

OPENING PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

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

Leader:

Turn our hearts to you, eternal Father,
and grant that, seeking always the one thing necessary
and carrying out works of charity,
we may be dedicated to your worship.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

All: *Amen.*



Reflection (Pope Francis, “Angelus Address” / March 21, 2021 [I])

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, the liturgy proclaims the Gospel in which Saint John refers to an episode that occurred in the final days of Christ’s life, shortly before the Passion (cf. Jn 12:20-33). While Jesus was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, several Greeks, curious because of what he had been doing, express the wish to see him. They approach the apostle Philip and say to him: “We wish to see Jesus” (v. 21). “We wish to see Jesus”. Let us remember this: “We wish to see Jesus”. Philip tells Andrew and then together they report it to the Teacher. In the request of those Greeks we can glimpse the request that many men and women, of every place and every time, pose to the Church and also to each one of us: “We wish to see Jesus”.

And how does Jesus respond to that request? In a way that makes us think. He says: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.... Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (vv. 23-24). These words do not seem to respond to the request those Greeks made. In reality, they surpass it. In fact, Jesus reveals that for every man and woman who wants to find him, He is the hidden seed ready to die in order to bear much fruit. As if to say: if you wish to know me, if you wish to understand me, look at the grain of wheat that dies in soil, that is, look at the cross.

Prayers of Intercession

In Christ the Lord, we are made a new creation. Let us call to him in prayer:

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, clothe us with compassion, kindness and humility,

–help us to be patient with everyone.

Teach us to be true neighbors to all in trouble and distress,

–and so follow the way of the Good Samaritan.

Help us to deny ourselves today,

–and not to deny those in need.

May we receive this day, and each day, of penance as your gift,

–and offer it back to you through works of mercy.

Master our rebellious hearts,

–and teach us to surrender our lives to you in trust.

Grant us the gift of your mercy,

–forgive our sins and make us instruments of your merciful love.

All:

O Lord,

*who hast mercy upon all,
take away from me my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me
the fire of thy Holy Spirit.*

*Take away from me
the heart of stone,
and give me a heart of flesh,
a heart to love and adore Thee,
a heart to delight in Thee,
to follow and enjoy Thee,
for Christ's sake,*

Amen.

St. Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-397)

MID SESSION PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

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

Reflection (Pope Francis, “Angelus Address” / March 21, 2021 [II])

The sign of the Cross comes to mind, which over the centuries has become the symbol par excellence of Christians. Even today, those who wish to “see Jesus”, perhaps coming from countries and cultures where Christianity is not well-known, what do they see first? What is the most common sign they encounter? The Crucifix, the Cross. In churches, in the homes of Christians, even worn on their persons. The important thing is that the sign be consistent with the Gospel: the cross cannot but express love, service, unreserved self-giving: only in this way is it truly the “tree of life”, of overabundant life.

Examination of Conscience (From “The Magnificat Lenten Companion / Lent 2021”)

- ✘ For the times when I forget that I need a Savior, and arrogantly rely on myself as if I am sufficient to myself: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I trust my sinful attachments more than the Father’s love: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I allow my own reactions and opinions to supersede the truth of the Father revealed to me through Christ in his Church: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I shun the presence of Christ, whether it be his sacramental presence or his presence through the people he puts in my life: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I blaspheme by using other human beings as things that I can manipulate or use for my own selfish ends: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I abuse those things the Father has given to me for the building up of his kingdom: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*
- ✘ For the times when I justify my sinfulness: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.*

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father ...

CLOSING PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

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

Reflection (Pope Francis, “Angelus Address” / March 21, 2021 [III])

Today too, many people, often without saying so, implicitly would like to “see Jesus”, to meet him, to know him. This is how we understand the great responsibility we Christians and of our communities have. We too must respond with the witness of a life that is given in service, a life that takes upon itself the style of God – closeness, compassion and tenderness – and is given in service. It means sowing seeds of love, not with fleeting words but through concrete, simple and courageous examples, not with theoretical condemnations, but with gestures of love. Then the Lord, with his grace, makes us bear fruit, even when the soil is dry due to misunderstandings, difficulty or persecution, or claims of legalism or clerical moralism. This is barren soil. Precisely then, in trials and in solitude, while the seed is dying, that is the moment in which life blossoms, to bear ripe fruit in due time. It is in this intertwining of death and life that we can experience the joy and true fruitfulness of love, which always, I repeat, is given in God’s style: closeness, compassion, tenderness.

May the Virgin Mary help us to follow Jesus, to walk, strong and joyful, on the path of service, so that the love of Christ may shine in our every attitude and become more and more the style of our daily life.

Prayer (From “The Magnificat Lenten Companion / Lent 2021”)

Leader:

God our Father,
in this Lenten season may we not betray your love by trying to deserve it.
Help us to fast from all that distracts us from your love.
Help us to recognize you as the origin and goal
of all of the desires you place in our hearts.
Help us to be true to ourselves and true to you
by continuing to beg for your love.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph (for the “Year of St. Joseph)

***All: Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.***

***To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.***

***Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.***

***Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil.***

Amen.

