

See of Ebbsfleet

Nine days in prayer
22 – 30 May 2020

Waiting for the Father's promise



'In the upper room, the apostles gave themselves single-heartedly to prayer, with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.' Acts 1.14

Introduction from the Bishop

AT A TIME when the whole world continues in anxiety – not simply about the usual things: what we shall eat, or drink, or wear (Matt 6.31-34), but anxiety for our bodies, our very breath and lives, and the lives of others, both our loved ones and strangers – the Church has a new triple proclamation!

Christ has died: and by his death we are forgiven, healed and reconciled to God.

Christ is risen: and he shares the brilliance of his new life through his body, the Church.

Christ will come again: and as pledge of what is to come has given us the Spirit to dwell in our hearts!

Christ gives us for our anxiety his resurrection peace – not as the world gives (*Jn 14.27*), and which passes understanding (*Phil 4.7*). It radiates from the stories of the empty tomb and the upper room, from the shores of Galilee and the hill of the ascension. He calls us not to be anxious about adding days to our lives, but to add life to our days! That is why Eastertide culminates in the period between the Ascension and Pentecost: ‘waiting for the Father’s promise’ as it says in *Acts 1.4* – waiting for the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life.

It was Jesus himself who first instructed his disciples to observe those days in prayer: ‘he told them not to go away from Jerusalem, but ‘to wait for the Father’s promise’. In 1897, Pope Leo XIII (the same pope who spoke of Anglican orders as ‘null and void’) wanted the Church in his day to rediscover the person and mission of the Holy Spirit, and asked the Church throughout the world to renew its devotion to the Holy Spirit every year in the nine days (the ‘novena’) between Ascension and Pentecost.

Some years later, another Roman Catholic, Cardinal Mercier of Malines (the leader of the Belgian resistance to German occupation in the First World War, and patron of the earliest serious search for unity by Anglicans and Roman Catholics) wrote a famous *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*, which I offer you now as part of the daily devotions in this booklet.

‘I am going to reveal to you’, he said, ‘the secret of sanctity and happiness. Every day, for five minutes, control your imagination, close your eyes to all the noises of the world, and enter into yourself. Then, in the sanctuary of your baptized soul (which is the temple of the Holy Spirit) speak to that Divine Spirit, saying to Him:

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

If you do this, your life will flow along happily, serenely, and full of consolation, even in the midst of great trials. Grace will be proportional to the trial, giving you the strength to carry it, and you will arrive at the Gate of Paradise, laden with merit. Submission to the Holy Spirit is the secret of sanctity.

I hope that you will join me, each day, at or near midday, beginning on Friday 22 May, with these prayers. If anyone not under my care uses this novena, I’m delighted. Add your own Intercession each day, but pray for us too, as we pray for you.



DAY ONE

FRIDAY 22 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

1 Come, thou Holy Paraclete,
And from thy celestial seat
Send thy light and brilliancy:

Scripture Passage

Acts 1.12-16, 21-26

After Jesus's Ascension

They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, only a sabbath day's walk away. When [the apostles] had entered the city they went to the room upstairs where they were staying. They all devoted themselves constantly to prayer, together with certain women – including Mary the mother of Jesus – as well as his brothers.

Around that time Peter stood up among the believers and said, 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus. ... So now, one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ... must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' So they proposed two, ... and praying said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship'. And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit imprints a dynamic drive on the disciples to accept as a *personal* commitment a mission to witness to the Gospel.

R./ Renew your wonders in the Church of our day, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'.¹ Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Dioceses of Bath & Wells and Bristol

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

¹ Pope St John XXIII, from a Prayer in preparation for the Second Vatican Council

DAY TWO

SATURDAY 23 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

2 Father of the poor, draw near;
Giver of all gifts, be here;
Come, the soul's true radiancy.

Scripture Passage

Ephesians 1.17-19

Understand the transforming power of faith

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit is not just a 'holy spirit' (cf. *Is* 63:10,11; *Ps* 51:13), nor even the 'Spirit of God' in a general way (cf. *Gen* 41:38; *Ex* 31:3; *1 Cor* 2:11,12; *Phil* 3:3; etc.). He is the 'Spirit of Christ' (*Rom* 8:9), the 'Spirit of God's Son' (*Gal* 4:6), the 'Spirit of Jesus Christ' (*Phil* 1:19). He is expressed in the crucified and risen Lord.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Birmingham

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY THREE

SUNDAY 24 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

3 Come, of comforters the best,
 Of the soul the sweetest guest,
 Come in toil refreshingly:

Scripture Passage

Live up to your calling!

