
ST JOHN'S
N4

Resources for praying at home



Passiontide 2020

Contents

Page 4 - Where can I find help to pray?

Page 5 - Setting a prayer space

Page 6 - What time should I pray

Page 7 - Some simple prayers

Page 11 - From the Wisdom of St Francis

Page 11 - The Angelus

Page 13 - The Daily Office

Page 15 - Midday Prayer

Page 18 - An Act of Spiritual Communion

Page 21 - The Rosary

Page 25 - The Examen

Page 28 - Prayers before bed

Dear Friends,

The last week or so have been, by far, my strangest as a priest. Not being able to gather together during the week, and of course, on Sundays, is for all of us different, perhaps uncomfortable, or even painful. The church is far more than just our gathered worship. The sacraments, especially the Eucharist, continue, even though I miss having people with me. Holy Week and Easter approach, and I have no idea as yet how it will be marked at St John's, but it will be. Christ will rise again on Easter Day.

It may be some weeks before we are able to gather again, and even then, it will be even longer before we are all back together. I hope that the information and resources in this booklet will help you to pray at home. Some of these resources are online, but for those of you without a computer or internet access, there is plenty within these pages too.

Although we may not be praying with others in the flesh, remember that Christians all over the world are in the world are praying too, most of them alone, in their homes. That's 2 billion people praying with you...

With much love and prayers,
Mthr Alice

Where can I find help to pray?

1. In this booklet! There are lots of ideas in these pages.

2. On our website. If you have access to the internet, this booklet is online, along with some links to other ideas:

www.sjebp.com/worship-resources

3. On our YouTube channel. Here you can pray Compline online with members of the St John's Singers, as well as sermons, and a chance to continue our Lent group.

<http://tiny.cc/sjebpyoutube>

4. You can see what live streamed services and events are happening all over the Church of England on the A Church Near You website.

<http://tiny.cc/cofelive>

5. From Mthr Alice. If you're stuck about what to do, or need some help, just phone or email.

020 8809 6111

vicar@sjebp.com

Setting a Prayer Space

One of the things about going to church is that it automatically takes us into a space that we know is sacred. When we walk through the doors, we know that we are there for a particular purpose; to pray and to worship. This is a bit harder at home, where you're used to doing everything else, so you might want to think about:

- Is there a chair or corner in your home that you can dedicate as the 'prayer space'? Is it somewhere different to where you watch TV or eat your food?
- You might like to place a candle in this space (making sure it's on a safe surface), so that you can light it when you come to pray. There is a candle included in this pack of resources.
- Do you have a crucifix or icon? Can you place this in the space? There is also a card with this pack you could use.
- When you come to pray, can you try and remove distractions? Ask others in the house to give you space, turn your TV or radio off, turn your phone to silent, or leave it in another room? Try and remove as many external distractions as possible.

What time should I pray?

It's up to you! Some of the prayers in this booklet will suggest a particular time to pray the prayers. If you're joining in with something online, then that obviously sets it for you - for example, our Compline services are at 8pm, so you might want to use that as a good time for some other prayers. Before you go to bed is a good time to reflect on the day and to pray.

First thing after getting up is often a good time; it can help you to 'get it done' before you are distracted by other things. You can offer the day to God, and all that will happen in it (even if that means not much at the moment!).

You might want to pray at the times you normally would in church. Mass is still being said at 11am on Sundays, so you might pause and pray then. Or perhaps on a Thursday morning, you might stop and pray through the Stations of the Cross at 9.30am.

Ultimately, there is no perfect time. Try some different times out and see what works best for you.

Some simple prayers

The *Lord's Prayer* is probably one of the first prayers your learned. It is the prayer that Jesus taught us. Try using it daily, as part of whatever prayer routine you get into.

Have a look at the texts of the Lord's Prayer in a Bible. Compare what Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 6:7-15) and what he says in Luke's (Luke 11:1-4). How are they different? What do you think that means?

The *Jesus Prayer* is a very simple prayer from the Orthodox Tradition. It is a prayer than can be said slowly, and prayerfully.

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

One way to use this prayer is to breathe in slowly as you say the first half to yourself. Then, as you say the second half, you breathe out slowly. You can do this again and again, for as long as you like, focussing on the words, and what they mean.

Another prayer we use a lot in church is the *Hail Mary*:
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our
death. Amen.

It's a very ancient prayer, that comes from the greeting of the Angel Gabriel to Mary. It simply asks her to pray for us, in the way that we might ask our friends to do the same. The prayers of Mary, and all the saints, are one way that we stay connected to the church, both on earth, and in heaven.

