



A devotional for  
*Eastertide*

CHRIST CHURCH / APRIL 5–MAY 24, 2015

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### PENTECOST SUNDAY



## EASTER WEEK

Resurrection

### OPENING PRAYER

From the Easter sermon of John Chrysostom

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 20:1–18

Isaiah 25:6–9

Acts 10:34–43

Psalms 117

### FIRST READING

An epitaph for Joy Gresham by C.S. Lewis

### SECOND READING

*Touched by an Angel* by Maya Angelou

### THIRD READING

*The Day of Resurrection* by John of Damascus

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

## OPENING PRAYER

### From the Easter sermon of John Chrysostom

Let no one grieve at his poverty,  
for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;  
for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.  
He has destroyed it by enduring it.  
He destroyed Hell when He descended into it.  
He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh.

Isaiah foretold this when he said,  
“You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below.”  
Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with.  
It was in an uproar because it is mocked.  
It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed.  
It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated.  
It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive.

Hell took a body, and discovered God.  
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.  
It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.

O death, where is thy sting?  
O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!  
Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!

Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!  
Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!

Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;  
for Christ having risen from the dead,  
is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

#### John 20:1–18

*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.*

*But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the*

*body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.*

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Isaiah 25:6–9

Acts 10:34–43

Psalms 117



#### FIRST READING

### An epitaph for Joy Gresham by C.S. Lewis

Here the whole world (stars, water, air,  
And field, and forest, as they were  
Reflected in a single mind)  
Like cast off clothes was left behind  
In ashes, yet with hopes that she,  
Re-born from holy poverty,  
In lenten lands, hereafter may  
Resume them on her Easter Day.

#### SECOND READING

### *Touched by an Angel* by Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.

### THIRD READING

*The Day of Resurrection* by John of Damascus  
Translation by John Mason Neale

The day of resurrection!  
Earth, tell it out abroad;  
The passover of gladness,  
The passover of God.  
From death to life eternal,  
From earth unto the sky,  
Our Christ hath brought us over,  
With hymns of victory.  
Our hearts be pure from evil,  
That we may see aright  
The Lord in rays eternal  
Of resurrection light;  
And listening to his accents,  
May hear, so calm and plain,

His own "All hail!" and, hearing,  
May raise the victor strain.  
Now let the heavens be joyful!  
Let earth the song begin!  
Let the round world keep triumph,  
And all that is therein!  
Let all things seen and unseen  
Their notes in gladness blend,  
For Christ the Lord hath risen,  
Our joy that hath no end.

**PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION**

## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon:  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope  
where there is darkness, light  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.  
Amen.



## SECOND WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Thomas: my Lord and my God

### OPENING PRAYER

An excerpt from *Prayers for Today*  
by Johann Freylinghausen

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 20:19–31

Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20,21

Acts 4:32–35

Psalm 22

### FIRST READING

*Seven Stanzas at Easter* by John Updike

### SECOND READING

*be believing* by Tamara Hill Murphy

### THIRD READING

*Resurrection* by Mary Ann Bernard

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer of John Donne

## OPENING PRAYER

### An excerpt from *Prayers for Today*

by Johann Freylinghausen

Who is like You, Jesus, sweet Jesus?

You are the light of those who are spiritually lost.

You are the life of those who are spiritually dead.

You are the liberation of those who are imprisoned by guilt.

You are the glory of those who hate themselves.

You are the guardian of those who are paralyzed by fear.

You are the guide of those who are bewildered by falsehood.

You are the peace of those who are in turmoil.

You are the prince of those who yearn to be led.

