

God's love appears to slip momentarily behind a cloud. Again, ask what that more difficult element of this recollection is drawing us to focus on.

Still in silence and stillness, give an opportunity for God to speak: maybe God is whispering an invitation to do something; perhaps God is providing the power of support, maybe offering understanding; perhaps God is silent, waiting for another moment in which to respond. Gently returning to the present moment it is always good to conclude with a short period of thanks and gratitude.

Experiencing the power of God's love, working unexpectedly in the lives of each us, can be a powerful way of learning that we are loved and have capacity to love others. Prayer plays a significant role in helping us to see how powerful the love of God in our poor earthenware vessels is; it also helps to sustain us when the going is tough and empower us for the challenge of loving others as we ourselves are loved by God.

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Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.**

FIRST READING Acts 14:21-27

PSALM Psalm 144

**RESPONSE I will bless your name for ever,
O God my King.**

Or **Alleluia!**

- 1. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. R.**
- 2. All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their
blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God,
to make known to men your mighty deeds
and the glorious splendour of your reign. R.**

**3. Yours is an everlasting kingdom;
your rule lasts from age to age. R.**

SECOND READING Apocalypse 21:1-5

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Jesus said: "I give you a new
commandment:
love one another, just as I have loved you."
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 13:31-35

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**I am the true vine and you are the
branches, says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears
fruit in plenty, alleluia.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Apocalypse 21:10-14, 22-23
John 14:23-29



FOCUS IN PRAYER

Loving one another is both a characteristic and an objective of fulfilling our Christian vocation. The "new commandment" of love requires us to come to terms with all that stands in the way of love in our lives: our prejudices, our pride, our pain. Any attempt to love others will struggle unless we bring to prayer both the times God's love has been evident in our lives and the times when we have felt its absence.

We can labour under the illusion that prayer is a warm, fluffy experience where peace and contentment abound. Often prayer is not only hard work, but can also invite us to address areas of our lives where we are in need: of healing, strengthening or challenging. It takes courage to bring to our prayer episodes in our lives where we have felt far from content or satisfied. Honest prayer is not for the faint-hearted but can be useful as a way of allowing the love of God to penetrate the darker corners of our lives and transform us into more effective vessels of God's love. We can also use moments of significant joy and beauty to encourage us; recalling moments in our lives where we have felt the presence of God's power, such moments often show us that we are loved and are truly capable of loving others.

A good focus in prayer is to ask the Spirit to help in remembering a significant moment in our life in order that we might see, hear, feel and taste that moment again in our mind and body. Always choose the experience to return to with care: it does not have to be a warm and beautiful one; it could be an experience that left us feeling sad or angry, but remember that experiences of trauma are best returned to in the company of appropriate professionals who can provide support through the process.

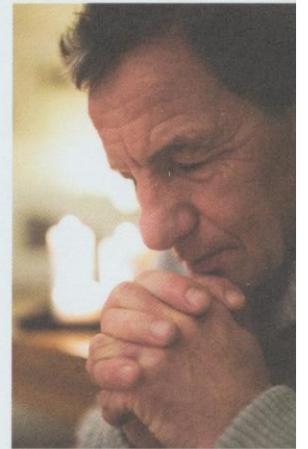
Sitting comfortably and quietly, it is good to become present to ourselves and to the gift of the Spirit. Looking back at the moment we have chosen, we allow our mind to relive that time, as if we were watching a video. Sometimes it is good to run through the event a few times in our mind, then identify a particular moment during the event where the love of God gave a sense of being really alive; remember what was going on, who else was there; experience the moment again with all the power of memory. Ask what that particular memory is teaching us now, anew.

It can be useful, if one feels strong enough, to repeat the exercise and focus on a particular moment during the event where we felt least alive. Again remember how it felt when the love of God was not at the forefront of our mind; it can be painful to recall such moments but we know that Jesus has experienced betrayal and abandonment before us, and these moments are only where

Divine Thread



We continue this Easter series on prayer with Fr Paul Maddison.



15 MAY 2022

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER
YEAR C

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I