The *Prayer of Preparation* is one that may be very familiar. It is a wonderful way to begin any time of worship.

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collects are the prayers that we use just before the readings at Mass. They are a prayer that does something to sum up the theme of the worship that week, and gather all of our prayers together. **The Collect** for the First Sunday of Advent is a very beautiful one:

**Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ
came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.**

Perhaps the most profound way to pray, although perhaps the hardest, is simply silence. You can try that too: focus on your breathing. Notice what you can feel under your feet. Notice and acknowledge any distracting thoughts and place them aside. Silence takes practice, but it is often a place where God can be found.

Many of you enjoy going to Walsingham on pilgrimage. You may be familiar with the *Walsingham Prayer*, which is one that is used several times during our time at the Shrine.

**O Mary, recall the solemn moment
when Jesus, your divine Son,
dying on the cross
confided us to your maternal care.
You are our Mother;
we desire ever to remain your devout children.**

**Let us therefore feel the effects
of your powerful intercession with Jesus Christ.
Make your name again glorious in this place,
once renowned throughout our land
by your visits, favours and many miracles.**

**Pray, O Holy Mother of God,
for the conversion of England,
restoration of the sick,
consolation for the afflicted,
repentance of sinners,
peace to the departed.**

**O Blessed Mary, Mother of God,
Our Lady of Walsingham,
intercede for us. Amen.**

The Wisdom of St Francis

Beryl shares with us one of her favourite quotations from St Francis for reflection:

We must all be on our guard against pride and empty boasting and beware of worldly or natural wisdom. A worldly spirit loves to talk a lot but do nothing, striving for the exterior signs of holiness that people can see, with no desire for true piety and interior holiness of spirit. It was about people like this that our Lord said, "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward" (Matthew 6:2). The spirit of God, on the other hand, inspires us to humility, patience, perfect simplicity, and true peace of heart.

The Angelus

We are used to saying the Angelus after Mass. We say this prayer then because our Mass happens to finish at 12 noon, which is one of the traditional times for this prayer to be said. The prayer originates from an 11th century monastic tradition and commemorates the Annunciation and Incarnation. It is one that you can join in with - perhaps stop to pray this prayer at 9am, 12 noon and 6pm.

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our
death.

And the Word was made flesh.

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary..

Pray for us O Holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of
Christ.

Pour forth, we beseech the O Lord, thy grace into
our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation
of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel;
so by his cross and passion, may we be brought
to the glory of his resurrection, by the same Jesus
Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

The Daily Office

The Daily Office is the rhythm of prayer throughout the day that has its origins in the monastic life. Members of religious communities would gather at several times throughout the day to pray with the Psalms and offer their lives to God. It is a tradition that continues to this day, and in many parishes, takes the form of saying Morning and Evening Prayer, which we say at St John's at 8.30am and 5.30pm. This pattern of prayer is one of the cornerstones of the worshipping life of the church, and it is a very helpful way to pray for many people. Kathryn writes about her experience here:

When I started exploring Christianity in my late 20s, I couldn't go to church on Sunday mornings. I had to work. So I read a lot: the Bible, and books from secondhand bookshops. I read a lot online, too. And eventually I stumbled on something called the Daily Office. This is the daily prayer of the Church.

You may have attended a service of Evensong, or listened to it on the radio. In the Church of England, this forms part of the regular cycle of daily prayers in the Book of Common Prayer: Morning Prayer (or Mattins), and Evening Prayer (or Evensong if it's sung). There are

also two shorter daily prayers: Prayer During the Day, and Night Prayer (also known as Compline).

So, in my late 20s, not attached to any church community at all, I started praying Morning Prayer every day before I was able to re-arrange my work to enable me to get to Mass on Sunday mornings. I did have the option of going to Evensong on some Sunday afternoons, so I started to do that when I could. And then I learned about Compline – and praying Compline in my pyjamas before going to bed became an indispensable part of my evening wind-down routine.

The prayers always include a reading from scripture, a psalm, and the Lord's Prayer. They are designed to be read with other people, but you can also pray them on your own: and if you do, you will be taking part in the prayer of the universal Church.

If you would like to join with this, you can get the Church of England 'Daily Prayer' app on your phones, or look on the Church of England [website](#). This booklet contains the order for Midday Prayer. It is a short Office that only takes about 15 minutes, and you can start it by saying the Angelus. If you live with somebody else, you can pray this together, with one of you leading, and the others saying the responses. Otherwise, you can just

pray this on your own, saying everything yourself.

