



Personal Prayer Vigil 2020

Welcome!

Welcome to your personal Lenten prayer journey! For the past many years St. John' has offered on Holy Saturday interactive contemplative multi-sensory prayer vigil, but this year we are bringing that similar experience to you at home. While this is a personal prayer experience, please know that you are not alone as others are on this same journey. We hope your spirit will be filled with the Divine Presence as you attend to these matters of the soul through this guided prayer experience.

Step 1: Blocking a Sacred Time.

Please honor your commitment to spend this time with God. Since you are at home, you may need to sequester yourself some place where you will not be disturbed and your distractions are limited. This form of personal isolation is important; please tell anyone else living with you that you are about to go "of the grid" for about an hour and not to disturb you in the room you will occupy; you may also invite and encourage them to join you as a meaningful experience you can explore together. Choose a window of time when you will most likely succeed and you won't be too tired to focus.

Step 2: Setting the Table.

In the room that you choose, you will need to find a chair and a table together. Please clear the table so you can access the items of the **Supply List** easily. Most all of these items are pretty common place for any household, but just make sure you have collected them all first, so you don't have to interrupt your session when you begin. You can print off this document, but we recommend you read it on your phone, computer, or tablet so you have direct access to the embedded links.

Supply List:

1. Candles
2. Candle lighter
3. Bible
4. (7) sheets of lined paper
5. (2) blank sheets of paper
6. A working Pen
7. Medium bowl filled with water
8. (5) small rocks
9. A clan cup filled with water
10. Headphones / air pods
11. Crayons or colored pencils (optional)
12. Smart phone, computer, or tablet with Internet

Step 3: Removing Distractions

To create your sacred space, you will need to remove any visual distractions, whether it is a pile of laundry, toys, or mail, you will find it hard to concentrate if you are facing a task that needs to be done; turn away from them as best as you can. You will need to remove digital distractions, too; to get the most out of your experience, for this session, you will need a screen with an Internet connection via a cell phone, computer, or tablet. To avoid distractions, close out of any other open programs or documents, turn off notifications and alarms, and set any devices including your watch and cell phone to "silent." If the room itself is noisy or next to a noisy room, you may want to use headphones or earbuds to listen better.

Step 4: Creating a Sacred Space

Now, we need to fine tune the atmosphere of your room to set the tone and mood for you to relax and pray.

1. On your phone, computer, or tablet turn on some contemplative music:

[click on the music link](#)

NOTE: This music link is on Youtube; you may need to click through an add before it begins. Once it starts, you can minimize the app, or click back to this guide. This is a video that will play contemplative music uninterrupted during

your session; you can pause it any time you like, or come back to it if a prayer station has you move away from it. Adjust the volume to your comfort level.

2. **Light some candles** on your table for ambient light.
3. Turn off the lights in the room.
4. Take your seat

Now that you have isolated yourself, collected your supplies, removed your distractions, and created a sacred space, you are ready to begin!



Station

1

Station 1: Settle Down

Directions:

Sit and listen. You have had a busy day and even getting ready for this moment has been a chore. Just sit for a while alone in this room. Listen to the music. Take a series of slow breaths and let them out slowly. Relax and try to clear your mind. In your mind's eye, focus on the word "Peace."

*It is often very difficult to still a busy mind. Your thoughts may become restless as you try to concentrate. That is normal and expected. Take the **pen** and **one of the lined pieces of paper** and write down a list of all the things your mind wants to think about and worry over. As you write each thing down, thank your mind for bringing it to your attention and commit to mentally work through it at a later time. Focus on the word "Peace." If your mind tries to bring it up again, reassure your mind that you will not forget about it, because you have already written it down and will deal with it later; focus on the word "Peace."*

"Be Still and Know that I am God"
-Psalm 46:10

Consider:

You will probably need to repeat this process several times during this time for each idea that is bothering you and your list may become quite lengthy. That's OK. Don't get frustrated and don't give in to giving each distracting thought more mental space than writing it down and committing to deal with it later. Return to "Peace." Think of each distracting thought as a helium balloon that is getting filled, and you then decide to let it go and fly away. Stay in this place as long as you need, until you feel the word you are reaching out to find: Peace

Station

2

Station 2: Water Rocks

Directions:

