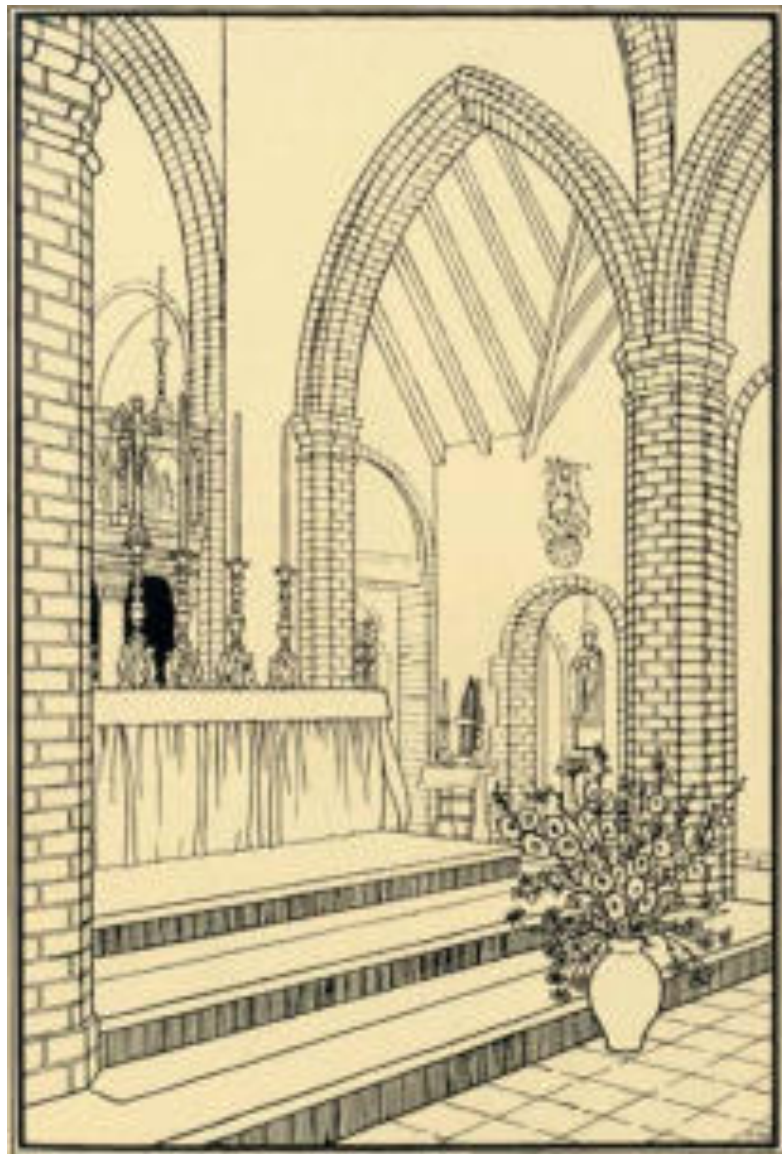


# Praying in Church

*A selection of prayers to use  
when praying in church*



THE CHURCH UNION



The Society  
under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda

# The re-opening of churches for private prayer

*June 2020*

Since March, our church buildings have been closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It has been a long period of exile from our churches, including the entirety of Easter, and so we rejoice that our church buildings are once again able to open for private prayer.

This marks the first step towards the resumption of the sacramental life, including public celebration of the Eucharist and reception of holy communion in churches. We pray that Christians may find spiritual solace and healing at this time of crisis through prayer and devotion in our country's familiar sacred spaces.

As you come and pray in church, you might want to spend some time in silent contemplation of all that has happened over recent months. It may be that you want to pray for family and friends or say some of the prayers which are familiar to you.

In this booklet, we provide prayers which may help you to pray in this holy space.

The first part has some prayers that focus on different parts of the church building. As you sit in church and look around, you will see some of the wonderful things that are used as part of the worship of God. It might be that you are reacquainting yourself with the interior of the church or are noticing things that you have not noticed before. It might be that you have not entered this church building previously.

The second part has other prayers which you may find helpful at this time.

Please do take this booklet home with you to help you continue the life of prayer in your own home.

We ask that you follow all the health guidelines in place, both on your journey to church and when inside church. We are aware that not all churches will be able to open and that not all individuals will be able to leave their home to go to church.

Whatever your circumstances, we hope you find time to pray, whether in church or at home, and that you discover the love of God in your daily life.

## **Thanksgiving for the church building**

Almighty God,  
whose glory we celebrate in this house of prayer:  
we praise you for the many blessings  
you have given to those who worship you here:  
and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you,  
and, being filled with the Holy Spirit,  
may become a living temple acceptable to you;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## **The Altar**

*As you look at the Altar, pray for your parish priest, and indeed all priests who offer the Eucharist at this and indeed any altar.*

O Jesus, I pray for your faithful and fervent priests;  
for your unfaithful and tepid priests;  
for your priests labouring at home or abroad in distant mission fields;  
for your tempted priests;  
for your lonely and desolate priests;  
for your young priests;  
for your dying priests;  
for the souls of your priests in Purgatory.