Midday Prayer

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.'

Your face, Lord, will I seek.

**We praise you, O God,
we acclaim you as the Lord;
all creation worships you,
the Father everlasting.**

**To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Now read the Psalm:

Sunday: Psalm 19

Monday: Psalm 126

Tuesday: Psalm 17:1-8

Wednesday: Psalm 48

Thursday: Psalm 133

Friday: Psalm 23

Saturday: Psalm 63:1-8

At the end of the Psalm:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

After the Psalm, read the reading for the day:

Sunday: Proverbs 8:30-31

Wisdom says, 'I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.'

Monday: Matthew 11:28

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'

Tuesday: Matthew 15:30

Great crowds came to Jesus, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them.

Wednesday: Habukkuk 2:14

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Thursday: I Corinthians 12:12-13

Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the

members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Friday: Luke 6:27-28

Jesus said, 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.'

Saturday: 2 Corinthians 4:18

We look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

After the reading, we say a short response:

Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Then we have a short time of prayer. You may like to pray for:

- Your families and friends.
- Our church community, and Christians around the world.
- Our bishops, Sarah and Joanne.
- Our NHS, and for all working so hard in the medical professions at this time.
- For peace in the world.

- For those who are sick.
- For those who have died.

After the intercessions, say the collect:

**Eternal God,
the light of the minds that know you,
the joy of the hearts that love you,
and the strength of the wills that serve you:
grant us so to know you
that we may truly love you,
so to love you that we may truly serve you,
whose service is perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Then say together the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father...

Midday Prayer then concludes with:

**May Christ our redeemer bring us healing and
wholeness.**

Amen.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

For many of you, it will be very strange not coming to church on a Sunday and receiving communion. The following liturgy is something that you might like to use on a Sunday morning, perhaps at 11am when Mass will

be being said for you at St John's. You might want to light a candle, and find a quiet space to pray.

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

You might like to start by praying together the Prayer of Preparation on page 8.

After this prayer, spend a moment calling to mind those times you have turned away from God and from neighbour:

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.

The person leading the liturgy might then say:

The Almighty and merciful Lord, grant me (us) pardon and absolution of all my (our) sins. Amen.

Then read the Gospel reading for the day. You might want to listen to this being read on our [YouTube](#) channel, where you'll also find a sermon, or you can find it at <http://tiny.cc/c8o7lz>.

Then spend some time praying for the Church, and the world. You can use the themes for intercession on page 17.

Then pray the following prayer together:

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you. And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, and embrace you with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live and die in your love. Amen.

You might want to finish your time of prayer together, or alone, by saying the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father...

The Rosary

The Rosary is a set of prayers using the rosary beads to help you to pray. Whilst the most common prayer in the rosary is the Hail Mary, it is a reflection on different passages in the life of Christ that are the focus. Each day of the week has a dedicated set of ‘mysteries’.

Mondays and Saturdays: The Joyful Mysteries.

- The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)
- The Visitation (Luke 1:39-56)
- The Nativity (Luke 2:1-21)
- The Presentation (Luke 2:22-38)
- The finding of the Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

Tuesdays and Fridays: The Sorrowful Mysteries

- The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-56)
- The Scourging at the Pillar (Matt. 27:26)
- The Crowning with Thorns (Matt. 27:27-31)
- The Carrying of the Cross (Matt. 27:32)
- The Crucifixion (Matt. 27:33-56)

Thursdays: The Luminous Mysteries

- The Baptism in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13-16)
- The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- The Preaching of the coming of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15)

- The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–8)
- The Institution of the Holy Eucharist (Matthew 26).