1. *Take a look back on your list of troubles you wrote down in the last prayer station and with your **pen** star the top five things that concern you the most. These are your “rocks.”*
2. *From the table, pick up one of your **rocks**, and assign it to one of your top five troubles on your list. Visualize that situation, that person, or that worry as you hold the rock. Allow yourself to feel the emotions of anger, hurt, or fear you associate with that trouble while you feel the rough edges and corners of the rock in your hand.*
3. *You need to let go of this trouble and give it God to take and transform it for your good. When you feel ready, drop the rock into **bowl of water**, to represent that you are handing these things over to God.*
4. *Repeat steps 2 and 3 for **each of the rocks** on the table.*
5. *Lastly, take a drink from the **cup of water** on the table.*

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.”

—1 Peter 5:7

Consider:

As you drink from the cup, feel God refreshing you from the inside out. Those rocks are off of the table, out of your hands, and submerged out of your reach. Leave them there. Don't pick them up again; they are no longer yours to hold or carry. Trust that God will cleanse, renew, and refresh those areas of your life you have given over to him to transform.

Station

3

Station 3: Confession

Directions:

Perhaps in the previous stations as your mind settled, some of your struggles and sins came to mind. Reflect on this past week, and tell God you are sorry for any wrong you have done. Push your chair back and kneel. Enter a time of confession.

**“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.
-Psalm 32:1–2**

Consider:

In these two verses of this Psalm, David uses all three words for sin in the Old Testament as well as three different word pictures for forgiveness:

1. **Pesa (peh-shah)**, translated "transgression"s as a sin of willful rebellion by crossing a boundary you knew it was wrong to do. Used 93 times in the OT. It is paired with **Nasa (nass-say)**; the first picture of forgiveness, which means "to lift up and carry away"
2. **Chataah (kha-tah)** is used for sin; it literally means to "miss the mark." It is used 580 time in the OT--the principal word for sin. **Kacah (kaw-saw)** is next picture for forgiveness; it means to hide or conceal.
3. **Awon (aw-vone)** translates as "iniquity" is the third sinful descriptor. It has 231 usages in OT. It is means to intentionally or unintentionally turn and "stray from the path." The third picture of forgiveness is **Chashab (khaw-shab)**--an accounting term, that suggests your short comings and debts will be cancelled and not be counted against you.

So sin means to willfully cross a boundary, to miss the mark, and to stray from the path, but to be forgiven means our sin is picked up off our shoulders and carried away, our sin is covered and made invisible as if it never happened, and that the debts are cleared and are not counted against us! That is good news! Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, you are forgiven.

Station

4

Station 4: Jewish Hand washing

Consider:

Faithful Jews have done this ritual hand washing, *netilat yadayim*, for millennia, usually before any meal containing bread. Hand washing for them was a spiritual exercise not just an act of personal hygiene. During the outbreak of COVID-19, we all have been called to be more mindful of washing our hands throughout the day to help reduce the risk of contracting the virus. Let us now wash our hands being more mindful of God at work in our life and his cleansing forgiveness of the sins we just confessed in the last station.

¹⁶Wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong, ¹⁷ learn to do right!
Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.

¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together,"
says the Lord. "Though your sins are like
scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool."

—Isaiah 1:16–18

Directions:

1. Remove your rings—unless you never remove them, in which case they are considered “part of your hand.”

2. Fill the **cup** with water and pour in twice on your right hand over the **bowl of water**. Repeat on the left. (Lefties: reverse the order.)¹ Make sure the water covers your entire hand until the wrist bone with each pour. Separate your fingers slightly to allow the water in between them. Rabbi Chisda says, “Don’t skimp. Fill your hands with water and God will fill them with His goodness.”

3. After washing, lift your hands chest-high and say the following blessing out loud:

“Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.”

4. Rub your hands together and then dry them. Be careful not to speak or get involved in anything else until you’ve recite the blessing.

Station 5: Prayers concerning COVID-19



Consider:

This past month COVID-19 has touched every aspect of our human condition. In every nation, people in families, friendships, businesses, churches, schools, etc.. have all had to adapt, change, and relate differently to one another. Below you will find the prayer of the Psalmist during the time of a great pestilence. He reassures the faithful of God’s protection and providence during a time of great fear. May we hear his words and say prayers for each specific group of people whom are affected written out below.