But above all, I recommend to you the priests dearest to me:  
the priest who baptised me;  
the priests who've absolved me from my sins;  
the priests at whose Masses I've assisted and who've given me your Body and Blood in Holy Communion;  
the priests who've taught and instructed me;  
all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, especially \_\_\_\_\_

O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart,  
and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen. (*St Therese of Lisieux*)

### **Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament**

*One of the most difficult things during the Coronavirus pandemic has not being able to receive Holy Communion. Spend some time praying whilst focusing on the place where Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, and ask him to come into your heart and make a 'spiritual communion'.*

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love you above all things,  
and I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you were already there  
and unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

### **Prayer before a crucifix**

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus  
while before your face I humbly present myself and,  
with burning soul,  
pray and beseech you  
to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments  
of faith, hope, and charity;  
true contrition for my sins,  
and a firm purpose of amendment.  
While I contemplate,  
with great love and tender pity,  
your five most precious wounds,  
pondering over them within me  
and calling to mind the words which David,  
your prophet, said to you, my Jesus:  
"They have pierced My hands and My feet,  
they have numbered all My bones."  
Amen.

## **Image of Jesus**

*As we look at a painting, picture or statue of Jesus, we renew our commitment to him and to devote our lives to him.*

Almighty God,  
whose Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
was moved with compassion for all who had gone astray  
and with indignation for all who had suffered wrong:  
in flame our hearts with the burning fire of your love,  
that we may seek out the lost,  
have mercy on the fallen  
and stand fast for truth and righteousness;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen. *(Eric Milner-White)*

## **Image of Our Lady**

*As we look at the image of Our Lady, we ask her to provide us with her motherly care. Mary is our mother, but also an example of how we pray and contemplate the life of Jesus, we are her to pray with us and for us.*

We fly to Thy protection, O Holy Mother of God.  
Do not despise our petitions in our necessities,  
but deliver us always from all dangers,  
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin. Amen.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

### **Prayer looking at the font**

*The font is the place of Baptism, and so we pray for all those who have been baptised in this church, and for all those who are preparing for Baptism.*

We praise you, loving Father,  
for the gift of your Son Jesus.  
He was baptized in the River Jordan,  
where your Spirit came upon him  
and revealed him as the Son you love.  
He sent his followers  
to baptize all who turn to him.  
Father, we pray for all those who have been baptised at this font  
that they may be filled with your Spirit,  
and may know that they are loved as your children,  
safe in Christ for ever. Amen.

### **Lectern**

*As you look at the lectern or the pulpit, think of the Word of God that is proclaimed from there, and pray for those who proclaim the Gospel in their lives, and ask God to give you the strength to proclaim the Gospel to those you meet.*

Heavenly Father,  
Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with the words I read and hear from Holy Scripture. Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News. Open my heart to hear the Gospel and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others. Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.  
In moments of hesitation, remind me:  
If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?  
If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?  
If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?  
God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Other Prayers

### Prayer for the Church

Most gracious Father,  
we pray for your holy Catholic Church:  
fill it with all truth,  
and in all truth with all peace;  
where it is corrupt, purge it;  
where it is in error, direct it;  
where anything is amiss, reform it;  
where it is true, strengthen and confirm it;  
where it is in want, furnish it;  
where it is divided, heal it  
and unite it in your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*William Laud*)

### Prayer for the parish

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications of us thy servants; and grant to this parish all things needful for its spiritual welfare: schools wherein to bring up the young: ministers to labour in this portion of the vineyard: churches complete in the beauty of holiness. Strengthen and confirm the faithful; protect and guide the children; visit and relive the sick and afflicted; turn and soften the wicked; rouse the careless; recover the fallen; restore the penitent; remove all hindrances to the advancement of thy truth; and bring all to be of one heart and mind within the fold of thy holy Church; to the honour and glory of thy blessed name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*William John Butler*)

### Prayer for those who are ill

Lord Jesus, your hand cooled the fevered brow, strengthened the weak limb and opened eye and ear to the beauty of your Father's world. Be present to those dear to us, weakened by sickness and whose strength to pray is burdened. Be at their side to carry their cross, restore them to their families with deeper faith and stronger body. Amen. (*Bernard Funnell*)

### Prayer for the Departed

Receive, Lord, in tranquillity and peace, the souls of your servants who have departed out of this present life to be with you. Give them the life that knows no age, the good things that do not pass away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*St Ignatius of Loyola*)

### **Prayer for friends**

Be pleased, O Lord, to remember my friends, all that have prayed for me and all that have done me good. Do good to them, and return all their kindness double in their own lives, rewarding them with blessings, making them holy with your graces, and bringing them to glory. Amen. (*Jeremy Taylor*)

### **Prayers during this time of Coronavirus pandemic**

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. (*The Church of England*)

God of healing and hope,  
in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear.  
Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are  
vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger.  
Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit  
bring out the best not the worst in us.  
Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other,  
and of the strength that comes from being one body in you.  
Through Christ our wounded healer. Amen. (*The Rev'd Dr Sam Wells*)

God of all care and compassion  
you take us through the deep waters  
but never abandon us in the storm;  
we walk in the dark  
but you never leave us without light.  
Be with us in the night of our anxiety  
and in the day of our overconfidence  
that we may keep faith with each other  
as you have kept faith with us  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Stephen Oliver*)

*The illustration of the Shrine Church on the front cover is by Enid Chadwick and is reproduced by kind permission of The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.*