You are the priest of those who seek the truth.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### John 20:19–31

*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*



*Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."*

*Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

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Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20,21

Acts 4:32–35

Psalms 22

## FIRST READING

### *Seven Stanzas at Easter* by John Updike

Make no mistake: if he rose at all  
It was as His body;  
If the cell's dissolution did not reverse, the molecule reknit,  
The amino acids rekindle,  
The Church will fall.  
It was not as the flowers,  
Each soft spring recurrent;  
It was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled eyes of the  
Eleven apostles;  
It was as His flesh; ours.  
The same hinged thumbs and toes  
The same valved heart  
That-pierced-died, withered, paused, and then regathered  
Out of enduring Might  
New strength to enclose.  
Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
Analogy, sidestepping, transcendence,  
Making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the faded  
Credulity of earlier ages:  
Let us walk through the door.  
The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,  
Not a stone in a story,  
But the vast rock of materiality that in the slow grinding of  
Time will eclipse for each of us  
The wide light of day.  
And if we have an angel at the tomb,

Make it a real angel,  
Weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair, opaque in  
The dawn light, robed in real linen  
Spun on a definite loom.  
Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,  
For our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,  
Lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are embarrassed  
By the miracle,  
And crushed by remonstrance.

#### SECOND READING

*be believing* by Tamara Hill Murphy,  
inspired by Luci Shaw's *Ascending*

Later on  
that day / the dark room  
was enough  
to concoct buttoned down  
in our minds.

While we lingered bolted-in  
shut-up / You  
breezed past barricade as One  
hole-pocked / exhaling  
absolution, a hot gust  
peace be with you;  
materializing new  
as Yourself / awake & alive

after the woman's claim  
you spoke her name.

afraid / our fingers  
trace your split side  
'til we inhale  
Your closer breathing  
our truer air.

### THIRD READING

#### *Resurrection* by Mary Ann Bernard

Long, long, long ago;  
Way before this winter's snow  
First fell upon these weathered fields;  
I used to sit and watch and feel  
And dream of how the spring would be,  
When through the winter's stormy sea  
She'd raise her green and growing head,  
Her warmth would resurrect the dead.

Long before this winter's snow  
I dreamt of this day's sunny glow  
And thought somehow my pain would pass  
With winter's pain, and peace like grass  
Would simply grow. (But) The pain's not gone.  
It's still as cold and hard and long  
As lonely pain has ever been,  
It cuts so deep and fear within.

Long before this winter's snow  
I ran from pain, looked high and low  
For some fast way to get around  
Its hurt and cold. I'd have found,  
If I had looked at what was there,  
That things don't follow fast or fair.  
That life goes on, and times do change,  
And grass does grow despite life's pains.

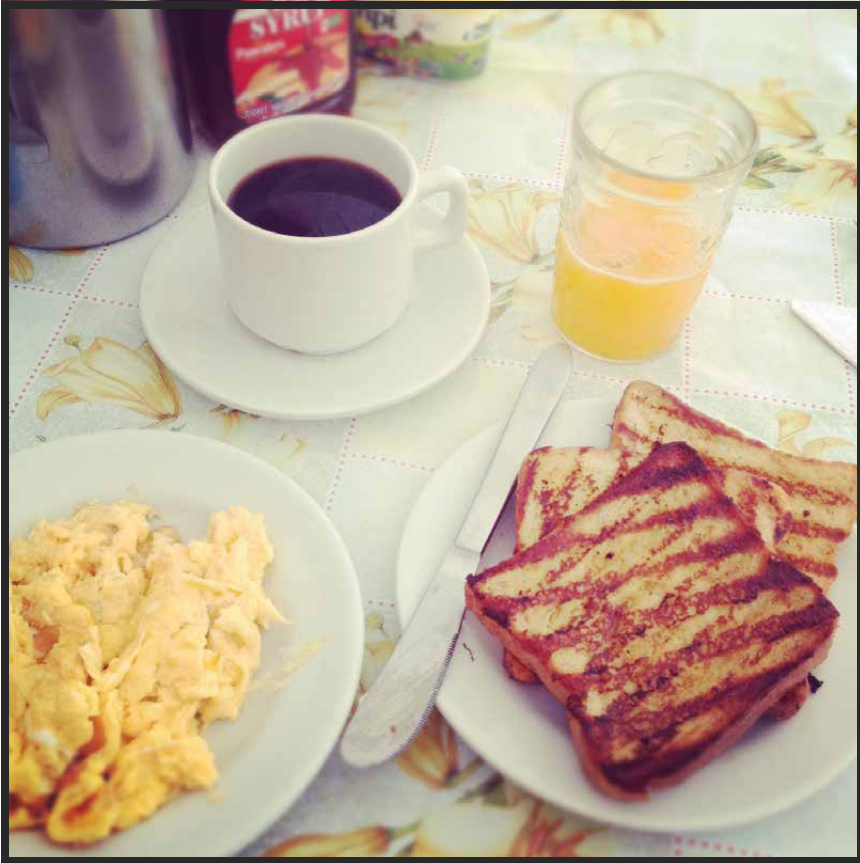
Long before this winter's snow  
I thought that this day's sunny glow,  
The smiling children and growing things  
And flowers bright were brought by spring.  
Now, I know the sun does shine,  
That children smile, and from the dark, cold, grime  
A flower comes. It groans, yet sings,  
And through its pain, its peace begins.

## PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer of John Donne

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitations of thy glory and dominion, world without end, Amen.





## THIRD WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Jesus eats with his friends

### OPENING PRAYER

*I Am Bending My Knee*

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 24:36b–48

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Acts 3:12–19

Psalms 142

### FIRST READING

*Easter* by George Herbert

### SECOND READING

Excerpted from *Easter Changes Everything*

by Frederica Mathewes-Green

### THIRD READING

*Recognizing the Bread of Life* by Tamara Hill Murphy

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Anima Christi*

## OPENING PRAYER

*I Am Bending My Knee,*  
originally from the *Carmina Gadelica I*

I am bending my knee  
In the eye of the Father who created me,  
In the eye of the Son who purchased me,  
In the eye of the Spirit who cleansed me,  
In friendship and affection.  
Through Thine own Anointed One, O God,  
Bestow upon us fullness in our need,  
Love towards God,  
The affection of God,  
The smile of God,  
The wisdom of God,  
The grace of God,  
The fear of God,  
And the will of God  
To do on the world of the Three,  
As angels and saints  
Do in heaven;  
Each shade and light,  
Each day and night,  
Each time in kindness,  
Give Thou us Thy Spirit.  
Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### Luke 24:36b–48

*As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.*

*Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

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Zephaniah 3:14–20

Acts 3:12–19

Psalms 142

FIRST READING

*Easter* by George Herbert

Rise, heart, thy lord is risen. Sing his praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With him may'st rise:  
That, as his death calcinèd thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and, much more, just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art,  
The cross taught all wood to resound his name  
Who bore the same.  
His stretchèd sinews taught all strings what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort, both heart and lute, and twist a song  
Pleasant and long;  
Or, since all music is but three parts vied  
And multiplied  
Oh let thy blessèd Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

## SECOND READING

### Excerpted from *Easter Changes Everything*

by Frederica Mathewes-Green

Easter just isn't fun in the same way Christmas is. It's commonplace to say that "Christmas is for children," but what about Easter? Is it for children, too?

It sure didn't seem so to me, back then. Compared to Christmas, Easter was boring. You could always count on Christmas to change a lot of stuff, especially in the toybox. Easter didn't change anything.

I remember my toybox, but not much of what was in it, and I don't retain any of those toys today. When I grew up, I put away childish things. When I grew up I began to be concerned with bigger things, many of them difficult to comprehend. I saw suffering and death. I saw people live through situations so crushingly unfair that it was impossible that the universe bore no witness, impossible that there was no God who could wipe tears away and effect justice on the last day. I saw people find within themselves nobility to overcome, as well, and heard them say the strength came from a source beyond their own.

These are not things children have to think about.