¹ “He who dwells
in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the Lord,
“He is my refuge and my fortress, my God,
in whom I trust.”

³ Surely he will save you from the fowler’s
snare and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings
you will find refuge;
his faithfulness
will be your shield and rampart.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence
that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague
that destroys at midday.

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

—Psalm 91:1–7

Directions:

Below you will find a list of groups of people who have been impacted by COVID-19. Each group has unique stresses and problems that they face as they adapt to the changing circumstances of the world around us. Pray prayers of protection, direction, and peace:

**For doctors, nurses, first responders, and caretakers exposed to the virus while helping the sick*

**For teachers and students whom are out of school trying to instruct and trying to learn outside of the classroom*

**For parents teleworking at home while taking care of their children*

**For the unemployed and underemployed who are without work and without pay trying to make ends meet*

**For businesses mandated to close their doors making hard decision to stay afloat, protect their employees, and their clientele.*

**For virologists and epidemiologists working hard to find a cure*

**For pastors and churches trying to shepherd their flock and inspire hope when they cannot gather together for support*

**For the shut-ins who cannot leave their home or receive visitors*

**For the homeless who have no safe place of shelter or Internet connection*

**For members of the police and armed services trying to keep our streets and nation safe*

**For the incarcerated who cannot be released*

**For the lonely and estranged who cannot socialize or connect with anyone*

**For all who are worried, fearful, helpless, hopeless and in need of encouragement, direction, and support*

**For wisdom in world leaders and governments*

**For stock markets and economies and growing debts*

**For the sick in need of respirators and medical attention*

**For the families of the tens of thousands of COVID deaths*

**For resilience for those yet to be infected but will be soon*

**For unity, collaboration, and good will between the nations*

**For my own family and friends in need of protection*

**For any other group of people brought to mind during this exercise not mentioned above in need of God's grace.*

LORD HERE OUR PRAYERS



Station 6: Stations of the Cross

Consider:

Every year, especially during Lent, many faithful Catholics follow the stations of the cross. Time and tradition have identified 14 snapshot moments of the Passion of Jesus' journey from Pilate's order to his death on the cross. As we prepare our own hearts for the coming resurrection, we need to travel through with Jesus down the path of our own introspection and pain. This video will be a guide asking us questions to ponder.

Directions:

Follow this link to the video called:

21st Century Stations of the Cross

(or type: bit.ly/21stcrossstations into your Internet browser)

NOTE: The video is on Youtube;

- 1. Please do not be distracted by any adds you can click through*
- 2. Please click to view full screen*
- 3. Please don't be tempted to click on of other videos you may like*
- 4. During the video take the **pen** and **one of the lined pieces of paper** and write down the questions you hear that give you pause to consider in your life.*
- 5. When the video is over, **click on the music link** again before you move on to the next station.*



Station 7: Lexio Divina

Consider:

Let us presently return to God's word with a Divine reading from the book of 1 Corinthians. This amazing epistle by St. Paul is all about the church struggling with how to be the church in a world

of adversity. Its message resounds with us strongly today. If you would like to be a part of our online study of this book, [check it out here](#), please email Jarrod (jconyers@stjohns-abq.org).

“How sweet are your words to my taste;
they are sweeter than honey. Your
commandments give me understanding; no
wonder I hate every false way of life. Your
word is a lamp for my feet
and a light for my path. ”
- Psalm 119:103-105

Directions:

*Pick up your **Bible** from the table and go to this passage:*

1 Corinthians 12:6-20. *Pray that God will reveal to you something about himself through your reading of His Word. Then read through the selected text very slowly three times. As you read, you may be drawn to a particular word or phrase. When that happens—STOP. Stay with the words that moved you, maybe repeating them slowly to yourself, allow them to sink into your heart. Allow your mind, your memory and your imagination to be free and to lead you to a deeper understanding of the text through the Spirit’s guidance.*

Station

8

Station 8: Merton’s Prayer

Consider:

Thomas Merton. (1915 – 1968) was an American Catholic writer, theologian and mystic. A Trappist monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, Kentucky, he was a poet, social activist, and student of comparative religion. Merton wrote more than 70 books,

mostly on spirituality, social justice and quiet pacifism. The prayer you will read is from one of his famous works, "Thoughts in Solitude" where he addresses the pleasure of a solitary life, as well as the necessity for quiet reflection in an age when so little is private. He has much to say to age about knowing and living a life of faith.

