, your mercy is before my eyes.
Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6
Blessed the man who follows not
   the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
   nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the LORD
   and meditates on his law day and night.

He is like a tree
   planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,
   and whose leaves never fade.
Whatever he does, prospers.

Not so the wicked, not so;
   they are like chaff, which the wind drives away.
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,
   but the way of the wicked vanishes.

Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11
The law of the LORD is perfect,
   refreshing the soul,
The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,
   giving wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,
   rejoicing the heart.
The command of the LORD is clear,
   enlightening the eye.

The fear of the LORD is pure,
   enduring forever.
The ordinances of the LORD are true,
   all of them just.
Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
    In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
    he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths
    for his name’s sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
    I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff
    that give me courage.

You spread the table before me
    In the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil;
    my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
    all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
    for years to come.
Psalm 24:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–10
The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;  the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas  and established it upon the rivers.

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?  or who may stand in his holy place?
One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,  who desires not what is vain.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,  a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks for him,  that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;  reach up, you ancient portals,  that the king of glory may come in!

Who is this king of glory?  The LORD, strong and mighty,  the LORD, mighty in battle.

Lift up, O gates, your lintels;  reach up, you ancient portals,  that the king of glory may come in!

Who is this king of glory?  The LORD of hosts; he is the king of glory.
Psalm 25:2–3, 4–5ab, 6 and 7bc
In you I trust; let me not be put to shame,
   let not my enemies exult over me.
No one who waits for you shall be put to shame;
   those shall be put to shame who heedlessly break faith.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
   teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
   for you are God my savior.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
   and your kindness are from of old.
In your kindness remember me,
   because of your goodness, O LORD.

Psalm 27:7–8a, 8b–9abc, 13–14
Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
   have pity on me, and answer me.
Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.
Hide not your face from me;
   do not in anger repel your servant.
You are my helper; cast me not off.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
   in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD with courage;
   be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.
Psalm 30:2–4, 11–13
I praise you, LORD, for you raised me up
    and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.
O LORD, my God,
    I cried out to you for help and you healed me.
LORD, you brought my soul up from Sheol;
    you let me live, from going down to the pit
Hear, O LORD, have mercy on me;
    LORD, be my helper.”
You changed my mourning into dancing;
    you took off my sackcloth
    and clothed me with gladness.
So that my glory may praise you
    and not be silent.
O LORD, my God,
    forever will I give you thanks.

Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20, 22
Upright is the word of the LORD,
    and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
    of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.
See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
    upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
    and preserve them in spite of famine.
Our soul waits for the LORD,
    who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
    who have put our hope in you.
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7–8, 8–9, 10
I have waited, waited for the LORD and he stooped toward me and heard my cry. And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.

Sacrifice or oblation you wished not, but ears open to obedience you gave me. Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not; then said I, “Behold, I come.”

“In the written scroll it is prescribed for me, to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!”

I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

Psalm 41:2–3, 4–5, 13–14
Blessed is the one who has regard for the lowly and the poor; in the day of misfortune the LORD will deliver him. The LORD will keep and preserve him; and make him blessed on earth, and not give him over to the will of his enemies.

The LORD will help him on his sickbed, he will take away all his ailment when he is ill. Once I said, “O LORD, have pity on me; heal me, though I have sinned against you.”

But because of my integrity you sustain me and let me stand before you forever. Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from all eternity. Amen. Amen.
Psalm 47:2–3, 6–7, 8–9
All you peoples, clap your hands,  
shout to God with cries of gladness.  
For the LORD, the Most High, the awesome,  
is the great king over all the earth.

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;  
the LORD, amid trumpet blasts.  
Sing praise to God, sing praise;  
sing praise to our king, sing praise.

For king of all the earth is God;  
sing hymns of praise.  
God reigns over the nations,  
God sits upon his holy throne.

Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6a, 6b–7
Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;  
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.  
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt  
and of my sin cleanse me.

