

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Seventh Sunday of Easter

*(For countries where the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord was celebrated
on Thursday 21 May.)*

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:

It is after the Ascension. The remaining Apostles “have kept [the Father’s] word”; they have believed that the Father sent Jesus. They witness to the Father’s glory by enacting their own sort of triumphal entry into Jerusalem, reminiscent of Palm Sunday. It was triumphant “when they reached the city” because the Eleven were deeply united in faith and charity, resolved to do the will of the Father. It is not a coincidence that their actions mirror those of the Saviour: they go to the Upper Room and there devote themselves to prayer with one accord. As a result of this conviction, persecution is soon to follow, but they will rejoice to the extent that they share in the sufferings of Christ.

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 Seventh Sunday of Easter.

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

1:12-14

AFTER JESUS WAS taken up into heaven the Apostles went back from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, to Jerusalem, a short distance away, no more than a sabbath walk; and when they reached the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the

Zealot, and Jude son of James. All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

The word of the Lord.

℟ Thanks be to God.

—•PSALM 26•—

℟ (13) I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

Or: Alleluia!

The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink? ℟

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. ℟

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer.

Of you my heart has spoken:
"Seek his face." ℟

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

4:13-16

IF YOU CAN have some share in the sufferings of Christ, be glad, because you will enjoy a much greater gladness when his glory is revealed. It is a blessing for you when they insult you for bearing the name of Christ, because it means that you have the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God resting on you. None of you should ever deserve to suffer for being a murderer, a thief, a criminal or an informer; but if anyone of you should suffer for being a Christian, then he is not to be ashamed of it; he should thank God that he has been called one.

The word of the Lord.

℟ Thanks be to God.

Alleluia, alleluia! I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy. **Alleluia!**

**A reading from
the holy Gospel according to John**

17:1-11a

JESUS RAISED HIS eyes to heaven and said: "Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; and, through the power over all mankind that you have given him, let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do. Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with that glo-

ry I had with you before ever the world was. I have made your name known to the men you took from the world to give me. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now at last they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you; for I have given them the teaching you gave to me, and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you, and have believed that it was you who sent me. I pray for them; I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they belong to you: all I have is yours and all you have is mine, and in them I am glorified. I am not in the world any longer, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

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

Eternal Life

Writing to a cardinal of her day, Saint Catherine of Siena said that such a “bellow”, that is to say, so loud a roar, should be uttered over the body of Holy Church as would awaken the sons lying dead within her. (The saint shared the popular notion of her times that lion-cubs were born dead and the father-lion brought them to life with his powerful roar.) I do not know what the word was that Saint Catherine in her day thought ought to be shouted over the body of Holy Church. But I do know the word that ought to be shouted today to wake up those of her children who have fallen asleep. The word is “Eternity!” This is the shout of Christian awakening; the word that, like the ploughshare, can open the furrow for a new sowing of the Word....

The dogma of Christ “true God and true man” can help us in this task by restoring our courage and the freedom of faith that we need for setting about shouting “Eternity, eternity!” to the people of today. For only faith in the divinity of Christ can make the word “eternity” a concrete possibility offered to human beings, the very task of life, and not, as it would otherwise be, a mere category of thought or a vague “yearning for the Totally Other...”.

If Christ was born for me, if he became the new human being for my sake, if he sanctified himself for my sake (cf. Jn 17:19), if he died for my sins, it follows that these events involve me directly, that they have a meaning that I ought to accept and imitate in my own life.

FATHER RANIERO CANTALAMESSA, O.F.M. CAP.

Father Cantalamessa is the preacher to the papal household. This excerpt is from Jesus Christ, The Holy One of God, Alan Neame, Tr. Copyright © 1991 by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN. Reprinted with permission.

INTERCESSIONS

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

Rejoicing in the unity for which our Saviour prayed before his death, we offer our prayers to God the Father:

That through the Church’s faithful announcement of the Gospel, God’s Word may spread throughout the world and redeem all pain and suffering. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

That people in need may find help, and that peace and security may be firmly established everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

That our parish community may grow in faith, hope, and love. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

For the repose of the souls of those who have died during the coronavirus pandemic, and all those who mourn them. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

For the poor, the lonely, the unemployed, and all who are exhausted by their present circumstances: that they find refreshment and renewal in soul and body. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

For the grace this week to rejoice even when we share in the sufferings of Christ, and to glorify God in all that we say and do. 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 cæli, lætare, 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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Come, Holy Spirit

This coming week, we prepare to celebrate the great feast of Pentecost. We now pray to be open to the coming of the Holy Spirit, as our Lady and the Apostles were at the first Pentecost.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

R And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R And you will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of your faithful,
grant that by that same Holy Spirit,
we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in your consolation,
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