Easter tells us of something children can't understand, because it addresses things they don't yet have to know: the weariness of life, the pain, the profound loneliness and hovering fear of meaninglessness. Yet in the midst of this desolation we find Jesus, triumphant over death and still shockingly alive, present to us in ways we cannot understand much less explain. In him we find vibrancy of life, and a firm compassion that does

not deny our suffering but transforms and illuminates it. He is life itself. As life incarnate, he could not be held back by death.

On Easter, we will sing, over and over, dozens of times, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.” It is not a children’s song. But grownups are taller, and can see farther, and know what hard blows life can bring. Easter may seem boring to children. Yet it contains the one thing needful for every human life: the good news of Resurrection.

Easter didn’t change anything? Easter changes everything.

### THIRD READING

*Recognizing the Bread of Life* by Tamara Hill Murphy,  
adapted from work by Luci Shaw

No, He is too quick. We never  
got to say thanks. He was there  
closer breath than our mourning prayer.

Remembering  
backward, we cannot imagine how  
we did not recall His voice.

Even if we heard back then  
those three years plus seven miles of teaching  
how would we retell the new-breathed meaning His  
words made Word raised upward in the air  
with all His strong bones executing  
every law letter? or the strange

bright tales sprouting  
through crusted-over faith  
like just-activated beads of yeast? Who could  
preach the words into man's heart  
as the Spirit comes close enough to raise  
to life the decaying rot inside? Who will  
diagram the hermeneutic  
of redemption, the cadence of re-birth?  
or digestively analyze rhetoric  
made flesh? or chew through  
propositions as they moisten in the cup  
passed 'round? Will anyone sit beside  
the broken loaf? and stir the bloody  
grapey liquid? and explain  
the symbol or substance  
telling truth that no sermon made us recognize?

Enough. Refrain.

Digest a finished work. Repeat.

Today—another wordless sermon—the ingested  
doctrines of our faith made plain  
the Christ we need to know.

## PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION



CLOSING PRAYER

*Anima Christi* (14th century)

Soul of Christ, sanctify me,  
Body of Christ, save me,  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within Thy wounds hide me,  
Permit me not to be separated from Thee,  
From the malicious enemy defend me.  
In the hour of my death call me  
And bid me come unto Thee,  
That with thy Saints I may praise Thee,  
Forever and ever.  
Amen.



## FOURTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

### OPENING PRAYER

A prayer of Saint Basil of Caesarea

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 10:11–18

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

Acts 4:5–12

Psalm 23

### FIRST READING

Excerpt from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*  
by C.S. Lewis

### SECOND READING

An excerpt from *Holy the Firm* by Annie Dillard

### THIRD READING

An excerpt from *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer from *Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton

## OPENING PRAYER

### A prayer of Saint Basil of Caesarea

Steer the ship of my life, Lord, to your quiet harbor, where I can be safe from the storms of sin and conflict. Show me the course I should take. Renew in me the gift of discernment, so that I can see the right direction in which I should go. And give me the strength and the courage to choose the right course, even when the sea is rough and the waves are high, knowing that through enduring hardship and danger in your name we shall find comfort and peace. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### John 10:11–18

*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."*

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

Acts 4:5–12

Psalm 23

#### FIRST READING

Excerpt from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

by C.S. Lewis

“But shall we see him?” asked Susan.

“Why, Daughter of Eve, that’s what I brought you here for. I’m to lead you where you shall meet him,” said Mr. Beaver.

“Is—is he a man?” asked Lucy.

“Aslan a man!” said Mr. Beaver sternly. “Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. Don’t you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a Lion—the lion, the great Lion.”

“Ooh!” said Susan, I’d thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will dearie, and make no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver; “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most, or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who

said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

## SECOND READING

### An excerpt from *Holy the Firm* by Annie Dillard

Christ is being baptized. The one who is Christ is there, and the one who is John, and the dim other people standing on cobbles or sitting on beach logs back from the bay. These are ordinary people—if I am one now, if those are ordinary sheep singing a song in the pasture.