For I acknowledge my offense,  
and my sin is before me always:  
“Against you only have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight”—

That you may be justified in your sentence,  
vindicated when you condemn.  
Indeed, in guilt was I born,  
and in sin my mother conceived me.
Psalm 54:3–8
O God, by your name save me.
   By your strength defend my cause.
O God, hear my prayer.
   Listen to the words of my mouth.
Strangers have risen against me;
   the ruthless seek my life;
   they do not keep God before them

God is present as my helper;
   the Lord sustains my life.
Turn back the evil upon my foes;
   in your faithfulness, destroy them
Then I will offer you generous sacrifice
   and give thanks to your name, LORD, for it is good.

Psalm 63:2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9
O God, you are my God, whom I seek;
   for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts.

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
   to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
   my lips shall glorify you.

Thus I will bless you as I live;
   lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of the banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
   and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

You are my help,
   and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
   your right hand upholds me.
Psalm 65:2–3a, 5, 6, 8–10a, 12–13
To you we owe our hymn of praise,
   O God on Zion;
To you our vows must be fulfilled,
   you who hear our prayers.

Blessed the one whom you will choose and bring
to dwell in your courts.
May we be filled with the good things of your house,
your holy temple!

You answer us with awesome deeds of justice,
   O God our savior,
The hope of all the ends of the earth
   and of those far off across the sea

You still the roaring of the seas,
   the roaring of their waves,
   the tumult of the peoples.
Distant peoples stand in awe of your marvels;
   the places of morning and evening you make resound with joy.
You visit the earth and water it,
   make it abundantly fertile.

You adorn the year with your bounty;
   your paths drip with fruitful rain.
The meadows of the wilderness also drip;
   the hills are robed with joy.
Psalm 71:1–2, 3–4a, 5–6, 15, 17
In you, O LORD, I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.  
In your justice rescue me, and deliver me;  
incline your ear to me, and save me.

Be my rock of refuge,  
a stronghold to give me safety,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.  
O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked.

For you are my hope, O LORD;  
my trust, O God, from my youth.  
On you I depend from birth;  
from my mother’s womb you are my strength.

My mouth shall declare your justice,  
day by day your salvation.  
O God, you have taught me from my youth,  
and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.

Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17
O God, with your judgment endow the king,  
and with your justice, the king’s son;  
He shall govern your people with justice  
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

Justice shall flower in his days,  
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.  
May he rule from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

He shall rescue the poor man when he cries out,  
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.  
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;  
the lives of the poor he shall save.

May his name be blessed forever;  
as long as the sun his name shall remain.  
In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;  
all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.
Psalm 85:8 and 10, 11–12, 13–14
Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and salvation, along the way of his steps.

Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16
You, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.
Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my pleading.

All the nations you have made shall come
and worship you, O Lord,
and glorify your name.
For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds;
you alone are God.

You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.
Turn toward me, and have pity on me;
give your strength to your servant.

Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27 and 29
The promises of the LORD I will sing forever;
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim
your faithfulness.
For you have said, “My kindness is established forever”;
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.
“I have made a covenant with my chosen one,  
I have sworn to David my servant:  
Forever will I confirm your posterity  
and establish your throne for all generations.”

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father,  
my God, the Rock, my savior.’  
Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,  
and my covenant with him stands firm.”

Psalm 91:1–4, 9–12, 15–16
You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shade of the Almighty,  
Say to the LORD, “My refuge and fortress,  
my God in whom I trust.”
He will rescue you from the fowler’s snare,  
from the destroying plague,  
He will shelter you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you may take refuge;  
his faithfulness is a protecting shield.

Because you have the LORD for your refuge  
and have made the Most High your stronghold,  
No evil shall befall you,  
no affliction come near your tent.  
For he commands his angels with regard to you,  
to guard you wherever you go.  
With their hands they shall support you,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

He will call upon me and I will answer;  
I will be with him in distress;  
I will deliver him and give him honor.  
With length of days I will satisfy him,  
and fill him with my saving power.
Psalm 92:2–4, 5–6, 13–14
It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praise to your name, Most High,
To proclaim your love at daybreak,
your faithfulness in the night,
With the ten-stringed harp,
with melody upon the lyre.

