

This short act of worship has been produced for you. If you are well enough and able, why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time when you would normally be sharing with others in church and pray for them as they pray for you.

Prayer of Adoration

We worship you, Almighty God,
Creator of the universe, source of all being,
Sustainer of all life.

You are wonderful and glorious beyond our imagining, and yet your love encompasses even the smallest creature.
We are amazed beyond telling when we consider your creative activity –
The mighty mountains, the tiniest flower -
But above all we marvel that you created us in your own image and redeemed us in Christ when we fell into sin.

Your presence transforms even the darkest times,
With you we know we need not be afraid.
Nothing can separate us from your love.
You are love above all love.
Wherever love is born, you are the creator.
Wherever love continues you live.
Wherever love rules you reign.

Lord, by your love awaken ours.
Draw out from us such an answering love,
That in our time of testing we will not fall away.

We make our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

Lord God, we confess that we do not always live our lives in the way that you would want us to live them. We sin against you in things that we think, things that we say and things that we do, or leave undone.

(Short silence.)

We ask you to take away from us now everything unchristian, and to fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we are empowered and enabled to do your will. **Amen**

Hymn: I know that my Redeemer lives (Singing the Faith 303)

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k8rKROCaDk>

I know that my Redeemer lives –
what joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
he lives, my everlasting Head!

He lives, to bless me with his love;
he lives, to plead for me above;
he lives, my hungry soul to feed;
he lives, to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath;
he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare;
he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name;
he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives.

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)

Today's Gospel Reading: John 14: 1 - 14

14 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.'

⁵ Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

⁶ Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'

⁸ Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'

⁹ Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.'

Time to Reflect

Jesus is trying to comfort his disciples. He has just told them that he is going to leave them, that one of them will betray him and that Peter will disown him. They are understandably

shocked, upset, unsettled and disturbed. In twenty-four hours, he will have been crucified and laid in a tomb and yet he is spending his time now worrying about them.

His remedy is to tell them to trust him. The Greek word translated as ‘believe’ in the Bible passage can also mean ‘trust’. He reassures them that although he is going to the Father, he will prepare many rooms, dwelling places, mansions for them and that he will come back and take them there and that they know the way there.

In Biblical times the father of the family would add rooms to the house, as necessary, when his sons married for example. The image here is of God adding rooms to his house for his people.

Honest Thomas says, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ and Jesus answers, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’

Have you ever asked directions of someone and, after following the third or fourth instruction, forgotten what they’d said and ended up totally lost? Jesus isn’t going to let that happen to the disciples. His promise to them is that he will come back for them and take them with him. He will truly be the way because he will lead them.

That promise is for us too if we follow Jesus. When it is our time to go to the Father, Jesus will come and take us. We don’t need to fret and worry.

But there is more. Jesus promises that those who follow him will be able to do the works that he has been doing. More than that – we will be able to do greater things. In the verses after those which make up today’s reading Jesus promises that he will send the gift of the Holy Spirit so that his disciples are not alone, not abandoned. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus’ followers will be able to do even greater things than he has been doing.

Even that is not the end of Jesus’ promises. He tells us that whatever we pray for in his name will be done. That doesn’t mean that we can pray for some extravagant car, or house, or piece of jewellery ‘in the name of Jesus’. It needs to be a prayer that Jesus could have prayed, one that shows God’s love at work in the world. Often we have to wait for the answer to our prayers, but they are always answered.

So we have Jesus, in part of his Farewell Discourse, comforting and reassuring his followers. He promises that he will come back and take us to the place that he has prepared for us, that we will, in the power of the Spirit, do even greater things than he has done and that our prayers ‘in his name’ will be answered.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

We pray, Lord God for your church throughout the world, that it may share to the full in the work of your Son, revealing you to people and reconciling people to you, and that Christians may learn to love one another as you have loved us.

The Lord hears our prayer

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the life of the world, that every nation may seek the way that ultimately leads to peace, that human rights and freedom may be respected everywhere, and that the world's resources may be shared ungrudgingly.

The Lord hears our prayer

Thanks be to God.

We pray for all in sorrow, need, anxiety or sickness, for the neglected, the persecuted and the lonely. We pray for those whose lives are lived in constant fear. Lord, reassure, comfort and protect them.

The Lord hears our prayer

Thanks be to God.

We pray for all whose lives are affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. For the sick and their families, for the grieving, for those whose money problems are intense, for those who feel they can't cope with isolation any longer. We also pray for the frontline workers who daily put their lives at risk to help others. Lord, uphold them, strengthen them and comfort them.

The Lord hears our prayer

Thanks be to God.

We ask all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

Hymn: O Jesus, I have promised (Singing the Faith 563)

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trs17OEHe7E>

O Jesus I have promised
to serve you to the end;
Lord, be for ever near me,
my master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.

O let me feel you near me;
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, now draw nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear you speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurings of self-will;

O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
Lord, speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, you have promised
to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory
your servant shall be too;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow
my master and my friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)

A prayer of blessing

May Christ give us grace
To grow in holiness,
To deny ourselves,
To take up our cross,
And to follow him.
And may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with us all,
Evermore.

Amen.