

A PRAYER SERVICE AT HOME

WHEN ATTENDANCE AT MASS IS NOT POSSIBLE

Ascension Thursday

In these extraordinary times when we cannot gather 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: Participation in a parish Mass on Sundays and Holydays "is a testimony of belonging and being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity." Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." — *Catechism of the Catholic Church § 1282*

Unfortunately, we are not able to attend Mass today; in the light of the coronavirus pandemic, all public celebration of Mass has been suspended. But, let us now be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

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: Coming together as God's family, with confidence let us acclaim the Father's forgiveness, for God is full of gentleness and compassion.

After a pause for silent reflection, the leader continues.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you brought us to salvation by your paschal mystery:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader Lord Jesus, you renew us by the wonders of your passion:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader Lord Jesus, you give us your body to make us one
with your Easter sacrifice:
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.

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who believe that your Only Begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Acts 1: 1-11

Reader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

When they had gathered together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.

While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 47

Reader: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

**All: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

Reader: 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.

**All: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

Reader: 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.

**All: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

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

**All: God mounts his throne to shouts of joy:
a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

SECOND READING

Ephesians 1: 17-23

Reader: A reading from First Letter to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cantor: Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

Cantor:

Go and teach all nations, says the Lord;
I am with you always, until the end of the world. *Mt 28: 19a, 20b*

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

Leader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

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 them 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

REFLECTION

This reflection appears in *The Word Among Us* which is providing free access to their magazine content during this stage of the coronavirus crisis. Visit wau.org.

Reader: *Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?* (Acts 1:6)

Amazing. After three years of traveling with Jesus, after seeing him arrested, tried, and crucified, after seeing him risen from the dead, even after forty days of Holy Spirit-inspired instruction — after all this, the apostles are still confused. They ask Jesus if he is now going to kick out the Romans and restore Israel to its former glory. They just didn't get it yet.

Still, we can ask a similar question today: "Lord, when are you going to come and set everything right again? What about all the wars and poverty and abortions?"

In response, Jesus tells the apostles, and us: Yes, I came to establish the kingdom of God — but I want you to help build it.

It's only right, on today of all days, to praise Jesus with "a blare of trumpets" (Responsorial Psalm). But in the midst of our celebrating, Jesus' words still reverberate: "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). "Go, . . . and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus may have ascended, but the work of his kingdom continues — and he has placed that work in our hands. That's why he promised us the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit so that our attempts to preach the gospel, take a stand against sin, and lift up the poor are filled with God's own grace and love.

It's not as hard as you might think. Preaching the gospel can be as simple as offering to pray for a struggling friend or sharing with a neighbor about how God helped you during a tough situation. Lifting up the poor can mean a weekly visit to a nursing home or increasing your donations to the poor box. Taking a stand against sin can mean praying for people's conversion or trying to establish a more peaceful environment in the home.

Yes, Jesus is going to restore his kingdom. And he's going to use you to do it.

"Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts. Empower us to build a kingdom worthy of the risen Lord!"

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

Leader: Let us pray to God the Father, through Jesus Christ his son,
who was taken up to heaven and intercedes for us at His right hand.

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

Reader: For the Universal Church, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia,
and our parish,
that the church at every level be a vibrant community
of the Holy Spirit.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For leaders of nations
that they demonstrate great willingness to overcome
barriers and differences, and work together for the benefit
of the earth and all peoples.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those who heroically care for people with COVID-19,
that they may be protected from harm themselves,
and be strengthened by Jesus, the Divine Physician.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those who are now vulnerable to the pandemic:
those in refugee camps, those in close living conditions
in poor districts of cities in South America, Asia and Africa,
those in crowded prisons, in migrant worker housing,
and those on ships and liners,
that they will not be forgotten by the rest of the world.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all whose diversity of culture enriches the life of the nation,
that their contribution to the vitality of society
be valued and welcomed.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For the families of those who have died during this pandemic,
that they may soon be able to celebrate
the lives of those they have lost,
and gather together to support one another in their grief.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all who serve in our military services,
that their generosity and sacrifices may contribute
to lasting peace and a better world.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For all who face financial stress at this time,
those who have lost employment,
or have no money for food and shelter,
and for charities which seek to give them support,
that governments and communities will work together
to relieve this suffering.
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,
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 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic,
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: Loving Father, hear our prayers,
which we make in faith in your Son, Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever.

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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