The two men are bare to the waist. The one walks him into the water, and holds him under. His hand is on his neck. Christ is coiled and white under the water, standing on the stones.

He lifts from the water. Water beads on his shoulders. I see the water in balls as heavy as planets, a billion beads of water as weighty as worlds, and lifts them up on his back as he rises. He stands wet in the water. Each one bead is transparent, and each has a world, or the same world, light and alive and apparent inside the drop: it is all there ever could be, moving at once, past and future, and all the people.

## THIRD READING

### An excerpt from *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo

“There exists yonder in the mountains,” said the Bishop, “a tiny community no bigger than that, which I have not seen for three years. They are my good friends, those gentle and honest shepherds. They own one goat

out of every thirty that they tend. They make very pretty woollen cords of various colors, and they play the mountain airs on little flutes with six holes. They need to be told of the good God now and then. What would they say to a bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I did not go?"

"But the brigands, Monseigneur?"

"Hold," said the Bishop, "I must think of that. You are right. I may meet them. They, too, need to be told of the good God."

"But, Monseigneur, there is a band of them! A flock of wolves!"

"Monsieur le maire, it may be that it is of this very flock of wolves that Jesus has constituted me the shepherd. Who knows the ways of Providence?"

"They will rob you, Monseigneur."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"An old goodman of a priest, who passes along mumbling his prayers? Bah! To what purpose?"

"Oh, mon Dieu! what if you should meet them!"

"I should beg alms of them for my poor."

"Do not go, Monseigneur. In the name of Heaven! You are risking your life!"

"Monsieur le maire," said the Bishop, "is that really all? I am not in the world to guard my own life, but to guard souls."

**PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION**



## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer from *Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.



## FIFTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Grafted into Christ

### OPENING PRAYER

An excerpt from *Prayer: the Great Conversation*  
by Peter Kreeft

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 15:1–8, 26–27

Genesis 22:1–18

Acts 8:26–40

Psalm 96

### FIRST READING

An excerpt from *Surprised By Hope* by N.T. Wright

### SECOND READING

*A Prayer Poem* by C.S. Lewis

### THIRD READING

An excerpt from *The True Vine* by Andrew Murray

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer of St. Jerome

## OPENING PRAYER

### An excerpt from *Prayer: the Great Conversation* by Peter Kreeft

#### *An Act of Faith*

O God,  
I firmly believe all the truths that you have revealed  
and that you teach us through your church,  
for You are Truth itself  
and can neither deceive nor be deceived.

#### *An Act of Hope*

O God,  
I hope with complete trust that You will give me,  
through the merits of Jesus Christ,  
all necessary grace in this world  
and everlasting life in the world to come,  
for this is what You have promised  
and You always keep Your promises.

#### *An Act of Love*

O God,  
I love You with my whole heart above all things,  
because You are infinitely good;  
and for Your sake I love my neighbor as I love myself.  
Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### John 15:1–8, 26–27

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

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*“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”*

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Genesis 22:1–18

Acts 8:26–40

Psalms 96

## FIRST READING

### An excerpt from *Surprised By Hope* by N.T. Wright

With Easter, God's new creation is launched upon a surprised world, pointing ahead to the renewal, the redemption, the rebirth of the entire creation... every act of love, every deed done in Christ and by the Spirit, every work of true creativity — doing justice, making peace, healing families, resisting temptation, seeking and winning true freedom — is an earthly event in a long history of things that implement Jesus's own resurrection and anticipate the final new creation and act as signposts of hope.

## SECOND READING

### *A Prayer Poem* by C.S. Lewis

“Master, they say that when I seem  
    To be in speech with you,  
Since you make no replies, it's all a dream  
    – One talker aping two.

They are half right, but not as they  
    Imagine; rather, I  
Seek in myself the things I meant to say,  
    And lo! the wells are dry.