Ephesians 4.1-6, 15-16

I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit has a direct relationship with love: it is through the Holy Spirit that God's love is poured into our hearts' (*Rom 5:5*). St Augustine said, 'If you see acts of charity, you see the Trinity ... the Spirit moves believers to love others as Christ loved them'.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Coventry

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY FOUR

MONDAY 25 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

4 Thou in labour rest most sweet,
 Thou art shadow from the heat,
 Comfort in adversity.

Scripture Passage

Ephesians 5.15-20

Watch how you live

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit stimulates us to engage in relationships of charity with all people. In this way, when we love we make room for the Spirit, we allow him to express himself in fullness.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Derby

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY FIVE

TUESDAY 26 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

5 O thou Light, most pure and blest,
Shine within the inmost breast
Of thy faithful company.

Scripture Passage

Be strong and pray

Ephesians 6.10-12, 18-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

Reflection and Response

There is no authentic prayer without the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. He becomes the most secret and most stable part of our being, from which a movement of prayer rises incessantly to God. We need greater sensitivity and attention to his presence in us, to transform it into prayer, learning to speak with the Father as children – dependent, but also free.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Dioceses of Exeter and Truro

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY SIX

WEDNESDAY 27 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

6 Where thou art not, man hath nought;
 Every holy deed and thought
 Comes from thy divinity.

Scripture Passage

1 Corinthians 12.3-7, 11

The Spirit at work in all who believe

I want you to understand brothers and sisters that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

All [the Spirit's gifts] are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit gives each Christian a rich and fertile spiritual life in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation: not a 'spirit of *slavery*', without freedom; but spirit of *adoption*, because with Christ we can call God 'Abba, Father!' (*Rom* 8:2, 15), and like Christ do the works of love.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Dioceses of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY SEVEN

THURSDAY 28 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

7 Sinful hearts do thou make whole
Bring to life the arid soul,
Guide the feet that go astray.

Scripture Passage

One Spirit begets one body

1 Corinthians 12.13-14, 18-20, 24b-26 31

In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body.

God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Reflection and Response

When Paul lists the fruits of the Holy Spirit, mentions love first: 'love, joy, peace,' etc. (*Gal 5:22*). Love *unifies*; and the Spirit is above all creator of the Body of Christ, communion, within the Christian community.

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Lichfield

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY EIGHT

FRIDAY 29 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

8 Make the stubborn heart unbend;
 To the faint new hope extend,
 Wounded souls, their hurt allay.

Scripture Passage

Romans 12.1-3, 9-10

Spiritual worship is a living sacrifice

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour.

Reflection and Response

The Holy Spirit influences not only a Christian's *actions* but his or her very *being*. In fact, he says that the Spirit of God *dwells* in us (cf. *Rom* 8:9; *2 Cor* 3:16) and that 'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts' (*Gal* 4:6).

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Oxford

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

DAY NINE

SATURDAY 30 MAY

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

Opening Prayer

'Close your eyes to all the noises of the world, enter into your soul, then say':

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me; and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will.

Sequence Verse

9 Fill thy faithful, who confide
 In thy power to guard and guide,
 With thy sevenfold mystery.

Scripture Passage

Romans 8.22-27

Hope carries us forward

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves: we who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen isn't hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Reflection and Response

The Spirit is a generous 'down payment' which God himself has given us ahead of time and at the same time guarantee of our future inheritance (cf. *2 Cor* 1:22; 5:5; *Eph* 1:13-14).

R./ Renew your wonders, Lord, in the Church of today, and in each one of us, 'as by a new Pentecost'. Lord, hear my prayer.

Intercession

Pray for Ebbsfleet affiliated clergy and parishes in the Diocese of Salisbury

Closing prayer

O Heavenly King, O Advocate, Spirit of Truth, you who are everywhere present, filling all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life; come and dwell in us, cleanse us from all impurity, and, O Good One, save our souls. Amen.

PENTECOST

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2.1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability

Sequence Verse

10 Here thy grace and virtue send:
Grant salvation to the end,
And in heav'n felicity.

Amen Alleluia!

Closing prayer

Grant Lord, that by your Holy Spirit present in us to give life and between us to give unity, we may know those things we have the power of Christ to do in our daily lives, and, knowing them, we may do them, for your glory. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.