

Affirmation Prayer...

The Lord our God is a faithful God. Let us pray to him.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia!

Hymn **Meter: 10 4 10 4 10 10**

Lead kindly light, amidst the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.
So long thy power hast blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on;
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile.

Psalm **116:10-19**

Abram put his faith in the Lord, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness. (Gn 15:6)

Faith and trust in God is such a difficult thing. We yearn for the stability that God brings, but at the same time are so afraid to let go of our own will. This dichotomy of fear and desire is a constant theme in our lives. Because of this, faith is not the refuge of the weakminded but the domain of the brave. The Israelites trusted in God when they heard the proclamation of Ezra the prophet and had faith that God would fulfill his promises. We have an even greater prophet in Jesus Christ. Let us rest our faith on him and let him fulfill the deepest desires of our hearts.

I trusted, even when I said:
"I am sorely afflicted,"
and when I said in my alarm:
"No man can be trusted."
How can I repay the Lord
for his goodness to me?
The cup of salvation I will raise;
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfill
before all his people.
O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds.
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:
I will call on the Lord's name.
My vows to the Lord I will fulfill
before all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem...

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.

Trust in the Lord, your God, and you will be found firm. Trust in his prophets and you will succeed.
(2 Chr 20:20)

Canticle of Zechariah

The Lord has blessed us in his mercy.
(cf. Jos 17:14)

All: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Intercessions

To the Lord of mercy, we pray:

R/ Jesus, we trust in you.

Because of the goodness of your Father: **R/**

Because you came among us and experienced the trials of the world: **R/**

Because of the saving power of your Gospel: **R/**

Personal intentions

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.

God our Father, you led the Israelites across the desert to a land of milk and honey. Lead us also, your people, to the land of everlasting joy, where we may behold your face for ever. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading 1 **Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10**

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh month. On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose. In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, ‘Amen! Amen!’ Then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law of God, translating and giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and Ezra, priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people, said to all the people, ‘This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.’ For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law.

He then said, ‘Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.’

Reading 2 **1 Corinthians 12:12-30**

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, ‘I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, ‘I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it was not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you’, nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you.’

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God

has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it. In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, the third to teachers; after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders, those with many languages. Are all of them apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and all interpret them?

Gospel **Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21**

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’

Men of St. Joseph Prayer

All: St. Joseph, help me to be like you. Help me to be obedient to the teachings of the Church and faithful to God’s commands. Help me to patiently endure my cross each day. Let me be a model of holiness and a pillar of virtue. I solemnly promise to embrace God’s will and I accept the challenge to work tirelessly for my family’s salvation. Be my guide and companion on this journey. St. Joseph, terror of demons, pray for us!

*Prayer for the text used with permission
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