Then, seeing me empty, you forsake  
    The Listener's role, and through  
My dead lips breathe and into utterance wake  
    The thoughts I never knew.

And thus you neither need reply  
Nor can; thus, while we seem  
Two talking, thou art One forever, and I  
No dreamer, but thy dream.

### THIRD READING

#### An excerpt from *The True Vine* by Andrew Murray

“You are the branch. You need be nothing more. You need not for one single moment of the day take upon you the responsibility of the Vine. You need not leave the place of entire dependence and unbounded confidence.

Abiding in Me is indispensable, for, you know it, of yourselves you can do nothing to maintain or act out the heavenly life.

It is the wholehearted surrender in everything to do His will, that gives access to a life in the abiding enjoyment of His love. Obey and abide.

The purpose is His, He will carry it out; the fruit is His, He will bring it forth; the abiding is His, He will maintain it.”

## PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION



## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer of St. Jerome

O Lord, you have given us your word for a light to shine upon our path; grant us so to meditate on that word, and follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day.  
Amen.



## SIXTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Friends of God

### OPENING PRAYER

The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 15:9–17

Isaiah 55:1–11

Acts 10:44–48

Psalm 98

### FIRST READING

*Supernatural Love* by Gjertrud Schnackenberg

### SECOND READING

An excerpt from *The Way of Justice as Compassion*  
by Simone Weil

### THIRD READING

An excerpt from *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer of St. Augustine

## OPENING PRAYER

### The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### John 15:9–17

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his*

*friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another."*

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Isaiah 55:1–11

Acts 10:44–48

Psalms 98

#### FIRST READING

### *Supernatural Love* by Gjertrud Schnackenberg

My father at the dictionary-stand  
Touches the page to fully understand  
The lamplit answer, tilting in his hand

His slowly scanning magnifying lens,  
A blurry, glistening circle he suspends  
Above the word "Carnation." Then he bends

So near his eyes are magnified and blurred,  
One finger on the miniature word,  
As if he touched a single key and heard

A distant, plucked, infinitesimal string,  
“The obligation due to every thing  
That’s smaller than the universe.” I bring

My sewing needle close enough that I  
Can watch my father through the needle’s eye,  
As through a lens ground for a butterfly

Who peers down flower-hallways toward a room  
Shadowed and fathomed as this study’s gloom  
Where, as a scholar bends above a tomb

To read what’s buried there, he bends to pore  
Over the Latin blossom. I am four,  
I spill my pins and needles on the floor

Trying to stitch “Beloved” X by X.  
My dangerous, bright needle’s point connects  
Myself illiterate to this perfect text

I cannot read. My father puzzles why  
It is my habit to identify  
Carnations as “Christ’s flowers,” knowing I

Can give no explanation but “Because.”  
Word-roots blossom in speechless messages  
The way the thread behind my sampler does

Where following each X I awkward move  
My needle through the word whose root is love.  
He reads, “A pink variety of Clove,

Carnatio, the Latin, meaning flesh.”  
As if the bud’s essential oils brush  
Christ’s fragrance through the room, the iron-fresh

Odor carnations have floats up to me,  
A drifted, secret, bitter ecstasy,  
The stems squeak in my scissors, Child, it’s me,

He turns the page to “Clove” and reads aloud:  
“The clove, a spice, dried from a flower-bud.”  
Then twice, as if he hasn’t understood,

He reads, “From French, for clou, meaning a nail.”  
He gazes, motionless. “Meaning a nail.”  
The incarnation blossoms, flesh and nail,

I twist my threads like stems into a knot  
And smooth “Beloved,” but my needle caught  
Within the threads, Thy blood so dearly bought,

The needle strikes my finger to the bone.  
I lift my hand, it is myself I’ve sewn,  
The flesh laid bare, the threads of blood my own,

I lift my hand in startled agony  
And call upon his name, “Daddy daddy” —  
My father’s hand touches the injury

As lightly as he touched the page before,  
Where incarnation bloomed from roots that bore  
The flowers I called Christ’s when I was four.

