

Give us inner strength to follow your promise and build a holy nation built on the values of Christ and not of this world. May people marvel at our transformation, and so be drawn to your loving promises. **Amen.**

We meet your word when we look at and listen to unexpected people.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express thanks that we have been included in your plans.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer our readiness to be transformed through serving others.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you our congregations, Bishops, Ministers and lay leaders in times of change.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

*We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord's Prayer together: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours Now and for ever. Amen.***

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with assurance in knowing we are deemed worthy.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with assurance in knowing we are loved.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with assurance in knowing we are chosen.**

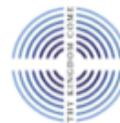
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2022

DAILY WAITING

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).

(This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and additional prayers may be added as you wish. Italic text is intended as an instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together.)

GATHERING

As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus gives to all his disciples.

Read the following from John 14 together:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light a candle, open a Bible, share the peace...

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

DAY: 5

LISTENING

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 PETER 2:9-10, NIV)

REFLECTING

I find these verses in 1 Peter to be some of the most compelling passages in scripture. A people once excluded are now embraced. Those who were exiled, now chosen. The reviled have been made holy, the rejected are loved. Those to whom Peter writes know what it is like to be marginalised, oppressed and harassed because of their faith. They are people without status – except in the eyes of God. They are unknown and unseen and unimportant. Except to the Creator of the universe.

In this verse, we are called – perhaps challenged – to see ourselves not as the world sees us, but as God sees us. We are called to judge ourselves not according to the values which seem to matter most to the world – status, wealth, power – but according to God's boundless love in Christ. Because of God's work for us in Christ we are called worthy, loved, chosen. You are called worthy, loved, and chosen in the eyes of God.

This is how we learn to be God's people, His 'special possession', rather than people beholden to this world. Ours is a status characterised by abundance, hope, faithfulness and love. What Christ has done is give a people, who had been told they held no value, a sense of eternal value. When we think we are useless, unimportant, a failure or an embarrassment, the word of God reminds us who we really are God's own people.

This is a love that transforms us. But for a purpose. For with the gift comes a calling – so 'that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light'. We are transformed to be agents of God's transformation; our eyes are opened so we can enable others to truly see. This addresses the human tendency to judge others as 'less', which we do for all sorts of reasons. In Christ God has chosen them too, they are included with us as part of His people. We cannot put

boundaries or walls down between us. Those who we might be tempted to exclude, ignore and reject are exactly those whom God gathers up and welcomes.

Consider your five friends: they are included in on this. Oh! that the Spirit would so move in them that they might come to know it for themselves. The transformation is incredible. Our marks of shame become signs of God's love. As we pray today, let us pledge to see everyone we meet through the loving eyes of God.

MARY'S SONG FROM LUKE 1 (NRSV)

46 And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
48 for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
50 His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

**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.**

PRAYING

Merciful God, as you chose a humble woman to be the mother of Jesus, we give thanks that we too are invited to belong to his people.