



*Chaplaincy of All Saints' Marseille
with Aix-en-Provence
and the Luberon*

RESOURCES FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

26th March 2020

Dear Friends,

One result of these weeks of lockdown is the extent to which communities are sharing resources for prayer, poetry, music and reflection. We have received the following this week:

- 1 The Church of England is rediscovering the practice of **Spiritual Communion**. Historically this was used to describe 'the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, is nonetheless able to share in the communion of Jesus Christ'. The Church of England has suggested a form of words to use, available at this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/Guidance%20on%20Spiritual%20Communion%20and%20Coronavirus.pdf>

Another form of words, which comes from the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the USA, is copied at the end of this letter:

- 2 A set of suggestions for **Praying at Home** has been sent to us by Canon Ann Slater, a regular worshipper in the chaplaincy on her summer visits to France. Some of these are also set out at the end of this letter.

- 3 On Monday the following verses from the Book of Jeremiah were set for Morning Prayer, which seem particularly apt for this time:

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.
They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.
It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17.7-8

With prayers from all of us in the ministry team, and every blessing,

The Revd Jamie Johnston
Chaplain

Spiritual Communion

taken from *St. Augustine's Prayer Book, USA*

The *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church reminds us that if one is unable to actually consume the consecrated bread and wine due to extreme sickness or disability, the desire is enough for God to grant all the benefits of communion. When being present at a celebration of the Eucharist is absolutely impossible, this act of prayer and meditation can provide the means by which you can associate yourself with the Eucharistic Action and open yourself to God's grace and blessing.

Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Let the power of the Holy Spirit come upon me, O Lord, mercifully to cleanse my heart and defend me from all adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle: Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me.

The Psalm: Psalm 23:5-6

You prepare a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over. Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The Gospel: John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me, you can do nothing.

The Apostles' Creed may be said.

In your own words, pray for your own needs, for those on your heart, for the peace of the world, and for the Church.

After offering these intercessions, continue with this Act of Contrition

O God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and for all the wrongs I have done and the good I have not done. Especially I confess... Forgive me for Jesus' sake, and grant me strength and wisdom to amend my life. Amen.

Act of Reception

In union, blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day (and remembering particularly my own parish and those worshipping there), I long to offer praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory. And particularly for the blessings given me...

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Come Lord Jesus, and dwell in my heart in the fullness of your strength; be my wisdom and guide me in right pathways; conform my life and actions to the image of your holiness; and, in the power of your gracious might, rule over every hostile power that threatens or disturbs the growth of your kingdom, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

And may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep my heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ my Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, be with me now and always. Amen.

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Praying at Home

Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of meditating on Scripture. It was first introduced by St. Gregory of Nyssa (c 330- 395), and also encouraged by St. Benedict of Nursia (c 480-547), the founder of the Benedictine order. In Lectio Divina, the chosen passage is read prayerfully several times. This gives an opportunity to think deeply about it and respond thoughtfully. You may even find yourself imagining that you are part of the scene – it can give a new way of understanding familiar passages.

The 4 'R's of Lectio Divina:

LECTIO (READ)

Take your time to read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage for a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen with your heart.

MEDITATIO (REFLECT)

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what that word, phrase or passage means, particularly in your life.

ORATIO (RESPOND)

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. If you are upset or angry, say so! It is OK to ask questions! You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently.

CONTEMPLATIO (REMAIN)

Now take some time simply to rest and remain in the presence of God. You may want to record some of your thoughts or prayers in a journal so you can come back to them later.

(Adapted from the Catholic Youth Prayer Book, St Mary's Press, Winona, 2006)

Some scripture passages to pray with:

Matthew 9:9-13

Matthew 11:25-30

Mark 4:35-41

Luke 8:4-8

Luke 15:1-7

Luke 18:35-43

Luke 23:39-43

John 15:1-11

John 21:15-17

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Julian of Norwich's Body Prayer

The 14th century Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich, once wrote, "The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be 'oned' with and like God in all things." After suffering immense pain she created this body prayer as a simple and beautiful way to pray without words.

The prayer has four simple postures and intentions.

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, however it may come to you.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence to come ...or not...and be what it is.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you don't know everything, that you are not in charge.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to what you are called to, willing to be present and be God's love in the world, however God calls you to.

Move through each of the postures slowly and listen for God as you focus on each of the intentions. You might like to do this in silence or you might prefer gentle music or to speak your thoughts to God.

(Images and some of the text is taken from this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=96&v=IKdXyKzTXk&feature=emb_logo)

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(Finger) Walking a Labyrinth

Walking a labyrinth is an ancient meditation practice drawn from Celtic Christianity. Often Labyrinths were marked out with stones or cut into the hillside. Sometimes you find labyrinth patterns on the floors of cathedrals – the labyrinth at Chartres being the most famous.

If you cannot get outside, though, then you can ‘take your finger for a walk’ round a labyrinth instead – tracing the lines slowly and meditatively into the centre and out again.

A Labyrinth is different from a maze. There is only one path. You cannot get lost.

As you travel inwards, think about your life journey up until this point. Think of all the highs and lows. All the turning points. All the times when you have noticed God at work. Notice how the path turns back on itself and you pass close by to events in the past. How have things in your life been connected?

Offer all of these to God.

When you get to the centre, rest a while in God’s presence. Just be still and attentive.

When you are ready, slowly trace your finger back out of the labyrinth. Imagine you are walking outwards, back into the world, knowing God’s presence with you. Listen to what new things God may be calling you to now.

