



# **Sunday Family Prayers: Church at Home**

**The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted all of our lives. In these extraordinary times when we cannot gather as a Christian Community to celebrate Mass, we may feel helpless, hopeless, or left behind.**

**Families may struggle with organizing children's schoolwork, financial difficulty cause by job loss, the stress of separation from friends and colleagues. Some may be grieving the deaths of loved ones. Some may have been regular Sunday worshippers, while some may not have been to a church in a while. The common element among us all is hunger for the grace of God.**

**The Catholic dioceses of Ohio want to help.**

**The Church of God is much, much more than a building. The Church of God is the People of God. Whether gathered together in a building or sheltering-at-home, we are all the Church! And, we can all offer our prayers to God – prayers of praise, prayers of sorrow and grief, prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers asking for God's help.**

**God has not abandoned you simply because we cannot celebrate Eucharist together. God's grace comes to you in many other ways! Praying alone or with your family is a wonderful way to experience the grace of God.**

**The prayer service in this booklet is based on a prayer service that many communities already celebrate when they do not have a priest available for Mass. We encourage you to involve every member of your household – even young children – in celebrating your relationship with God and with God's Church by praying this liturgy together.**

**There are many ways to create a prayerful environment in your home. You can prepare a table<sup>1</sup> with a white cloth, a crucifix, a picture of Jesus or Mary, and/or a candle.<sup>2</sup> Fresh flowers from your yard, or green growing plants may also help make your space feel prayerful. Be creative! If you have a smartphone, tablet, or computer, you could use**

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<sup>1</sup> Kitchen table, coffee table, living room end table – whatever works best for your family to gather around.

<sup>2</sup> If you have your children's baptismal candles, consider getting them out and lighting them!

that device to find the Scripture readings for the day (<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/050320.cfm>), and even use it to read aloud during your prayer service. You might also simply open your family Bible to the Scripture passages. There is a listing of the Scriptures for each Sunday in May at the Liturgy of the Word section of this booklet.

**Please know that liturgy does not have to be perfect. Your prayer service is all about building relationships between your family members and God. Allow your family to be honestly themselves, and it will be a good prayer experience.**

*“In truth I tell you once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.”*

*Mt: 18:19-20*

## **Before you Begin**

- Set your environment – crucifix, cloth, candles, saints' images
- Have the Scriptures marked and ready – tablet or smartphone, Bible
- Silence your phones, television, or anything else which would distract your family from prayer
- Gather your family, and have everyone take a deep breath or two together in silence

## **Introduction**

*As you light a candle, pray:*

**Leader: Lord Jesus you came as a light that shines in darkness and a light that darkness cannot overpower. Enlighten our hearts and minds to your presence in our midst.**

*Sing a song together to open your prayer service – something that everyone knows well and can easily sing along with. Feel free to use an online video or recording to help!*

*All make the Sign of the Cross together on your bodies as you say the words aloud:*

**Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

**All: Amen.**

## **Greeting**

**Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever.**

**All: Blessed be God forever.**

## **Act of Contrition**

**Leader: For the times when we have failed to love God and to love each other we ask for God's forgiveness.**

**All: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.**

## **Prayer**

**Leader: We pray silently in our hearts:**

*(Pause 15-30 seconds for silent prayer, then continue)*

**God, Father of compassion and love,  
we are in need of Your grace to redirect our hearts.  
We are in need of Your hope to rekindle and sustain our faith.  
We are in need of Your wisdom that we might recognize Your Holy  
Spirit dwelling within us, calling us to live as children of the  
Resurrection.**

**Be with us in our prayer this day.**

**Help us to trust that You are here, within us and beside us.**

**Help us to believe that our prayer will change not only our own hearts,  
but will change our world.**

**All this we ask in the name of Jesus our brother,  
who shares our lives and Yours, in the unity of the Spirit.**

**One God for ever and ever.**

**All: Amen**

## **Listening to God's Word**

*Proclaim the readings scheduled for the day. The Responsorial Psalm may be read aloud or sung, or you may find an online video or recording of the day's psalm.*

### Sunday Scriptures:

May 3: Acts 2:14, 36-41; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:20-25; John 10:1-10

May 10: Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12

May 17: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

May 24 (*choose from two options*)

- 7th Sunday of Easter: Acts 1:12-14; Psalm 27; 1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11
- Ascension of the Lord: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20

*You may choose to proclaim all the day's readings with the Responsorial Psalm between, or only two readings, or only the Gospel. Have a member of the family stand and read each Scripture aloud, with the response afterwards:*

**Reader: The Word of the Lord**

**All: Thanks be to God**

*Sing an 'Alleluia!' before you read the Gospel.*

*After proclaiming the Gospel, all respond:*

**Reader: The Gospel of the Lord**

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

*Pause for a moment of silent reflection on the Gospel, or talk about your responses to the Gospel.*

## **Intercessions**

*Everyone may respond “Lord, hear our prayer” to these intercessions, or everyone may read the second line after the pause for silent prayer. Feel free to add other prayers.*

**Leader: We bring our needs and prayers before our heavenly Father.**  
*(Pause 5-10 seconds for silent prayer)*

**We pray for our world;** *(Pause)*

**Lord, heal and comfort those who have coronavirus.**

**We pray for doctors, nurses, and all who are helping the sick;** *(Pause)*

**Lord, protect them and strengthen them as they care for others in your name.**

**We pray for our civil leaders;** *(Pause)*

**Lord, help them to make wise decisions.**

**We pray for those who are anxious and afraid;** *(Pause)*

**Lord, ease their fears and give them the comfort of your presence.**

**We pray for the poor, the hungry, and the homeless;** *(Pause)*

**Lord, help them in their need.**

**We pray for our families and friends** *(feel free to add specific names);*

**Lord, protect them and look after them.**

**We pray for our loved ones who have died** *(feel free to add specific names);*

**Lord, hold them closely in your loving embrace.**

**Leader: Father, we ask you to hear our prayers and help us cooperate with your response, for we pray to you in faith and love and trust, through Christ our Lord,**

**All: Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Leader: As God's family, the Church, we pray as Jesus himself taught us:**

**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. Amen.**

*While we cannot receive communion at this time we can still make an act of Spiritual Communion in which we express our faith in Jesus and in his presence in the Eucharist and invite him to unite himself with us.*

## **Act of Spiritual Communion**

**My Jesus, I believe that you  
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.**

**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.**

*(by St Alphonsus de Liguori)*

## **Concluding Prayer**

**Leader: The Lord bless us and keep us; The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us; The Lord turn his face toward us and give us his peace both now and forever.**

**All: Amen.**

**Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

**All: Amen.**