

Staying close to Jesus

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH JESUS DURING CORONAVIRUS

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16)

At this time when we miss gathering together, and especially miss being able to gather together around the Lord's table to share bread and wine, it would be easy to feel distant from Jesus, and to forget his precious promise, that He is with us always (Matthew 28:20).

As a sacrament, the Lord's supper is given to us as an effective visible sign of God's grace and goodness towards us, through which he works in us invisibly and Spiritually, to confirm and strengthen our faith (See article 25 of the 39 articles in the Book of Common Prayer). Along with meeting together on the Lord's Day (and the prayers, singing, and reading and preaching of Scripture that we enjoy in our gatherings), it is right that we also miss this sacrament very much, and look forward, long for even, the day we can celebrate it again, all together, remembering and proclaiming his death until he comes, feeding in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Whilst we are unable to enjoy celebrating and sharing communion together at the Lord's Table, we nonetheless can be assured of our continued communion with our risen Lord Jesus. The following passages of scripture and prayers are given as a way to help us reflect on the full access with have to God, through the completed sacrifice of Jesus, our Passover Lamb.

You may wish to pray all or part of the following, as you are able. You can use these prayers anywhere and at any time. Find a quiet space, some may find lighting a candle or placing a cross in front of them is also helpful.

You can read more from the Church of England below on Spiritual Communion and the Coronavirus*



Some verses of Scripture

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you ... On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you ... The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them ... My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (from John 14:18-22).

Remain in me and I will remain in you (John 15:4).

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16).

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:33-34)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:19-22).

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6.35).

Reflection

Reflect on the day and on your relationships. - What good things have come from God today? - Where have I fallen short? - What might I do tomorrow?

You may wish to say or pray: **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

Scripture Reading

If you have access to [today's readings](#) for Holy Communion, you may wish to read and reflect on them, or use the passages from [Daily Prayer](#):

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

Prayers

Pray for the needs of the world

for your local community

and for those close to you

End with the Lord's 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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

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

Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus

Ask him to be with you now: Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen

(Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)

You may like to use one or more of the following prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'. Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care. Amen

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful; in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you; in these days of emptiness, take possession of us; in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross. Amen (Prayer of Angela Ashwin)

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. Amen

***Guidance from the Church of England on Spiritual Communion**

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in the Lord's Supper, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. The form of prayer included here offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost' (Canon B 15).