For you make me jubilant, Lord, by your deeds;
at the works of your hands I shout for joy.
How great are your works, Lord!
How profound your designs!

The just shall flourish like the palm tree,
shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the Lord,
they shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9
Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the Lord who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.”
Psalm 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13
Sing to the LORD a new song;
    sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Sing to the LORD; bless his name.
Announce his salvation, day after day.
    Tell his glory among the nations;
    among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.
Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;
    let the sea and what fills it resound;
    let the plains be joyful and all that is in them!
Then shall all the trees of the forest exult.
They shall exult before the LORD, for he comes;
    for he comes to rule the earth.
He shall rule the world with justice
    and the peoples with his constancy.

Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12
The LORD is king; let earth rejoice;
    let the many isles be glad.
The heavens proclaim his justice,
    and all peoples see his glory.
Light dawns for the just;
    and gladness, for the upright of heart.
Be glad in the LORD, you just,
    and give thanks to his holy name.
Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6
Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done wondrous deeds;  
His right hand has won victory for him,  
his holy arm.

The LORD has made his salvation known:  
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.  
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness  
toward the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation by our God.  
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands:  
break into song; sing praise.

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and melodious song.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 9–10, 11–12
Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
and all my being, bless his holy name.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits.

He pardons all your iniquities,  
he heals all your ills.  
He redeems your life from destruction,  
he crowns you with kindness and compassion.

He will not always chide,  
nor does he keep his wrath forever.  
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,  
nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west,  
so far has he put our transgressions from us.
Psalm 104:1–2a, 5–6, 10, 12, 24 and 35
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
   O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
You are clothed with majesty and glory,
   robed in light as with a cloak.

You fixed the earth upon its foundation,
   not to be moved forever;
With the ocean, as with a garment, you covered it;
   above the mountain the waters stood.

You send forth springs into the watercourses
   that wind among the mountains.
Beside them the birds of heaven dwell;
   from among the branches they send forth their song.

How manifold are your works, O LORD!
   In wisdom you have wrought them all—
the earth is full of your creatures;
Bless the LORD, O my soul! Alleluia.

Psalm 105:1–8
Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name;
   make known among the peoples his deeds!
Sing praise to him, play music;
   proclaim all his wondrous deeds!
Glory in his holy name;
   let hearts that seek the LORD rejoice!
Seek out the LORD and his might;
   constantly seek his face.
Recall the wondrous deeds he has done,
   his wonders and words of judgment,
You descendants of Abraham his servant,
   offspring of Jacob the chosen one!
He the LORD, is our God
   whose judgments reach through all the earth.
He remembers forever his covenant,
   the word he commanded for a thousand generations.
Psalm 111:1–4, 5–7, 8–10

Hallelujah!
I will praise the LORD with all my heart
in the assembled congregation of the upright.
Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.
Majestic and glorious is his work,
his righteousness endures forever.
He won renown for his wondrous deeds;
gracious and merciful is the LORD.

He gives food to those who fear him,
he remembers his covenant forever.
He showed his powerful deeds to his people,
giving them the inheritance of the nations.
The works of his hands are true and just,
reliable all his decrees,

Established forever and ever,
to be observed with truth and equity.
He sent release to his people,
decreed his covenant forever;
holy and fearsome is his name.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
prudent are all who practice it.
His praise endures forever.

Psalm 115:1–2, 3–4, 9–14, 15–16, 17–18

Not to us, O LORD, not to us
but to your name give glory
because of your kindness, because of your truth.
Why should the pagans say,
“Where is there God?”

Our God is in heaven;
whatever he wills, he does.
Their idols are silver and gold,
the handiwork of men.
The house of Israel trusts in the LORD, who is their help and shield.  
The house of Aaron trusts in the LORD, who is their help and shield.  
Those who fear the LORD trust in the LORD, who is their help and shield.  
The LORD remembers us and will bless us, will bless the house of Israel, will bless the house of Aaron, Will bless those who fear the LORD, small and great alike.  
May the LORD increase your number, you and your descendants.  