Wednesdays and Sundays: The Glorious Mysteries

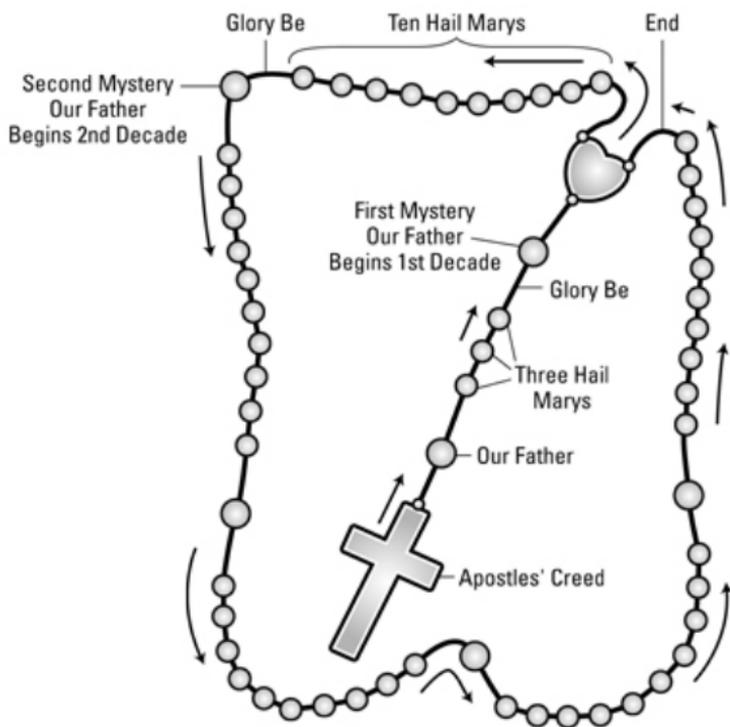
The Resurrection (John 20:1–29)

The Ascension (Luke 24:36–53)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–41)

The Assumption of Mary

The Coronation of Mary in heaven



Begin by holding the rosary by the crucifix, and say the Apostles Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Then, on the first bead, say:

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Then on each of the next three beads say:

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Then say:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Then, on the last bead on the first chain announce to yourself the first mystery. Hold that scene in your head, and pray:

Our Father...

Follow the beads round as shown on the diagram, praying on each one:

Hail Mary, full of grace...

At the end of the ten beads pray:

Glory be to the Father...

Repeat for the remaining four mysteries, making your way around the rosary beads. At the end of the fifth mystery, the rosary prayers finish with:

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

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

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation; grant we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

The Examen

Towards the end of the day, you may like to reflect on what has happened that day (even though, at the moment, it may not be very much!). Sebastian shares with us how the Examen can help us to do this.

One of my favourite forms of private prayer is the examen, a traditional part of Ignatian spirituality. The purpose of the examen is to become more aware of where God has been in your daily life, and where you have turned away from God. It is usually focused on the day that has just passed, but if you only say it occasionally you could look at the last week, or even longer. The prayer has five stages.

Firstly, start by opening yourself up to God. Ask God to be with you through the prayer that follows, to

shed light on the time that you are about to spend with God's presence, and to guide your thoughts and emotions, drawing you ever closer to Godself. You may wish to use visualisation to help with this, perhaps imagine that you are sitting with Jesus and talking to Him, or picture the Holy Spirit descending on you and filling you with holy light.

Secondly, express gratitude. Thank God for everything that God has done in your life, and look for one or two particular blessings to concentrate on. Let the awareness of all the good that God has done for you sink in.

Thirdly, review the day. This is likely to be the longest part of the prayer. Go through the day chronologically, thinking about the things that you did and said and experienced, and the people you interacted with. As you review the day, ask yourself "Where was God? Where was I open to God and letting Them work in me and through me? Where was I turning away from God's call?" And ask yourself as well, "What is God trying to tell me now, in this prayer?".

Fourthly, express repentance. During your review, it's likely that there were moments when you know that you have not been everything that God has been calling

you to be. Don't beat yourself up about these moments and wallow in the guilt, but express your sorrow, and ask God for forgiveness, and the strength to do better.

And finally, look forward to the next day, and ask for help to see God more clearly, in yourself and in those around you.

You may find it helpful to pray along with one of the following audio links:

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/player/prayer%20tools/examen-p-1>

<https://examen.libsyn.com/>

Compline

Compline is the part of the Daily Office that is said just before going to bed. You can join in with this live on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday evenings by going to our [YouTube](#) channel. If you don't have access to the internet, Mthr Alice can find a way to allow you to join in!

Prayers before Bed

Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the silent hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied
by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may rest upon your eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Traditionally, Compline ends by singing the seasonal anthem to Our Lady. Until Wednesday of Holy Week, this anthem is the *Ave Regina Caelorum*, which is another way to end your day before sleeping:

Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned.
Hail, by angels mistress owned.
Root of Jesse, Gate of Morn
Whence the world's true light was born:

Glorious Virgin, Joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in heaven they see;
Fairest thou, where all are fair,
Plead with Christ our souls to spare.

Or you can listen to it being sung at <http://tiny.cc/mip7lz>.

An updated version of this booklet will be available after Easter.