## SECOND READING

### An excerpt from *The Way of Justice as Compassion* by Simone Weil

Not only does the love of God have attention for its substance; the love of our neighbor which we know to be the same love, is made of this same substance. Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world but people capable of giving them attention. The capacity to give one's attention to a sufferer is a very rare and difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it is a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it. Warmth of heart, impulsiveness, pity are not enough.

The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him: "What are you going through?" It is a recognition that the sufferer exists, not only as a unit in a collection, or a specimen from the social category labeled "unfortunate," but as a man, exactly like us, who was one day stamped with a special mark by affliction. For this reason it is enough, but it is indispensable, to know how to look at him in a certain way.

This way of looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth.



### THIRD READING

## An excerpt from *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton

And as I close this chaotic volume I open again the strange small book from which all Christianity came; and I am again haunted by a kind of confirmation. The tremendous figure which fills the Gospels towers in this respect, as in every other, above all the thinkers who ever thought themselves tall. His pathos was natural, almost casual. The Stoics, ancient and modern, were proud of concealing their tears. He never concealed His tears; He showed them plainly on His open face at any daily sight, such as the far sight of His native city. Yet He concealed something. Solemn supermen and imperial diplomatists are proud of restraining their anger. He never restrained His anger. He flung furniture down the front steps of the Temple, and asked men how they expected to escape the damnation of Hell. Yet He restrained something. I say it with reverence; there was in that shattering personality a thread that must be called shyness. There was something that He hid from all men when He went up a mountain to pray. There was something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth.

## PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer of St. Augustine

O thou, who art the light of the minds that know thee, the life of the souls that love thee, and the strength of the wills that serve thee; help us so to know thee that we may truly love thee; so to love thee that we may fully serve thee, whom to serve is perfect freedom.

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and let your angels protect those who sleep. Tend the sick. Refresh the weary. Sustain the dying. Calm the suffering. Pity the distressed. We ask this for the sake of your love.

Lord Jesus, our Saviour, let us come to you.

Our hearts are cold; Lord, warm them with your selfless love.

Our hearts are sinful; cleanse them with your precious blood.

Our hearts are weak; strengthen them with your joyous Spirit.

Our hearts are empty; fill them with your divine presence.

Lord Jesus, our hearts are yours; possess them always and only for yourself.

Amen.



## SEVENTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Ascension

### OPENING PRAYER

An excerpt from *Prayer: The Great Conversation*  
by Peter Kreeft

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Luke 24:44–53

Ezekiel 36:24–28

Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

Psalm 8

### FIRST READING

*Ascension*, a sonnet by Malcolm Guite

### SECOND READING

*Ascending* by Luci Shaw

### THIRD READING

*Ascension* by John Donne

### PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

### CLOSING PRAYER

A prayer of St. Richard of Chichester

## OPENING PRAYER

### An excerpt from *Prayer: The Great Conversation* by Peter Kreeft

Most holy God, the source of all good desires, all right judgements, and all just works: Give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, so that our minds may be fixed on the doing of Your will, and that we, being delivered from the fear of all enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the mercies of Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### Luke 24:44–53

*Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*

*Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.*

Ezekiel 36:24–28

Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

Psalm 8

**FIRST READING**

*Ascension*, a sonnet by Malcolm Guite

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory  
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place  
As earth became a part of Heaven's story  
And heaven opened to his human face.  
We saw him go and yet we were not parted  
He took us with him to the heart of things  
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted  
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,  
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,  
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,  
Whilst we our selves become his clouds of witness  
And sing the waning darkness into light,  
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,  
Which all creation waits to see revealed.

