

Good morning everyone

Lord our God, we thank you for the help you have given us so that we can stand before you, rejoicing in the certainty of faith. We thank you for guiding and leading our lives and for letting us see a goal ahead. Be with us in times of silence when we seem to be alone. Keep us strong and steadfast through all the turmoil of life. Help us to remain unshaken, for you walk with us holding us by the hand. Amen.

Psalm 102

Prayer to the Eternal King for Help

A prayer of one afflicted, when faint and pleading before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, O LORD;

let my cry come to you.

Do not hide your face from me

on the day of my distress.

Incline your ear to me;

answer me speedily on the day when I call.

For my days pass away like smoke,

and my bones burn like a furnace.

For the LORD will build up Zion;

he will appear in his glory.

He will regard the prayer of the destitute,

and will not despise their prayer.

Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD:

that he looked down from his holy height,

from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,

to hear the groans of the prisoners,

to set free those who were doomed to die;

so that the name of the LORD may be declared in Zion,

and his praise in Jerusalem,

when peoples gather together,

and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

He has broken my strength in mid-course;

he has shortened my days.

John 8:21-30

Jesus Foretells His Death

Again he said to them, 'I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.' Then the Jews said, 'Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, "Where I am going, you cannot come"?' He said to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.' They said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus said to them, 'Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.' They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.' As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Let us pray with the words which Jesus taught us:-

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.

I am sure that you are all feeling some spiritual hunger for the eucharist, which in this time of emergency is not available to us as before. We might reflect at this time on how we so often take the reception of the Blessed Sacrament too much for granted! Perhaps this eucharistic fasting may help us more deeply to appreciate our communion with and within the Body of Christ. Many of you will already be familiar with the tradition of making a spiritual communion. In the Christian Church, spiritual communion refers to a practice that is useful when the faithful, for some reason, perhaps illness, distance, or, as we are familiar with in our ecumenical life, the tragic disunity of the Church, prevents us from receiving the sacrament. St Thomas Aquinas defined spiritual communion as an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him. At this time of imposed eucharistic fasting, it may be helpful to you to remember the possibility of making a *spiritual* communion. There are many prayers from the tradition to help us, such as this classic from the great pastor, St Alphonsus Liguori:

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.

Blessings

Vicky