

A PRAYER SERVICE AT HOME
WHEN ATTENDANCE AT MASS IS NOT POSSIBLE

Fifth Sunday of Easter - May 2, 2021

In these times when not all feel free to gather together as a Christian Community to celebrate Mass, let us unite ourselves spiritually to the Mass as it is being celebrated in our churches.

One way you can do this by joining broadcast Masses on radio, television, or via the internet.

This resource is offered to provide a ritual by which families, "the domestic church," can keep the Lord's day holy by joining together to celebrate part of the Church's liturgy at home. Ideally, the head of the family will lead the service; other members of the family should take on roles as readers.

It would be appropriate to celebrate this service at the usual time the family would attend Mass. If possible, prepare a suitable prayer space with a crucifix, holy picture and/or a candle or two. If the family is blessed with musical talent, hymns would be appropriate.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

GREETING

Leader: We gather together to keep holy the Lord's Day. Sunday has been called the Lord's Day because it was on this day, on the first Easter, that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life. Although public Mass has been restored, the threat of the transmission of COVID-19 continues, the Archbishop is continuing the dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation, and those who are not yet comfortable with the potential risk of returning to Sunday Mass still strive through these prayers to be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering, death and resurrection

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Leader: The risen Christ goes before us into God's glory.
With joyful alleluias we celebrate giving praise and thanks.

After a pause for silent reflection, the leader continues.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are the vine we are the branches.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader Christ Jesus, you command us to bear fruit.
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader Lord Jesus, you glorify the Father.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

GLORY TO GOD

**All: Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you, we bless you
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, (Jesus),
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

COLLECT

Leader: Let us pray.

Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Acts 9:26-31

Reader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 4

Reader: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

All: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Reader: I will fulfill my vows before those who fear the Lord.
The lowly shall eat their fill;
they who seek the Lord shall praise him:
"May your hearts live forever!"

All: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Reader: All the ends of the earth
shall remember and turn to the Lord;
all the families of the nations
shall bow down before him.

All: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Reader: To him alone shall bow down
all who sleep in the earth;
before him shall bend
all who go down into the dust.

All: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Reader: And to him my soul shall live;
my descendants shall serve him.
Let the coming generation be told of the Lord
that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born
the justice he has shown.

All: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

SECOND READING

1 John 3:18-24

Leader: Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cantor: Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Cantor:

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me will bear much fruit. Jn 15:4a, 5b

All: Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 15:1-8

Leader: A reading from the Gospel according to John:
Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Reader: Daily Meditation: Acts 9:26-31

He tried to join the disciples. (Acts 9:26)

There's a lot of adventure in today's first reading, isn't there? Paul, fresh from escaping death threats in Damascus, arrives in Jerusalem, where he faces suspicion from Christians and an attempted murder from some Greek-speaking Jews.

Why so much drama? Quite possibly God was using all this upheaval to "prune" Paul, to further purify him from remnants of his old life (John 15:1-3).

We are so used to talking about the saints as if their holiness were a given, but that's rarely the case. For many of them, the road to holiness was as long and winding as it is for many of us. After all, we know that Paul had a strong, assertive personality. Humility doesn't always come easily!

By his own admission, Paul was "an arrogant man" before his conversion (1 Timothy 1:13). You can imagine how some of that arrogance might still have been present as he tried to convert people. Maybe the man who had once spent his life "breathing murderous threats" against Christians still needed to learn Jesus' teaching about being poor in spirit (Acts 9:1). So it's possible that God was using the chaos Paul encountered in Jerusalem to help him examine his heart and see where he still needed to change.

Anyone who has lived more than a few decades will tell you how valuable it is to be pruned by the Lord. They probably didn't enjoy it at the time, but looking back, they could appreciate the fruit of such pruning. Coming face-to-face with our selfishness or arrogance or resentments can move us to turn to Jesus and ask him to purify us and set us free.

So let Jesus prune you from time to time. He promises that if you do, you will bear "more fruit" (John 15:2). You'll become more like him, just as Paul did.

Jesus, you are a wise and gentle gardener. Keep pruning me so that I can become more like you.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**All: I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made,
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:**

[All bow during these two lines:]

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and become man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

We have confidence in our merciful God who gives us whatever we ask.

Reader: The response will be: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: For the Church: *(pause)*
that we may continually draw life from Christ
and bear a rich harvest of virtues and Gospel values for God's glory.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For a spirit of trust among leaders of society, *(pause)*
that they understand that human society demands
a spirit of goodwill among all sections of the community,
in which no section is considered as second-class citizens.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all who see themselves as spiritual but not religious, *(pause)*
that they may discover God's presence in our parish community
and develop a new understanding of church
through relationships with us.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For an end to violence in our communities: *(pause)*
that God will turn hearts from destructive deeds,
open pathways for dialogue,
and protect the innocent from harm.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all who are experiencing pruning through loss,
transition, or change: *(pause)*
that God will give them strength, guide them, and
help them find courage and support through fellow believers.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all who feel cut off from God, friends, themselves, or life itself:
(pause)
that God will show them how they are connected
and from whom they can draw life.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the sick, especially those for whom
we have been asked to pray, and, particularly,
those who are placed in quarantine and isolation, *(pause)*
that God's healing touch may bring them comfort and peace.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all our sisters and brothers who have died, especially
those who have died from the coronavirus pandemic,
(pause)
that they experience the joy of God's heavenly family for all eternity.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the prayers we now make in the silence of our hearts, *(pause)*
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: All-knowing God, we are the fruit of your Son's vine.
Do not cut us off, but hear us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

All: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

**All: 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.
Amen.**

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

St. Alphonsus Liguori

**All: My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in the most Blessed Sacrament.
I love You above all things
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there,
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

Leader: St Michael, the Archangel, Protect and Pray for us.

All: Amen.

Leader: The Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us; the Lord turn his face toward us and give us his peace both now and forever.

All: Amen.

Leader: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

SOURCES

Lectionary for Sunday Mass

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Prayers at Home When Gathering for Mass Is Not Possible

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Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Leader's Edition

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