



THE DIOCESE OF
SHEFFIELD

Resources for personal prayer

Lord, teach me to pray...

This resource offers several approaches to personal prayers drawn from different traditions

The Examen Prayer

The Examen prayer is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes around 15 to 20 minutes per day.

1. **Still yourself in silence** for a few minutes. Let go of the day, relax your body and mind, and your breathing, slowly. Remember that you are in God's presence. Ask him that this time with him, and all your life, might be directed solely to his service and praise.
2. **Ask God for light and wisdom**, pray that you may receive the light of Christ, so that you can look at your day with God's eyes, not just your own, see the day you have experienced, and remember it clearly. Pray also for wisdom, so you can fully understand what you are seeing, and be able to walk in God's light.
3. **Give thanks for the day** that you have just lived, which is a gift from God. Express your gratitude for the day.
4. **Review the day** – Let your mind drift back over the events of the day, and the moods and feelings they invoked in you. You might want to remember them 'quietly', on your own, or you might want to talk to Jesus about your day in your own words, whichever seems better and more natural to you at the time.

This remembering of your moods and feelings might well stir up feelings within you, both of thanksgiving and of sorrow, and a need for healing.

- What events and feelings are you *drawn to*, what particularly gave you life today? What did you feel good about? These times are sometimes called **consolation** moments. Thank God for these events and feelings that have brought you joy, relish and enjoy them. Thank God again for the gifts He has given you, and for the times that you have let His glory shine through, when God has worked through you today.

- What events and feelings made you feel driven? What has drained you of life today? Your biggest struggle, perhaps, or when you felt sad, helpless or angry? These times are sometimes called **desolation** moments. Look at these uncomfortable experiences in the Lord's presence. Express your sorrow to Him, and ask Him to help you make sense of those experiences. Resist the temptation to judge yourself! Allow Christ Himself to help you understand the moods, feelings and needs that these events have aroused. Remember that Jesus **never** refuses forgiveness. With total confidence, ask Him to forgive you for the times when you have obstructed or distorted the light of his glory. (Remember, sin is simply 'getting in God's way').
5. **Look forward to tomorrow**, ask the Lord to be with you in every detail of the following day. If there is an attribute ('grace') you desire, e.g. to become more patient, or more trusting, or if you need help with a person or situation you find difficult or trying, which you will have to face tomorrow, then **ask** the Lord to help you in these ways, especially tomorrow.

Bible texts which may prove helpful:-

Ps. 51:6,7 – ‘You desire truth in the inward being, therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Luke 6:36, 37 – ‘Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged’.

Ps. 103:8, 10 – ‘The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love ... He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities’.

Matthew 18:21, 22 – ‘Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.”’

The Examen prayer can be used privately by individuals, usually in the evening. It can also be used in small groups, with a leader guiding the prayers, particularly when people are inexperienced in using it.

We hope that it will be useful to you in your prayer life, and in your spiritual development.

Praying the Diocesan 2025 Prayer (very...) slowly

With thanks to Catherine Burchell Reader, St. Mary's, Walkley

If you have committed to being part of Sheffield Diocese's 2025 Prayer Community you will have pledged to pray daily for the diocese using the prayer written specially for use in our diocese during the next few years. Our diocesan prayer was written with much thought and care to help us focus on the challenges and changes facing our diocese over the next 5 or 6 years. At first you may have prayed it enthusiastically. The prayer was new, invigorating, relevant. But over time you may have found that its regular repetition has, like regular repetition of many things, brought up a number of challenges...

- You may find yourself rattling through the prayer without giving it much thought.
- You may find it difficult to focus meaningfully on everything in the prayer every day due to its length.
- You may find that over time certain words or phrases don't seem to wear so well as others and are starting to become distracting.
- You may worry that by placing so much emphasis on praying for the diocese you find yourself looking inwards towards the needs of the church rather than outwards towards the needs of the wider world.
- You may find that you have memorised the prayer. But then you wonder if this is a prayer that will offer sustenance in times of trouble or crisis in the way in which certain psalms, hymns, canticles and prayers known by heart have sustained Christians in difficulty over the centuries.
- You may have been eagerly using the prayer with your congregation or church groups on a regular basis, but after a few times, their response is "oh no, not that prayer again".
- You may, in short, no longer really be feeling all that renewed, released or rejuvenated.

How then can regular repetition of a prayer such as our Diocesan 2025 prayer be a help rather than a hindrance to our praying life?

The way which has helped me has simply been to slow the prayer down. Right down. If you are familiar with the idea of Lectio Divina you will recognise the method I'm about to describe below. You can do this on your own or as a group.

