

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Fifth Sunday of Easter

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there if possible. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

The Lord Jesus has “called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.” We hear him do that very concretely in the Gospel today. He reassures us with these words: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me. Where I am you will be. I am the way, the truth, and the life. Whoever believes in me will do the works I do.” This is the Word of God that “continued to spread” so that the number of disciples “increased daily.” And this increase is what the risen Christ continues to offer the Church. “Come to him; let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.” Let us entrust ourselves to the divine Architect, who will fashion us into a dwelling place for him for all eternity.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

Choose an appropriate hymn.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

The following are the readings of the 5th Sunday of Easter.

**A reading from
the Acts of the Apostles**

6:1-7

AS THE NUMBER of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word

of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

————•PSALM 33•————

R (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Or: Alleluia.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the LORD on the harp;
with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises. **R**

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full. **R**

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
to deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine. **R**

A reading from
the first Letter of Saint Peter

2:4-9

BELOVED: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture:

Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, / a cornerstone, chosen and precious, / and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

The stone that the builders rejected / has become the cornerstone,
and

A stone that will make people stumble, / and a rock that will make them fall.
They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia, alleluia. I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord; / no one comes to the Father, except through me. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the way and the truth and the life.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

14:1-12

JESUS SAID TO his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Allow for a few minutes of silence and meditation. In a family, the leader could offer some words of consolation and reflection at this moment. “Today, we profess our faith with renewed ardor; we profess our total adherence to Jesus and all that he has revealed to us about our heavenly Father and our call to holiness, our call to live with him. We ask for the grace to live with the confidence that we do know the way—for Jesus himself is the way, and we have fellowship with him through the Church. May the Lord banish from our hearts all darkness, doubt, and confusion. May he bathe us in his light, and the peace that comes from knowing that we are loved and that the Lord will never deceive us or abandon us.”

M E D I T A T I O N O F T H E D A Y

Yes, Lord, We Follow You

Let us march forward intrepidly to meet our Redeemer, Jesus, pursuing our onward course without swerving until we come to the assembly of the saints and are welcomed by the company of the just. It is to join our Christian forebears that we are journeying, to those who taught us our faith.... In the place where the Lord will be everyone’s light, the true light which enlightens every human person will shine upon all. In the house where we are going the Lord Jesus has prepared many resting places for his servants, so that where he is we also may be. This was his express desire. Listen to his own words: *In my Father’s house there are many resting places. And: I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.*

You may say, perhaps, that he was speaking only to his disciples, and it was to them alone that he promised there would be many resting places.... And what of that statement of his about people coming from all sides to take their seats in the Kingdom of God? Have we any grounds for doubting that God's will is effective? With Christ, surely, to will a thing is to accomplish it. In short, the Lord has not only shown us the way we are to travel, he has also pointed out our destination. Where I am going you know, he says, and the way there is known to you. This destination is our Father's house, and our way to it is Christ, as his own words assure us: I am the way, the truth, and the life.... Let us set out, then, upon this way, holding fast to the truth and following in the footsteps of life. Christ is the way that leads us, the truth that strengthens us, and the life that restores us to life in him.

To make sure that we really understand his will, our Lord prays a few minutes later: Father, it is my desire that those whom you have given me be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory. How graciously our Lord asks his Father here to grant what he himself had promised earlier! The promise came first and then the request, not the other way round. Conscious of his authority and knowing the gift was at his own disposal, he made the promise; then as if to exemplify his filial submission, he asked his Father to grant it....

Yes, Lord Jesus, we do follow you. But we can only come at your bidding. No one can make the ascent without you, for you are our way, our truth, our life, our strength, our faith, our reward. We belong to you; be the way that carries us onward, the truth that inspires us with courage, and the life that fills us with renewed vigor.

SAINT NILUS OF SINAI

Saint Nilus († 430) was a monk, theologian, and ascetic writer. He was a student of Saint John Chrysostom.

INTERCESSIONS

The leader can begin with these words:

God has called us out of darkness and into his wonderful light. Counting on the Father's boundless mercy we now pray:

R Lord, hear our prayer.

That all members of the Church may be strengthened in holiness and truth, and walk in the fear of the Lord. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

Holy Father's Intention: We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

That divisions will be healed, violence will cease, and the peace and justice of God's Kingdom will reign in every nation on earth. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For all mothers, that through the intercession of the Mother of God, the Lord will bless them and reward them for their sacrifices and love. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For the poor, the vulnerable, the lonely, and the forgotten: that they know the security and love of Jesus. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For an end to the coronavirus pandemic, for God's mercy on all who are suffering and dying, and for strength and protection on all healthcare workers dedicated to fighting it. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

Personal intentions

Our Father....

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into 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.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.



Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia,
has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
alleluia!

R For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia!

Or:

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia,
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia;
ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

V Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

R Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.

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Prayers of Trust

Father, who can describe your trustworthiness, your love, your delight in being loved by your tiny unworthy creatures? Your blessed Spirit moves in us, and we catch a vision, a presence, a joy that pulls us forward to a complete abandonment to you: such that even in darkness and pain and doubt, we can never turn from you or withdraw from you or forget your name.
(Fr Francis Martin)

We have gathered some prayers on the theme of this Sunday's Gospel, which could be used during the week and beyond.

O God,
our refuge and our shield,
even when we walk in the shadow of death you are there at our side.
Be with your people in this time of danger: bring strength to the afflicted
and protection to those untouched by disease.
Give us love and courage,
that we may trust in your power to save and reach out to all who need our care.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYER OF TRUST IN JESUS

O sacred heart of Jesus, I place my trust in thee,
Whatever may befall me, Lord, though dark the hour may be;
In all my woes, in all my joys, though nought but grief I see,
O sacred heart of Jesus, I place my trust in thee.

When those I loved have passed away, and I am sore distressed,
O sacred heart of Jesus, I fly to thee for rest.
In all my trials, great or small, my confidence shall be
Unshaken as I cry, dear Lord, I place my trust in thee.

This is my one sweet prayer, dear Lord, my faith, my trust, my love,
But most of all in that last hour, when death points up above,
O sweet Saviour, may thy face smile on my soul all free.
Oh may I cry with rapturous love, I've placed my trust in thee.

PRAYER OF SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

O Christ Jesus,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of your presence,
your love, and your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
in your protecting love and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to you,
we shall see your hand,
your purpose, your will through all things.

PRAYER OF SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

O Mother of Jesus, and my mother,
let me dwell with you, cling to you and love you
with ever-increasing love.

I promise the honor, love, and trust of a child.

Give me a mother's protection,

For I need your watchful care.

FROM THE END OF THE TE DEUM

May your mercy always be with us, Lord,

For we have hoped in you.

In you, Lord we put our trust:

we shall not be put to shame.

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.
(Saint Teresa of Ávila)