May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth.  
Heaven is the heaven of the LORD, but the earth he has given to the children of men.

It is not the dead who praise the LORD, nor those who go down into silence; But we bless the LORD, both now and forever.

**Psalm 116:12–13, 15–16bc, 17–18**  
How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me? The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones, I am your servant, the son of your handmaid; you have loosed my bonds.

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the LORD. My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people.
Psalm 118:1–4, 5, 19–25, 28–29

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.
Let Israel say:
his mercy endures forever.
Let the house of Aaron say,
his mercy endures forever.
Let those who fear the LORD say,
his mercy endures forever.

In danger I called on the LORD;
the LORD answered me and set me free.

Open the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and thank the LORD.
This is the LORD’s own gate,
through it the righteous enter.
I thank you for you answered me;
you have been my savior.
The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice in it and be glad.
LORD, grant salvation!
LORD, grant good fortune!

You are my God, I give you thanks;
my God, I offer you praise.
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.
Blessed are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they who observe his decrees, who seek him with all their heart.

You have commanded that your precepts be diligently kept.
Oh, that I might be firm in the ways of keeping your statutes!

Be good to your servant, that I may live and keep your words.
Open my eyes, that I may consider the wonders of your law.

Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes, that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart.

I have said, O LORD, that my part is to keep your words.
The law of your mouth is to me more precious than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Let your kindness comfort me according to your promise to your servants.
Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.

For I love your commands more than gold, however fine.
For in all your precepts I go forward; every false way I hate.

Wonderful are your decrees; therefore I observe them.
The revelation of your words sheds light, giving understanding to the simple.
Psalm 122:1–2, 3–4, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9

I rejoiced because they said to me,
   “We will go up to the house of the L ORD,”
And now we have set foot
   within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, built as a city
   with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up,
   the tribes of the L ORD.

According to the decree for Israel,
   to give thanks to the name of the L ORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
   seats for the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
   May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
   prosperity in your buildings.

Because of my relatives and friends
   I will say, “Peace be within you!”
Because of the house of the L ORD, our God,
   I will pray for your good.

Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5

Happy are you who fear the L ORD,
   who walks in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
   happy shall you be, and favored.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
   in the recesses of your home;
Your children like olive plants
   around your table.
Behold, thus is the man blessed
   who fears the L ORD.
The L ORD bless you from Zion:
   may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
   all the days of your life.

Psalm 130:1–2, 3–4, 5b and 7a, 7bc
Out of the depths I cry to you, O L ORD;
   L ORD, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
   to my voice in supplication.

If you, O L ORD, mark our iniquities,
   L ORD, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
   that you may be revered.

I trust in the L ORD;
   my soul trusts in his word.
My soul waits for the L ORD
   more than sentinels wait for the dawn.
Let Israel wait for the L ORD.

For with the L ORD is kindness,
   and with him is plenteous redemption.

Psalm 131:1, 2, 3
O L ORD, my heart is not proud,
   nor are my eyes haughty;
I busy not myself with great things,
   nor with things too sublime for me.

Nay rather, I have stilled and quieted
   my soul like a weaned child.
Like a weaned child on its mother’s lap,
   [so is my soul within me.]

O Israel, hope in the L ORD,
   both now and forever.
Psalm 136:1–3, 4–6, 7–9
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his mercy endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his mercy endures forever;
Who alone does great wonders,
for his mercy endures forever;
Who made the heavens in wisdom,
for his mercy endures forever;
Who spread out the earth upon the waters,
for his mercy endures forever.

Who made the great lights,
for his mercy endures forever,
The sun to rule in the day,
for his mercy endures forever,
The moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his mercy endures forever.

Psalm 138:1–2ab, 2cde–3, 7c–8
I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,
for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple
and give thanks to your name.

Because of your kindness and your truth;
for you have made great above all things
your name and your promise.
When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me.