Read the prayer aloud, firstly at a normal pace. Then again, very slowly, with a pause after each line. Read it slowly two or three times. Then sit in quiet for a while. You may notice a line or phrase of the prayer resonating in particular. If so, stay with this phrase, meditate upon it, let it shape your thoughts as you pray for other things on your mind - the church, the diocese, the world, your daily routine, your family and friends, those in need etc.

If you are doing this as a group, why not first read the prayer out loud together and then have one person read it again much more slowly.

Another way to do this together, perhaps as the closing prayer at the end of a meeting, would be to write the prayer out, dividing it into lines or phrases as you see fit. Pray the prayer slowly as a group, each person taking one line, going round the group until all the lines have been read. Then invite people to focus on "their" line (or another line if they wish) taking it with them away from the meeting into whatever they are doing over the next day or week.

If you are doing this on your own as part of your daily prayer, why not work through the prayer over several days, each day taking one line of the prayer to focus on.

How could you divide up the lines?

There are several ways in which you could do this, some using longer chunks, some using the shortest chunks possible. You might wish to vary this over time to help keep the prayer fresh.

Here's how the prayer appears on the diocesan leaflet "Towards a generous & flourishing Diocese of Sheffield in 2025"

Living God

Jesus calls his followers to seek first your kingdom

Renew us as we make your love known;

Release us to share freely together in mission;

And Rejuvenate us to be fruitful in your service.

Give us courage, wisdom and compassion,

***That strengthened with the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may, as the Diocese of Sheffield, both flourish and
grow through Christ our Lord.***

Taking a line daily, you could spread the prayer thus over 9 or 10 days.

Here's how the prayer appears on the little diocesan bookmarks:

Living God
Jesus calls his followers to
Seek first your Kingdom.
Renew us as we make your
love known;
Release us to share freely
together in mission;
and Rejuvenate us to be
fruitful in your service.
Give us courage, wisdom
and compassion,
that strengthened with the
grace of the Holy
Spirit, we may, as the
Diocese of Sheffield,
both flourish and grow

Notice how the lines are shorter and how by focusing on a shorter phrase, the emphasis is changed, even broadened. Taking a line or so daily you could spread the prayer over a fortnight or more.

You could shorten the phrases even further...

***Living God
Jesus calls
his followers
to seek
first
your kingdom
Renew us
As we make
Your love
Known.
Release us
To share
Freely
Together
In mission
And rejuvenate us
To be
Fruitful
In your service.
Give us
Courage
Wisdom
And compassion
That strengthened
With the Grace
Of the Holy Spirit
We may
As the Diocese
of Sheffield
Both flourish***

Praying it this way would take you just over a month!

I have found that by doing this, the prayer has started to come alive, to permeate and give focus to the rest of my prayers whilst continuing to be a prayer for the diocese. I think it has made my prayers more expansive, more generous. Paradoxically, less has become more.

And I have found that simply by slowing the prayer down in different ways, you can help it become meaningful again not just for yourself, but also for your church groups and congregations. The prayer has itself become renewed, released and rejuvenated!

Hopefully it will continue to help us become likewise.

The Rosary

Ways to use these meditations 1

Slowed down Lord's Prayer

Part of this document contains a way of breaking down the Lord's prayer into six parts.

How to pray these meditations using the Lord's Prayer:

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray, Living God, Jesus calls his followers to seek first your kingdom. Renew us as we make your love known; Release us to share freely together in mission; and Rejuvenate us to be fruitful in your service. Give us courage, wisdom and compassion, that strengthened with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may, as the Diocese of Sheffield, both flourish and grow through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Read the Scripture, Meditation, and Prayer intention for the 1st Mystery. Pray the broken down Lord's Prayer, using the suggested meditations it contains.
- Repeat with the following Four Mysteries, Meditations and Prayers
- Finish with the Diocesan Prayer:

1st Mystery of Light: The Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan - Renewed

'Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased' (Mt 3,13-17).

Baptism is the beginning, it is the beginning of the journey of faith, it is the beginning of the great Christian adventure. It is the moment when our human nature is renewed, the refreshing water which flows from the side of Christ over our bodies and our souls, cleanses and heals, these waters imbue our very selves with the Holy Spirit. It is in this state of renewed baptismal joy that we begin our journey as a Diocese into the unknown depths of renewed missionary zeal.

Let us pray for our Churches that we might recall the renewal of our baptism as we seek to revitalize our mission, our worship, our faith.

2nd Mystery of light: The Self-revelation of the Lord at the Wedding Feast of Cana - Released

'On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first

of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him' (Jn 2,1-12).

