



*Silence of the heart  
is necessary so you  
can hear God everywhere—  
in the closing of the door,  
in the person who needs you,  
in the birds that sing,  
in the flowers, in the animals.*

*—Mother Teresa*

**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**28 June 2020**

**Invitation to Prayer**

As we begin this time of worship,  
may our minds be still,  
may our hearts be open,  
may we receive God's love and peace.

**Gathering Prayer**

Like the bare branches of the winter trees,  
I come empty,  
transparent,  
simple in my longing for you  
and for the world that, with your love, might be.

I come to rest in your presence,  
to hibernate for a time  
in this undemanding Sabbath space  
where I might lean on you—the Great Goodness  
that enlivens me and all that is.

Warm me with the sun of your love.  
Shower me with beauty that I might grow lush with grace.  
Fill me with Spirit and send me forth  
to be what I encounter in the silence of my prayer.  
Amen.

**Scripture Reading**—Psalm 13 from *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill

*We are invited to express all of our feelings to God as we would a friend. But sometimes we may be reluctant to do this. Why?*

*Maybe we are struggling to admit and sit with hard feelings ourselves. We may be stoic and dismiss (or even flee from) our anger, disappointment and pain. We may see lament as being unfaithful since we believe our suffering is a test or punishment from God and therefore it is something we need to endure on our own. Or perhaps we wish to be optimistic and therefore we see lament as a downer that stands in the way of positive thinking.*

*When we allow our spiritual lives to breath into and, in fact, be life, many gifts are opened to us. The psalms lead the way when it comes to sharing our fulness with God. Read Psalm 13 slowly and prayerfully, pausing at the places indicated, bringing your own experience to the prayer.*

How long, my Beloved?  
Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I bear this pain in my soul,  
and live with sorrow all the day?  
How long will fear rule my life?

*What situation brings pain  
to your soul at this time?*

Notice my heart and answer me,  
O my Beloved;  
Enlighten me, lest I walk  
as one dead to life;  
Lest my fears say,  
“We have won the day,”  
lest they rejoice in their strength.

*Where are you experiencing  
lifelessness right now?*

As I trust in your steadfast Love,  
my heart will rejoice,  
for in You is freedom.  
I shall sing to the Beloved,  
who has answered my prayers  
a thousandfold!  
Come, O Beloved, make your home in my heart.

*Choose a line from above  
and repeat it silently  
for a few moments as your prayer.*

## Going Deeper

As you reflect on your prayer experience with Psalm 13 just now:

- Where did the prayer of the psalmist resonate for you?
- Where did the words jar or feel uncomfortable for you?
- What, if anything, is being revealed to you?

This week's psalm, Psalm 13, is a psalm of lament. It includes the traditional elements of lament such as expressing one's complaint, invoking God's presence, asking God for help, resting confidently in God's love, offering praise and gratitude.

- When you consider your journey at this time, do you find yourself at home with one of these elements more than the others?
- What, if anything, might this say about your life? about your relationship with God?



A friend may well know that you are sad, but she will feel trusted if you tell her about it. And you will feel a lot better. Friendship with God operates much the same way. God is interested in your willingness to entrust how you are feeling. So when you are sad or depressed, take a moment to become aware of God's presence, of God looking at you.

(from *Praying the Truth* by William Barry)

Now or later, you might try writing your own prayer of lament. Try including the traditional elements—lament, invocation, petition, confidence and praise.

### Reflections in Solitude and Silent Meditation

*You might choose to read the Reflections in Solitude for this week followed by silent meditation.*

How to meditate—from the World Community for Christian Meditation

To meditate, sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer-phrase, "Ma-ra-na-tha." Say it as four syllables of equal length.

Listen to it as you say it, gently but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything—spiritual or otherwise. If thoughts and images come, these are distractions at the time of meditation, so keep returning simply to saying the word.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Loving God, we give thanks that you are not far away from us, but are nearer to us than our breath. Though we may travel through shadows of death and seasons of confusion and sorrow, we know you are with us for every day the light of your love dawns. May we trust in your steadfast presence as we bring before you the longings of our heart.

We hold in the light of love the concerns we have for our world...

*We pray, bring us healing, bring us peace.*

We hold in the light of love the concerns we have for our land and our communities...

*We pray, bring us healing, bring us peace.*

We hold in the light of love the concerns we have for those we know and for ourselves...

*We pray, bring us healing, bring us peace.*

## **Disciples' Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.

## **Blessing**

As we move away from this time of Sabbath prayer,  
may we carry in our bodies and souls  
a silent stillness that enables deep awareness.

May we live out the grace and compassion we've received  
leading us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

The love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the communion of the Spirit be with us all.