

# A PRAYER SERVICE AT HOME

WHEN ATTENDANCE AT MASS IS NOT POSSIBLE

## Third Sunday of Advent

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.

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 bishop 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:** 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:** You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All:** **Lord, have mercy.**

**Leader:** You came to call sinners:  
Christ, have mercy.

**All:** **Christ, have mercy.**

**Leader:** You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All:** **Lord, have mercy.**

## COLLECT

**Leader:** Let us pray.

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation, and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. 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.

**All:** **Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

Is 61:1-2A, 10-11

**Reader:** A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
to heal the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
to announce a year of favor from the LORD  
and a day of vindication by our God.

I rejoice heartily in the LORD,  
in my God is the joy of my soul;  
for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation  
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,  
like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem,  
like a bride bedecked with her jewels.  
As the earth brings forth its plants,  
and a garden makes its growth spring up,  
so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise  
spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Is 61:10b, Lk 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54

**Reader:** My soul rejoices in my God.

**All: My soul rejoices in my God.**

**Reader:** My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked upon his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed.

**All: My soul rejoices in my God.**

**Reader:** The Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.

**All:** **My soul rejoices in my God.**

**Reader:** He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help of his servant Israel  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy.

**All:** **My soul rejoices in my God.**

## SECOND READING

1 Thes 5:16-24

**Reader:** A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

The Word of the Lord.

**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

IS 61:1 (and LK 4:18)

**Cantor:** Alleluia, alleluia.

**All:** **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Cantor:** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor.

**All:** **Alleluia, alleluia.**

## GOSPEL

Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

**Leader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

**All:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Leader:** A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

## REFLECTION

### 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 the following two lines:]

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became 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

### 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

**All:** 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 in 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.

## 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

Father McLaughlin, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Richboro, PA

*English translation of Lectionary for Mass*

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*English translation of The Roman Missal*

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*Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition.*

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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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