

# CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Sixth Sunday of Easter

*This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday alone or with your household. 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 there is more than one person present, choose someone to lead the prayer and one or two people to do the readings.*

*Whoever leads the prayer can say:*

When Philip “proclaimed the Christ” to the crowds, they were “united in welcoming the message Philip preached”. Their full acceptance of the word of God provoked Peter and John to go to them and lay hands on them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. This fulfils what Jesus promised us the night before he died: “[The Father] will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth.” The reason for our “hope” is a Person we have met: Christ the Lord whom we “reverence” in our hearts and whose commandments we keep. Just as the crowds are transfixed by the attraction of Philip, so we are captivated by the One who has loved us and revealed himself to us. This is the source of our joy in the face of all slander.

## **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, such as:*

O my God,

I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,  
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments,  
but most of all because they offend Thee, my God,  
who art all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more  
and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Amen.

*The following are the readings of the Sixth Sunday of Easter.*

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

**8:5-8, 14-17**

**P**HILIP WENT TO a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

*The word of the Lord.*

**R** Thanks be to God.

————• **PSALM 65** •————

**R** (1) Cry out with joy to God all the earth.

**Or:** Alleluia!

Cry out with joy to God all the earth,

O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

Say to God: “How tremendous your deeds!” **R**

“Before you all the earth shall bow;  
shall sing to you, sing to your name!”

Come and see the works of God,  
tremendous his deeds among men. **R**

He turned the sea into dry land,  
they passed through the river dry-shod.

Let our joy then be in him;  
he rules for ever by his might. **R**

Come and hear, all who fear God.

I will tell what he did for my soul:  
Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer  
nor withhold his love from me. **R**

**A reading from**  
**the first Letter of Saint Peter**

**3:15-18**

**R**EVERENCE THE LORD Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

*The word of the Lord.*

**R** Thanks be to God.

**Alleluia, alleluia!** Jesus said: “If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.” **Alleluia!**

**J**ESUS SAID TO his disciples: “If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.”  
*The Gospel of the Lord.*

*Allow for a few minutes of silent reflection. The following passage could be read:*

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

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*Why We Keep the Commandments*

A Christian is a disciple of the Lord who keeps his commandments, and if not...Jesus has said openly: He cannot be my disciple.

A Christian seeks God's will, the happiness of others, and...the Church's presence in today's world. A Christian loves the cross of Christ and carries it in his or her life. A Christian is a living Credo, continuing Jesus' work here on earth, and making the song of hope resound in the midst of the world's trials.

Whatever difficulties may arise, the Christian remains God's heir.

For love of Christ, a Christian accepts hatred if it comes....

The Holy Spirit dwells in and enlightens a Christian.

A Christian who is continually renewed makes Jesus' revolution of love alive in his or her life. With the Church, a Christian lives the Passion of Christ in union with Mary, in the midst of critics, opposition, and that suffering which is destructive.

In a word, a Christian is a faithful reproduction of the life of Christ who causes all who see him or her to say, "There is Christ!"

VENERABLE FRANCIS XAVIER NGUYỄN VĂN THUẬN

*Cardinal Nguyễn Văn Thuận († 2002) was imprisoned by the Vietnamese government for thirteen years. This excerpt is from Prayers of Hope: Words of Courage, English edition © 2012, Daughters of St. Paul/Pauline Books & Media, Boston, MA. Used by permission.*

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**INTERCESSIONS**

*In a group, the leader can begin with these words:*

The Lord has promised not to leave us orphans. Counting on the boundless mercy of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we now pray:

That the Church will stand before the world without stain or blemish, holy and obedient to God's Word. Lord, in your mercy,

**R** Hear our prayer.

That divisions in the world will be healed, violence will cease, and the peace of God's Kingdom will bless the earth. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For blessings on police, firefighters, care workers and medical personnel, and all those who protect and serve us at the risk of their own lives. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

That God will strengthen and preserve our parish, that we may find creative ways of serving him during this difficult time. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

That those suffering from addictions may find liberation and peace in spite of any additional stress they are currently experiencing. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

For the grace this week to keep Christ as Lord in our hearts, ready to offer ourselves in his name to all those who need us. Lord, in your mercy, *R*

### Personal intentions

Our Father....

*In a group, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as:*

Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to you, with all our worries and concerns. Make us the living stones of the Church in this difficult time, and when we are free once more to gather in our churches, may we be strengthened in faith, hope, and charity.

### *An Act of Spiritual Communion:*

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things

and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever.

Amen.

*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.*

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

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia!  
for he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia!  
has Risen as he said, alleluia!  
Pray for us to God, alleluia!



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## Preparing for the Coming of the Advocate

*On Thursday 21 May the Church begins nine days of prayer in preparation for the celebration of Pentecost. Each evening from that day until the great feast you may wish to recite or sing the ancient hymn of longing for the Holy Spirit, known in English through the familiar hymn "Come, O Creator" which paraphrases the Latin. The tune may be found online.*

### VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS

Metre: 88 88

Suggested tune: *Plainchant—traditional*

Come, O Creator Spirit, come,  
And make within our hearts thy home;  
To us thy grace celestial give,  
Who of thy breathing move and live.

O Comforter, that name is thine,  
Of God most high the gift divine;  
The well of life, the fire of love,  
Our souls' anointing from above.

Thou dost appear in sev'n-fold dower,  
The sign of God's almighty power,  
The Father's promise, making rich  
With saving truth our earthly speech.

Our senses with thy light inflame;  
Our hearts to heav'nly love reclaim;  
Our bodies' poor infirmity  
With strength perpetual fortify.

Our mortal foe afar repel,  
Grant us henceforth in peace to dwell;  
And so to us, with thee for guide,  
No ill shall come, no harm betide.

May we by thee the Father learn,  
And know the Son, and thee discern,  
Who art of both; and thus adore  
In perfect faith for evermore.

All glory to the Father be,  
All glory Risen Son to thee;  
Who with the Paraclete art one,  
Reigning while endless ages run.

*Veni, Creator Spiritus,  
Mentes tuorum visita:  
Imple superna gratia,  
Quæ tu creasti pectora.*

*Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
Altissimi donum Dei,  
Fons vivus, ignis, caritas,  
Et spiritalis unctio.*

*Tu septiformis munere,  
Digitus paternæ dexteræ,  
Tu rite promissum Patris,  
Sermone ditans guttura.*

*Accende lumen sensibus,  
Infunde amorem cordibus,  
Infirma nostri corporis  
Virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Hostem repellas longius,  
Pacemque dones protinus:  
Ductore sic te prævio,  
Vitemus omne noxium.*

*Per te sciamus da Patrem,  
Noscamus atque Filium  
Teque utriusque Spiritum  
Credamus omni tempore.*

*Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Et Filio qui a mortuis  
Surrexit ac Paraclito  
In sæculorum sæcula.*