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." -John 3:8

Directions:

1. *Read this prayer that Thomas Merton wrote and consider how it fits into the context of your own life and faith.*
2. *Consider: Where does it challenge you? How does it help you? What does it mean to you?*
3. *Then, pray this prayer out loud and from your heart.*

“MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please

you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.” -Thomas Merton



Station 9: Story Prayers

Consider:

It is often difficult to see God at work in our lives, especially when we encounter pain, disappointment, and suffering. That does not mean He is not present enduring that difficulty with us. This station is one of redemptive healing as you zero in to a painful event you have faced or are facing now.

Directions:

- 1) *Before you begin, think of a scene of a difficult situation in your past or present that brings you pain.*
- 2) *Take the **crayons** before you and draw out that scene on a **blank white sheet of paper** with stick figures or any other way you may*

wish. (You can use your pen if you could not find colors to use)
Questions to ask as you draw your scene: What colors do you use?
Where does the scene take place? What people are present? Do you
write in thought or speech bubbles to the people you draw?

3) Take a moment and look at your picture; remember the feelings you
had, and pray about the situation.

4) Then ask yourself, “Where was Jesus in this situation?”

5) Draw Jesus into your picture. Is he close? Is he far away? Is he
beside you? Put him in and remember his promise that he is always with
you.

Station

10

Station 10: Conversation prayers

Consider:

God is able to speak to us all the time, but we are too often too
busy to listen. During this time where many of us have had more
time to be at home, have we made more time to listen to God?

Now is a good moment, where you have committed to be
present before him. Just as the young prophet Samuel heard God speak to him
before he went to sleep, may you hear God’s voice speak to you, now.

**“The Lord came and stood there, calling as
at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then
Samuel said, ‘Speak Lord,
for your servant is listening.’”**

--1 Samuel 3:10

Directions:

Sit and talk to God as if were beside you:

1) Pray that God will converse with you as you prepare to begin writing, and that your heart will be ready to listen.

*2) Ponder in your heart a difficult situation or a question that you want to ask God about, then grab the **pen** and **several sheets of lined paper** on the table. Write out your question you want to ask God.*

3) When you are done, skip to the next line and indent

4) Write whatever comes to your mind in response without thinking about it, questioning it, or editing it. Just write it down!

5) Write your response to that back on the left margin, then indent on the next line and keep doing this as the dialogue goes back and forth between you and God speaking to your heart.

6) When you feel you are done. Read back over what you wrote out, and pray over what is written.



Station 11: I Thirst

Consider:

St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta wrote out a famous devotion called, "I Thirst." It was a lengthy reflection of what she imagined God would say to each and all of us. An artist created a visually stunning video to go with it. We showed this at our youth group this past year, but we bring it back now in light of our circumstances to remind us of God's love and introduce the rest of you to this powerful message of redemption.

Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will
be their shepherd;
he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away
every tear from their eyes.”

—Revelation 7:16–17

Directions:

[Follow this link](#) to the video called:

I Thirst

(or type: bit.ly/Ithirst into your Internet browser)

NOTE: The video is on Youtube;

- 1. Please do not be distracted by any adds you can click through*
- 2. Please click to view full screen*
- 3. Please don't be tempted to click on of other videos you may like*
- 4. When the video is over, **[click on the music link](#)** again before you move on to the next station.*

Station

12

Station 12: Benediction

Consider:

Think back on your prayer journey now. What spoke to you? What did you discover? What pain did you unearth? What comfort did you find? What difference will it make?

May the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.
—Psalm 19:14

Directions:

1. *Sit a while and consider the questions above about this guided reflection.*
2. *So that this experience is not lost amongst the business of your life that you are about enter back into, please take the **pen** and **1 sheet of lined paper** on the table. Then write out three things you will do differently in how you live, or how you think, or how you pray as a reminder of your prayer journey to take with you.*
3. *Pray the traditional prayer of St. Francis in closing*
4. *Sit quietly as long as you like before you reengage the world different.*

The Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offense, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

AMEN.