

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Ever-present God, you make yourself known in the breaking of the bread and in the bonds of community. Reveal yourself to us in the faces of all we meet. Strengthened by your body and blood, let us boldly live out your good news. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

As we know you in the breaking of the bread, we know you in the grains of the field and the flowing waters. Care for the earth you lovingly create. Strengthen those who safeguard threatened land and water. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You are the authority to whom we dedicate our lives (*like Toyohiko Kagawa, whom we commemorate today*). Help us keep the needs of those most vulnerable at the forefront of our community. Move us to care for any who are disregarded or oppressed. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Mothering God, you feed and comfort those who hunger. Open the hearts of those who hoard resources and lead them to share your abundance. We pray for anyone hungering for your comforting presence this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You pour out your love on those who are oppressed. Support and comfort anyone who is marginalized for their gender or sexuality and those whose stories are not believed. Form this community to listen faithfully and speak honestly in our ministry together. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember with thanksgiving all your beloved saints (*especially*). As you have raised them to eternal life, abide with us in your promise of resurrection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.



Celebrate

Third Sunday of Easter
April 23, 2023

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord's day.

Prayer of the Day

O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Today's reading is the conclusion of Peter's sermon preached following the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The center of his preaching is the bold declaration that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]:

³⁶"Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ

so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 134. **Tuesday** (Mark, Evangelist) Mark 1:1-15. **Wednesday** Exodus 24:1-11. **Thursday** Psalm 23. **Friday** 1 Peter 2:13-17. **Saturday** (commemoration of Catherine of Siena, theologian, died 1380) Ezekiel 34:1-16. **Fourth Sunday of Easter** Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10.

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I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,

and listened to my supplication,

²For the LORD has given ear to me

whenever I called.

³The cords of death entangled me;

the anguish of the grave came upon me;

I came to grief and sorrow.

⁴Then I called upon the name of the LORD:

“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”

¹²How shall I repay the LORD

for all the good things God has done for me?

¹³I will lift the cup of salvation

and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁴I will fulfill my vows to the LORD

in the presence of all God's people.

¹⁵Precious in your sight, O LORD,

is the death of your servants.

¹⁶O LORD, truly I am your servant;

I am your servant, the child of your handmaid;

you have freed me from my bonds.

¹⁷I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving

and call upon the name of the LORD.

¹⁸I will fulfill my vows to the LORD

in the presence of all God's people,

¹⁹in the courts of the LORD's house,

in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah! **R**



I will call up - on the name of the LORD.

of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

²²Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Luke 24:13-35

Gospel

The colorful story of Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus answers the question of how Jesus is to be recognized among us. Here, he is revealed through the scriptures and in the breaking of bread.

Now on that same day two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, the women had said; but they did not hear to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory? ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them each other while you walk along? ²⁸They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place here in these days?” ¹⁹He asked them, “What are you doing?” ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

1 Peter 1:17-23

Second Reading

The imagery of exile is used to help the readers of this letter understand that they are strangers in a strange land. Christians no longer belong to this age. Through the death of Christ we belong to God, so that our focus, faith, and hope are no longer on such things as silver or gold.

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways ²⁰He was destined before the foundation

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