

**AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**  
**7<sup>th</sup> 'Sunday of Easter -24<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Alleluia, Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*We reflect on the day and on our relationships.*

- *What good things have come from God today?*
- *Where have I fallen short?*
- *What will I try to do differently in future?*

Lord Jesus, through the gift of the Holy Spirit you strengthen us in times of trial.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You console us in times of sorrow.

**Christ, have mercy**

You guide us in times of darkness and doubt.

**Lord, have mercy**

May the God of love and power  
Forgive us and free us from our sins,  
Heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit,  
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The Collect (special prayer for today)*

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you not to leave us comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen**

**READINGS**

***Acts 1:6-14***

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know

the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

### **Gospel Reading:**

#### ***John 17:1-11***

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

## REFLECTION

Before leaving his apostles, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit. So they returned from the Mount of Olives to the upper room where they waited in prayer with Mary, the mother of Jesus for the promised Spirit. The upper room became their waiting room.

I'm sure that each one of us is familiar with being in a waiting room of some kind or other, and no two waiting rooms are the same. Sometimes we may be waiting in eager anticipation for our holiday flight, or awaiting the arrival of a loved one; or perhaps we have an appointment with the doctor or dentist, and our anxiety levels gradually rise as we wait.

There is no comparison between waiting in a comfortable airport lounge, and waiting in a hospital room for test results or news of a loved one. Yet in all waiting rooms there is a peculiar underlying atmosphere of uncertainty which can tinge even the most eager of anticipation with a certain apprehension.

What makes the experience so difficult is precisely the waiting. Waiting is not easy. We have to revert to 'being' rather than 'doing'. We relinquish our busyness and have to embrace enforced idleness; this can be really hard, especially for active people.

But surely, the hardest thing about waiting is the sense of powerlessness that usually accompanies it. Things are out of our control; and we do like to be in control. There is nothing we can do but wait. And for the past weeks we have all been waiting; often with apprehension, unsure of what the future will hold, for our health, our society and our economy. Waiting, and particularly in present times can lead us to feel lonely, nervous, anxious and fearful. In our isolation we look for some distraction, for something to make the time pass more quickly, for some way to retain our links with others.

But waiting, though painful, can also be a means of grace. The soul is nurtured by need as well as by plenty. Waiting brings home to us how interdependent we are; we need others. Yet waiting is part of life; we wait for spring to come after a hard winter; we plant seeds and wait for them to grow; we wait for a broken limb to mend. Waiting is necessary for change, growth and healing to happen and our powerless vulnerability can make us more open to experience.

In that upper room, the apostles must have felt as many of us do at the moment. They put their trust in Jesus, but that doesn't mean that they weren't apprehensive about the future. They must have been well aware of

their own powerlessness. But that only served to open them to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And in their waiting, they prayed and supported each other.

We, too, should try to make these days, days of prayer as we wait not only for a way out of the current pandemic, but also for Pentecost when the gift of the Holy Spirit is renewed in the Church as a whole, and in us as individuals.

And so we pray

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,

**'I am with you always'.**

**Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.**

**Hear our prayers for others and for ourselves,**

**and keep us in your care. Amen**

**Lord God,**

**as we rejoice in the glorious ascension of your dear Son, we give thanks for men and women of vision; for those who have shared their faith with us.**

**We remember all whose lives are clouded by doubt or despair, and pray that they may experience the joy of the presence of our ascended Lord.**

**As we rejoice in your presence, we remember all who feel lonely and neglected in our world. We ask you blessing on all who wait in self-isolation, on all who are shielding others and on all who are struggling with their current situation.**

**As we rejoice in your love, we remember our loved ones, our homes and families. We pray for our community, and all those whom we can only greet at a distance, asking for your strength to bear our longing for closeness. We ask your blessing on all key workers and those who brighten the world by their dedication and goodness towards others, their faith and their willingness to serve.**

**As we rejoice in your power, we remember those whose powers are waning, the elderly and the infirm. We ask your blessing on all who are ill either physically or mentally. May they find hope in you and your abiding love.**

**As we rejoice that in your Son you have prepared for us a place in your kingdom, bless our loved ones departed. May they share with your saints in glory.**

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen**

*We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now*

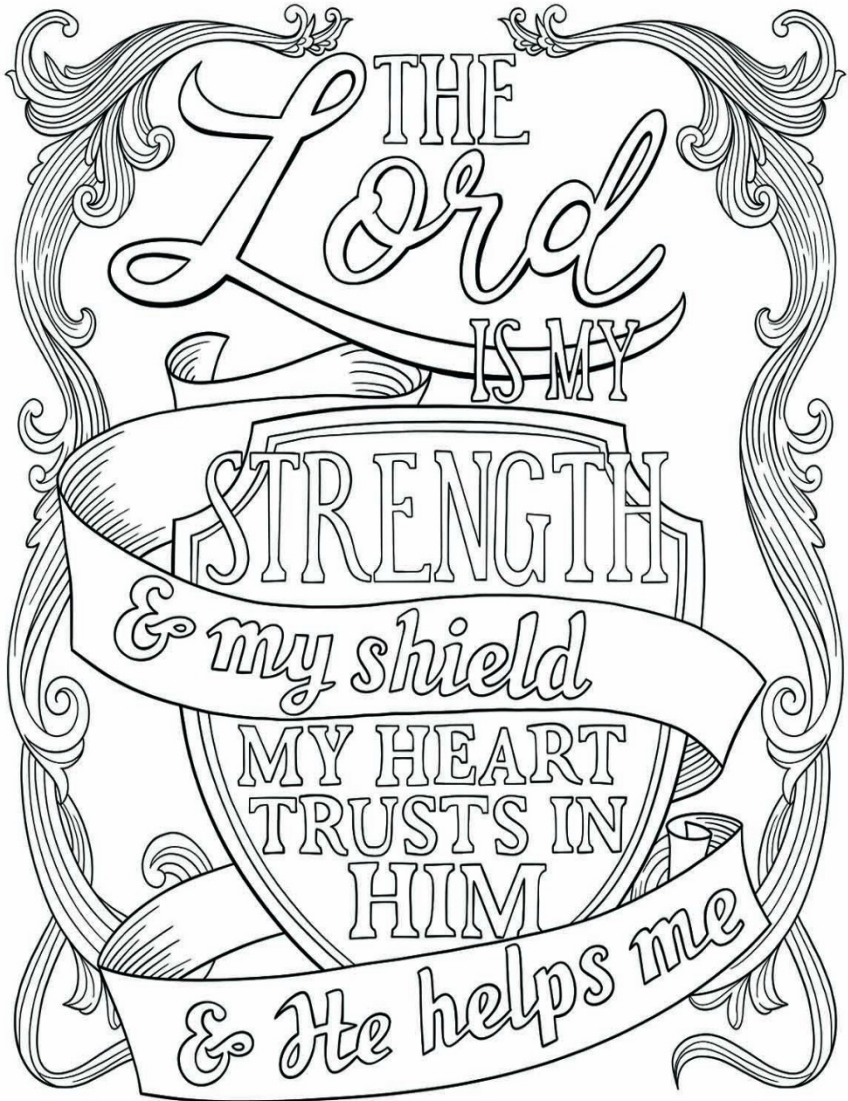
**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more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

*We pray God's blessing on each other*

**May the Holy Spirit keep us faithful in times of trial and difficulty, united in prayer and fellowship.**

**And**

**May the Lord bless us and keep us;  
may the Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;  
may the Lord turn his face toward us and grant us his peace. Amen**



PSALM 28:7