



A Hunger in My Soul

Over the past year the articles in the bulletin have begun with the title St. Joseph 101: looking at the basics: exploring foundations.

When I began writing this reflection, I hesitated using the title 101 and I did not. Certainly, these days seem to me more than 101. The call to us seems to go deeper - to believe and *to live* belief more deeply, perhaps, than before.

Our plan at the beginning of Lent was to see the Mass in its different parts and to take each in “slow motion”. By the end of Lent our prayer themes would show the movements of each part of Mass and give us a pattern that could be used for our personal and family prayer also. So needed now.

This Pattern and Guide for Prayer is given at the end of these reflections.

I have a friend who always says the same thing whenever things seem to take a turn which we hadn't expected: Now what?

NOW - We are physically separated from each other. We are not able to physically attend Mass. We are not able to receive sacramental Communion.

We may be reminded of the distraught Mary Magdalene crying out: *They have taken my Lord away...* This sorrow of Mary Magdalene is a great grace, a grace for which we can pray for one another: to have great hunger for what is now absent from us.

May the Lord grace and increase this hunger, this longing.

May this time of imposed sacramental fasting

lead us into a deeper desire for the sacraments

and a deeper desire for union with the Lord and with each other.

May we look forward with great eagerness to that time when we can once again celebrate Mass together and be united in sacramental Eucharist.

May this Joy be ours soon, Lord, soon.

S. Mary Ann

A Guide for Personal and Family Prayer

As we are not able to join in Mass together, let us pray for ourselves and the world following the Prayer Pattern of the Mass.

Preparing for Mass / Preparing for Prayer

- *Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on us.*
- Prepare a place for prayer in your home.
- Ask for the grace to quiet your spirit, to still your body.
- Take time to come into God's Presence.

Holy Spirit fall upon us and all the peoples of the world.

Introductory Rite / Beginning of Prayer

- *Melt Us*
- Bring before God anything which keeps you or your family from a holy, peace-filled spirit.
- Pray for any unhealthy spirit to be melted and lifted away.

Lord, melt from us anything that is not of You. Give Your Spirit and Holiness to all who are gathered into our prayer.

– Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy

Liturgy of the Word / Praying with Scripture – Lectio Divina

- *Mold Us*
- Read Scripture – Readings of the Day from cms.usccb.org > calendar or any favorite Bible passage – You might want to google passages on certain themes, for example: Scriptures of Praise, of Thanksgiving, Trust, Hope, Faith in Hard Times.
- Pray a Psalm as a response to your Scripture passage as is done at Mass. Psalm 23 is always a favorite. You could also google Psalms for specific themes which would touch your heart and spirit.
- Take some time to ponder a word or phrase that struck you.

Lord, You have melted away what is not of You – Now mold us through Your Word. May we be Your Word to one another.

Intercessions – Ask the Lord to melt and mold those concerns for which you want to pray.

Lord, melt away all that is not of You (in these situations)

Lord, mold us and our world into Your image and likeness.

**Liturgy of the Eucharist / Praying for Spiritual Communion and Communion
Of Love and Service for One Another**

- Fill us

- The Church has a tradition of praying for a Spiritual Communion with Christ when we are unable to receive Him sacramentally. Below is a spiritual communion prayer adapted from one written in the 1700's by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

My Jesus, I believe you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you more than anything in the world, and I hunger to receive you. But since I cannot receive Communion sacramentally, feed my soul spiritually. I unite myself to you now. Unite me also with my brothers and sisters. May all hunger for union with You and may all the world be One in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

- Spend a few moments in silent prayer.

Lord, fill us with Your Holiness, Your Love, Your Mercy.

May all the world be filled with the Healing of Your Grace.

The Dismissal / Our Prayer sends us Forth

- Use us

- Ask for God's Blessing that the Lord may use you and your loved ones to live and share hope, peace and charity. Pray that this time of prayer may bear fruit in love and service.

Lord, use us for Your Glory and for the salvation of the world and may the Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless us and send us forth.

Spirit of the Living God, Melt Us, Mold Us, Fill Us, Use Us. Amen.