

Affirmation Prayer...

Our Lord watches over those who trust in him. Let us adore 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: 88 88 88**

O Jesus, to your servants give
The consolation they require;
And when the cloud of trouble falls,
With heavenly hope their souls inspire.
Be ever near us, Christ, to bless
And help us in your faithfulness.
As you were with your saints of old,
Be with us, ever present, Lord;
Unite us to yourself, we pray,
As you have promised by your word:
Then we shall glorify and laud
The Holy Spirit sent from God.

Psalm **46:4b-12**

Fear not, Jerusalem! He who gave you your name is your encouragement. (Bar 4:30)

It is easy to fall into discouragement and to see our situation as hopeless. But discouragement is a tool of the enemy of mankind, the devil. Let us counter him by being agents of encouragement in our world. In doing so, we become a powerful force for good and for the Kingdom of God.

The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.
Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are shaken:
he lifts his voice, the earth shrinks away.
The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come, consider the works of the Lord,
the redoubtable deeds he has done on the earth.
He puts an end to wars over all the earth;
the bow he breaks, the spear he snaps.
He burns the shields with fire.
"Be still and know that I am God,
supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth!"
The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

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.

Word of God **2 Corinthians 1:3-7**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ's sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it

is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace, encourage your hearts and strengthen them in every good deed and word. (2 Thes 2:16-17)

Canticle of Zechariah

Lay aside your sadness and be of good cheer. (cf. Jb 9:27)

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

We strive to live the Gospel and so we say:

R/ Let us be people of encouragement.

For the downcast and the disillusioned, – may we buoy them up with joy. **R/**

For those who are wavering in their faith, – may we guide them gently in the way of truth. **R/**

For the lukewarm, – may we inspire them by our fervor.: **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 encourage the downtrodden and hopeless. Make us people of encouragement, that we may give hope to those in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading 1 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

There were seven brothers who were arrested with their mother. The king tried to force them to taste pig's flesh, which the Law forbids, by torturing them with whips and scourges. One of them, acting as spokesman for the others, said, 'What are you trying to find out from us? We are prepared to die rather than break the laws of our ancestors.'

With his last breath the second brother exclaimed, 'Inhuman fiend, you may discharge us from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, since it is for his laws that we die, to live again for ever.'

After him, they amused themselves with the third, who on being asked for his tongue promptly thrust it out and boldly held out his hands, with these honourable words, 'It was heaven that gave me these limbs; for the sake of his laws I disdain them; from him I hope to receive them again.' The king and his attendants were astounded at the young man's courage and his utter indifference to suffering.

When this one was dead they subjected the fourth to the same savage torture. When he neared his end he cried, 'Ours is the better choice, to meet death at men's hands, yet relying on God's promise that we shall be raised up by him; whereas for you there can be no resurrection, no new life.'

Reading 2 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who has given us his love and, through his grace, such inexhaustible comfort and such sure hope, comfort you and strengthen you in everything good that you do or say.

Finally, brothers, pray for us; pray that the Lord's message may spread quickly, and be received with honour as it was among you; and pray that we may be preserved from the interference of bigoted and evil people, for faith is not given to everyone. But the Lord is faithful, and he will give you strength and guard you from the evil one, and we, in the Lord, have every confidence that you are doing and will go on doing all that we tell you. May the Lord turn your hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ

Some Sadducees – those who say that there is no resurrection – approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, we have it from Moses in writing, that if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. Well then, there were seven brothers. The first, having married a wife, died childless. The second and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children. Finally, the woman herself died. Now, at the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife since she had been married to all seven?'

Jesus replied, 'The children of this world take wives and husbands, but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection they are sons of God. And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all men are in fact alive.'

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
of Magnificat*