



The FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT

A resource for praying at home



Introductory Note from Fr Toby

I would encourage you to keep regular times of prayer. When so much is out of kilter in our lives, having set times of prayer is more important than ever. Try to keep Sunday (or Saturday evening) and pray when we would usually meet for Mass. Or pray at 9am when I'll be offering Mass for and on behalf of you all.

You might also want to try to enrich your worship at home with art and music.

An excellent source of Christian art online is the Visual Commentary on Scripture. See <https://thevcs.org/>. You'll find three pictures for this Sunday's Gospel here: <https://thevcs.org/i-am-resurrection-and-life>.

Singing always enriches our worship – even if you don't think you're a good singer, there is no reason to be shy at home! There are lots of recordings of hymns of youtube to support your singing.

Think too about where you will pray. Depending on how busy your home is, can you find a quiet place? Can you involve your family, especially children, in your time of worship?

Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit. All we can do is turn up and try to be attentive. But it is the Holy Spirit who prays in us. Try passing a few minutes in silence, or listening to sacred music, before your time of prayer. Then simply ask Jesus, in the quiet of your heart, as his first disciples once did: "Lord, teach us how to pray". And trust that God will do the rest.

*(Picture on front cover: *The Raising of Lazarus* (1310) by Duccio di Buoninsegna).*

THE INTRODUCTION

Light a candle and spend some time in silence if you can.

This Sunday, which was traditionally called Passion Sunday, is when the crosses are veiled in churches. It marks a turning point in Lent as we near Holy Week and begin particularly to meditate upon the great mystery of the Cross.

So you might want to sing (or read) this Passiontide hymn:

GLORY be to Jesus,
Who, in bitter pains,
Poured for me the life-blood
From his sacred veins.

2. Grace and life eternal
In that Blood I find;
Blest be his compassion,
Infinitely kind.

3. Blest through endless ages
Be the precious stream,
Which from endless torment
Doth the world redeem.

4. Abel's blood for vengeance
Pleaded to the skies;
But the Blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries.

5. Oft as it is sprinkled
On our guilty hearts,
Satan in confusion
Terror-struck departs.

6. Oft as earth exulting
Wafts its praise on high,
Hell with terror trembles
Heaven is filled with joy.

7. Lift ye, then, your voices,
Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder
Praise the precious blood!

Then making the sign of the Cross say (it is good to say all the prayers out loud):

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

Spend some time in silence, calling to your mind your sins. Then, praying to God for the gift of repentance, say the confession:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
through our own fault
in thought and word and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

You might then like to say the KYRIE ELEISON,

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison. Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Or listen to a recording of the Kyrie chanted:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22W_JsYiwCc&list=RD22W_JsYiwCc&index=1

Remind yourself of the gift of God's forgiveness, by reading these words from 1 John 1.9:

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Then say the Collect for Lent V:

Let us pray.

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.

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.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Then read this Sunday's readings, which you can find in the Messenger. The Psalm is Ps 129 (130): "Out of the depths I cry to you...". You might like to listen to a recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkvWxDJc2BI> or

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrOm_n0a930

If you can, spend some time in silence reflecting on the readings.



The Raising of Lazarus by William Blake

As you read the account of the raising of Lazarus, note how Jesus does not act immediately. Here is an extract from a sermon by S. Peter Chrysologus, a Fifth-Century Bishop from North Italy, exploring why that might be:

We are told that *“when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he remained where he was for two days.”* You see how he gives full scope to death. He grants free reign to the grave; he allows corruption to set in. He prohibits neither putrefaction nor stench from taking their normal course; he allows the realm of darkness to seize his friend, drag him down to the underworld, and take possession of him. He acts like this so that human hope may perish entirely and human despair reach its lowest depths. The deed he is about to accomplish may then clearly be seen to be the work of God, not of man.

He waited for Lazarus to die, staying in the same place until he could tell his disciples that he was dead; then he announced his intention of going to him. Lazarus is dead, he said, and I am glad. Was this a sign of his love for his friend? Not so. Christ was glad because their sorrow over the death of Lazarus was soon to be changed into joy at his restoration to life. *“I am glad for your sake,”* he said. Why for their sake? Because the death and raising of Lazarus were a perfect prefiguration of the death and resurrection of the Lord himself. What the Lord was soon to achieve in himself had already been achieved in his servant. This explains why he said to them: *“I am glad for your sake not to have been there, because now you will believe.”* It was necessary that Lazarus should die, so that the faith of the disciples might also rise with him from the dead.

Then spend some time in silent prayer. You might like to use these bidding prayers to help you pray:

<https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/bidding-prayers-sunday-29th-march>

Pray for all leading the Church, especially Bishop Jonathan and the Bishop of Bristol, for those affected by the corona virus, those in authority, those serving the public at this time. Pray for those who are ill and those who have died. Please pray for those on the prayer lists on the Messenger.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Say the OUR FATHER.

To prepare yourself for the act of spiritual communion, you might like to sing or read this hymn:

DROP, DROP, slow tears
And bathe those beauteous feet,
Which brought from heaven
The news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat;
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let his eye
See sin but through my tears.

For a recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e2cje7D9W0>

Then make your act of SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. Spend a moment meditating on Jesus' love for us that he revealed on the Cross. If you have a Crucifix, spend some time looking at it or holding it. Desiring to be united with Christ, then pray:

MY JESUS,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment
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.

Spend some time in silence, giving thanks, and then say:

Blessed, praised and adored be Jesus Christ on his throne of
glory in Heaven, and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Amen.

Say this concluding prayer:

Lord our God, your Son so loved the world

that he gave himself up to death for our sake.

Strengthen us by your grace,

and give us a heart willing to live by that same love.

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.

And then pray for God's blessing, saying:

The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

Thanks be to God.