Your right hand saves me.
The LORD will complete what he has done for me;
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands.
Psalm 139:1–3, 4–6

O LORD you have probed me and you know me;
you know when I sit and when I stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.
My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,
with all my ways you are familiar.

Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know the whole of it.
Behind me and before, you hem me in
and rest your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
too lofty for me to attain.

Psalm 145:1–2, 8–9, 10–11, 13b–14

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name for ever and ever.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.
The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.
Psalm 148:1–2, 3–10 11–12, 13, 14

Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD from the heavens,  
give praise in the heights.  
Praise him, all you angels;  
give praise, all you hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon;  
give praise, all shining stars.  
Praise him, highest heavens,  
you waters above the heavens.

Let them all praise the LORD’s name;  
for the LORD commanded and they were created,  
Assigned them duties forever,  
gave them tasks that will never change.

Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deep waters;  
You lightening and hail, snow and clouds,  
storm winds that fulfills his command;  
You mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;  
You animals wild and tame,  
you creatures that crawl and fly;

You kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all who govern on earth;  
Young men and women too,  
old and young alike.

Let them all praise the LORD’s name,  
for his name alone is exalted,  
majestic above earth and heaven.

The LORD has lifted high the horn of his people,  
to the glory of all the faithful,  
of Israel, the people near to their God.  
Hallelujah!
The Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46–55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.
Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32)
“Now, Master, you may let your servant go
in peace, according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people Israel.”

Lauda Sion (Short Form)
Laud, O Zion, your salvation,
Laud with hymns of exultation,
Christ, your king and shepherd true . . .

Lo! the angel’s food is given
To the pilgrim who has striven;
see the children’s bread from heaven,
which on dogs may not be spent.

Truth the ancient types fulfilling,
Isaac bound, a victim willing,
Paschal lamb, its lifeblood spilling,
manna to the fathers sent.

Very bread, good shepherd, tend us,
Jesu, of your love befriend us,
You refresh us, you defend us,
Your eternal goodness send us
In the land of life to see.

You who all things can and know,
Who on earth such food bestow,
Grant us with your saints, though lowest,
Where the heav’nly feast you show,
Fellow heirs and guests to be. Amen. Alleluia.
Veni Sancte Spiritus
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
And from your celestial home
    Shed a ray of light divine!
Come, Father of the poor!
Come, source of all our store!
    Come, within our bosoms shine.

You, of comforters the best;
You, the soul’s most welcome guest;
    Sweet refreshment here below;

In our labor, rest most sweet;
Grateful coolness in the heat;
    Solace in the midst of woe.

O most blessed Light divine,
Shine within these hearts of yours,
    And our inmost being fill!

Where you are not, we have naught,
Nothing good in deed or thought,
    Nothing free from taint of ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour your dew;
    Wash the stains of guilt away:

Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
    Guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful, who adore
And confess you, evermore
    In your sevenfold gift descend;
Give them virtue’s sure reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
    Give them joys that never end. Amen.
    Alleluia.
Daily Prayer 2020 is your resource for fostering a practice of prayer. Excellent for personal devotion or leading small groups, this book is written annually to reflect the liturgical year.

Drawing on the long tradition of Christian prayer, a simple order of prayer is provided for each day of the liturgical year, beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2019, and extending through December 31, 2020. The order of prayer is dated and includes a Scripture passage, normally from the daily Mass, a reflection, intercessions, the Lord’s Prayer, and a closing prayer. This easy-to-use format presents a way to begin or end parish meetings and formation sessions with prayer rooted in the liturgical year.

Daily Prayer will be with me this year and for many years to come. Its interpretation of the day’s reading provides a perspective that never would have occurred to me. Daily Prayer helps me to pray better, providing more meaningful words and understanding to my prayer.

—David J. Nahs, St. Jude Catholic Church
Peoria, Illinois

I have used Daily Prayer for many years. It sets a positive tone to my day. Daily Prayer is perfect for busy people who want to spend a few quiet moments with God before starting their day.

—Leslie Palmer, Sacred Heart Church
Castleton-on-Hudson, New York