

Worship at home

Ways of praying at home when we
cannot meet at church



Lent 2020



Julian of Norwich's Body Prayer

The 14th century Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich, once wrote, "The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be 'oned' with and like God in all things." After suffering immense pain she created this body prayer as a simple and beautiful way to pray without words.

The prayer has four simple postures. And intentions.

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, however it may come to you.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence) to come ...or not...and be what it is.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you don't know everything, that you are not in charge.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to what you are called to, willing to be present and be God's love in the world, however God calls you to.

Move through each of the postures slowly and listen for God as you focus on each of the intentions. You might like to do this in silence or you might prefer gentle music or to speak your thoughts to God.



(Images and some of the text on this page is taken from this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=96&v=IKdXykzTXk&feature=emb_logo)

Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of meditating on Scripture. It was first introduced by St. Gregory of Nyssa (c 330- 395), and also encouraged by St. Benedict of Nursia (c 480-547), the founder of the Benedictine order. In Lectio Divina, the chosen passage is read prayerfully several times. This gives an opportunity to think deeply about it and respond thoughtfully. You may even find yourself imagining that you are part of the scene – it can give a new way of understanding familiar passages.

The 4 'R's of Lectio Divina:

LECTIO (READ) Take your time to read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage for a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen with your heart.

MEDITATIO (REFLECT) Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what that word, phrase or passage means, particularly in your life.

ORATIO (RESPOND) Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. If you are upset or angry, say so! It is OK to ask questions! You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently.

CONTEMPLATIO (REMAIN) Now take some time simply to rest and remain in the presence of God. You may want to record some of your thoughts or prayers in a journal so you can come back to them later.

(Adapted from the Catholic Youth Prayer Book, St Mary's Press, Winona, 2006)

Some scripture passages to pray with:

Mt 9:9-13

Lk 8:4-8

Lk 23:39-43

Mt 11:25-30

Lk 15:1-7

Jn 15:1-11

Mk 4:35-41

Lk 18:35-43

Jn 21:15-17

(Finger) Walking a Labyrinth

Walking a labyrinth is an ancient meditation practice drawn from Celtic Christianity. Often Labyrinths were marked out with stones or cut into the hillside. Sometimes you find labyrinth patterns on the floors of cathedrals – the labyrinth at Chartres being the most famous.

If mobility is difficult or you cannot get outside though (If you are self-isolating, for example!) then you can ‘take your finger for a walk’ round a labyrinth instead – tracing the lines slowly and meditatively into the centre and out again.

A Labyrinth is different from a maze. There is only one path. You cannot get lost.

As you travel inwards, think about your life journey up until this point. Think of all the highs and lows. All the turning points. All the times when you have noticed God at work. Notice how the path turns back on itself and you pass close by to events in the past. How have things in your life been connected?

Offer all of these to God.

When you get to the centre, rest a while in God’s presence. Just be still and attentive.

When you are ready, slowly trace your finger back out of the labyrinth. Imagine you are walking outwards, back into the world, knowing God’s presence with you. Listen to what new things God may be calling you to now.



The Ignatian Examen

Over 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness through the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us.

- 1. Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
- 2. Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
- 3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?
- 4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
- 5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Lord's Prayer.

(Adapted from <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/>)

Praying for Others

When we are isolated from others it can feel very lonely. And those we care about will be feeling lonely too. Don't forget to pray for them! You could:

- ✦ Use photographs of friends and family to help you focus when you pray
- ✦ Find some pebbles from the garden. Wash and dry them, and write the names of people you want to pray for on them with a pencil, felt tip or a sharpie.
- ✦ Make a prayer wall in your house where you can stick post-it notes with names or prayer requests. (Some more adventurous alternatives might be to make a prayer tree with a branch from the garden, or how about a 'prayer fridge' where you can stick the names on the front and pray for one or two each time you go to get anything out!
- ✦ Finding a map of the world and praying for a different country each day.

Prayer can be practical too...

Why not hold others in prayer by:

- ✦ Picking up the phone – particularly if you know that they are also self-isolating or may be worried or lonely
- ✦ Writing a letter to someone you haven't seen for a long time
- ✦ Sending a quick text of reassurance – let someone know you're praying for them

Praying with others:

It may not be possible to meet in person, but you can pray with others by using the same words at (roughly) the same time.

- ✦ Use the printed order of service and the reading list
- ✦ Download the 'Pray as you go' app (or the CofE's 'Daily Prayer' app)
- ✦ Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Remember – you are never alone – at any time there are people across the world joining their prayers with the saints and all the hosts of Heaven.

Get Creative!

We are made in the image of a creator God, so have a go at being prayerfully creative!

- ✦ Try some mindful colouring. Try printing some adult colouring sheets with a Christian theme and focusing on the words or themes as you colour: <http://joditt.com/free-christian-coloring-pages-adults/>
- ✦ Bake some bread. As you eat it you could read the story of the feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-14) and pray for those around the world who don't know where their next meal is coming from. **(This would also be a good thing to do during Holy Week. Read Mark 14:12-26 for the account of the Last Supper)**
- ✦ Make Easter cards and send them to your neighbours. Pray for them as you do.
- ✦ Make a Lenten Jesus Tree. You could make the ornaments out of paper or, if you are feeling particularly crafty, maybe felt! (Like a Christmas tree or a Jesse tree, but all the ornaments tell the story of Jesus' life) Find a free set of print-able and colourable ornaments here: <http://stbrigidsacademy.blogspot.com/2011/03/the-jesus-tree.html>
- ✦ Sing your favourite hymns
- ✦ Have a go at writing a new hymn! (Pick a well-known tune and write some new words)
- ✦ Write a psalm or a poem
- ✦ Make some origami birds or butterflies to remind you of the hope that comes with Jesus' resurrection

If you have facebook we would love to see (or hear!) your creations! Please post us a picture or a recording!

And when you've run out of words...

*...light a candle (or have a battery powered one) and know that God is with you, and that the Holy Spirit 'intercedes with sighs too deep for words'.
(Romans 8:26)*