SECOND READING

*Ascending* by Luci Shaw

for the time  
being / the dark earth  
was enough  
to substantiate you  
in our vision

but the universal circle  
claimed you / rid  
of a finite foothold  
you lifted / scattered  
your feathers in light  
faceted the  
invisibilities  
of thin air / time & space  
after the light-ning  
malted in one

blinded / our eyes  
turn inward  
as we find  
your closer paraclete  
our truer view



### THIRD READING

#### *Ascension* by John Donne

Salute the last, and everlasting day,  
Joy at the uprising of this Sun, and Son,  
Ye whose true tears, or tribulation  
Have purely wash'd, or burnt your drossy clay.  
Behold, the Highest, parting hence away,  
Lightens the dark clouds, which He treads upon;  
Nor doth he by ascending show alone,  
But first He, and He first enters the way.  
O strong Ram, which hast batter'd heaven for me!  
Mild lamb, which with Thy Blood hast mark'd the path  
Bright Torch, which shinest, that I the way may see!  
O, with Thy own Blood quench Thy own just wrath;  
And if Thy Holy Spirit my Muse did raise,  
Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise.

**PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION**

## CLOSING PRAYER

### A prayer of St. Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits which you have given us,  
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us.  
Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,  
may we know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day.  
Amen.



# PENTECOST SUNDAY

## OPENING PRAYER

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15

Ezekiel 37:1–14

Acts 2:1–21

Psalms 145

## FIRST READING

*Circling the Presence* by Tamara Hill Murphy

## SECOND READING

*Small prayer in a hard wind* by Christian Wiman

## THIRD READING

*Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three-person'd God*  
by John Donne

## PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION

## CLOSING PRAYER

Novena to the Holy Spirit

## OPENING PRAYER

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15

*“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”*

—

*But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.*

*“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the*

*world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

*"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

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Ezekiel 37:1–14

Acts 2:1–21

Psalms 145

#### FIRST READING

### *Circling the Presence* by Tamara Hill Murphy

I wonder what marked the moment as the acceptable time for tongues of fire to fall down?

A certain magic word?

What ancient riddle opened the door? Moved the mountain into the sea?

What familiar Spirit fluttered the dead eyelid? Called deep up from deep?

I do not have the word, have not discovered the incantation.

But I've met the Spirit  
and I think I know the answer.

I do not know the answer in the way one memorizes a flashcard formula,  
babbles  
incessant technical jargon, wishful thinking, vain repetitions of one-hit  
wonders.

Not in short-term memory exercises. Not in altar-call professions  
sudden inspiration, prickly goose-bumpy revelation.  
I do not know the trick to conjure down the flames.

But I studied the dusty photographs  
read unfeeling the prayers, practiced the old language on inert tongue,  
slept under the canopy of intercession,  
squatted the hallway with the Son,  
rocked sweaty in the lap of the Father,  
eavesdropped under the door crack the Spirit-guide  
and we knew it when we saw it

## SECOND READING

### *Small prayer in a hard wind* by Christian Wiman

As through a long-abandoned half-standing house  
Only someone lost could find,

Which, with its paneless windows and sagging crossbeams,  
Its hundred crevices in which a hundred creatures hoard and nest,

Seems both ghost of the life that happened there  
And living spirit of this wasted place,



Wind seeks and sings every wound in the wood  
That is open enough to receive it,  
  
Shatter me God into my thousand sounds .

### THIRD READING

*Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three-person'd God*  
by John Donne

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you  
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;  
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.  
I, like an usurp'd town to'another due,  
Labor to'admit you, but oh, to no end;  
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.  
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,  
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;  
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,  
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
Except you'enthrall me, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

**PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION**

## CLOSING PRAYER

### Novena to the Holy Spirit

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate.

Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Charity within us.

The great charity of all the the host of Saints is only made possible by your power, Oh Divine Spirit. Increase in me, the virtue of charity that I may love as God loves with the selflessness of the Saints.

Amen.



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