By this first of his public miracles, Christ proves that he has a deep interest in our many and varied activities during the course of our journey toward heaven. Jesus is truly interested in our earthly affairs.

The miracle at the Feast of Cana signifies his giving of his own Body and Blood at the Last Supper. The wine in abundance shows that God's kindness knows no limits. It is this new wine of the Gospel which releases us for God's mission.

Let us pray that we might be released by the overflowing love of God to preach His good news a fresh in this generation.

3rd Luminous Mystery: The Lord Jesus Proclaims the Coming of the Kingdom - Rejuvenated

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mk 1, 15) The preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. Mk 1:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. Mk 2:3-13; Lk 7:47- 48): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. Jn 20:22-23) (Blessed John Paul II, RVM 21).

The people of God wanted to see and listen to our Lord Jesus Christ. His presence was powerful and healing. It was the faith of paralytic that truly cured him. But Christ made it clear that his healing would be more than just physical. What was more important to Our Divine Saviour was the forgiveness of his sins. Jesus claims his authority as the Son of God when he not only cures the crippled man, but also forgives his sins.

Let us pray that our faith becomes rejuvenated, through the healing of our sins.

4th Luminous Mystery: The Transfiguration of Our Lord - Renewed

About eight days after saying this, he took Peter, John, and James, and went up onto a mountain to pray. While he was praying, his face changed in appearance and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah. They appeared in glory and spoke of his passage, which he was about to fulfill

in Jerusalem. Peter and those with him had fallen into a deep sleep; but awakening, they saw his glory and likewise saw the two men who were standing with him. When these were leaving, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, how good it is for us to be here. Let us set up three booths, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (He did not really know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and the disciples grew fearful as they entered it.

Then from the cloud came a voice which said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." When the voice fell silent, Jesus was there alone. The disciples kept quiet, telling nothing of what they had seen at that time to anyone.

Jesus wants us to share in his glory. The Transfiguration reminds us that as Christians our lives are being changed and transformed each and every day. We are being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ: crucified, risen, and now glorified. Don't be found sleeping as were the three Apostles. How we close our eyes to God's glory because we are lazy and inattentive to what God is trying to do in our lives!

When transfigured, Jesus is seen with Moses the giver of the Jewish Law, and the greatest of all the prophets, Elijah. Jesus is the fulfilment of the Mosaic Law and the longed-for Messiah so much prophesized by the prophets. It is no wonder that the apostles said to Jesus, Lord, how good it is for us to be here!

Let us pray that we might be changed and transformed day by day, as we seek to become more like Jesus.

5th Luminous Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist - Renewed, Released, Rejuvenated

'During the meal Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take this and eat it," he said. "This is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. "All of you must drink from it," he said, "for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink this fruit of the vine from now until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's reign." Then, after singing songs of praise, they walked out to the Mount of Olives. A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies 'to the end' his love for humanity (Jn 13:1),

Take bread and wine. Give thanks. This is my Body. This is my Blood. Do this to remember me. Five simple sentences, five simple instructions. The Eucharist sustains us, it is our food for the journey to heaven. When we are tired and weary it renews our vigour and our faith. The Eucharist rejuvenates us, by taking the Lord's body and blood into our own bodies, into our own blood, we become more like him, ready, and willing to proclaim his Gospel of salvation. The Eucharist releases us, it is the memorial of Calvary, the moment when our salvation, our redemption from sin is made possible.

The Eucharist bring heaven and earth, through Calvary into contact; angels, saints, and nations sing and praise God together, it is a foretaste of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us pray for the Diocese of Sheffield, for its people, for its lay leaders, for its deacons, priests and bishops, that as we gather around the mysteries of light, as we gather around the Lord, we might be renewed, released and rejuvenated to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to this generation and to all the generations to come.

Ways to use the Meditations 2

Mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

What is the Rosary?

- The rosary is time honoured form of Christian meditation, which has enriched the lives of millions of the faithful since well before the Reformation and continues to enrich the faith of many in the Church of England and beyond.
- A frequent question about the Rosary is; 'surely its all about Mary, and not about Jesus.' There is no doubt that the use of the Hail Mary throughout the Rosary makes many Christians uncomfortable to the point where this method of prayer is abandoned. The Rosary focuses in its Meditations on the life of Jesus, when we pray the Rosary we look at episodes from the life of Jesus through the eyes of his mother, and pray ourselves into the situation in order to understand Jesus and his mother and the disciples more.

Where is the Hail Mary in Holy Scripture ?

- Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee = Luke 1:28
- Blessed art though among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus = Luke 1:42
- Holy Mary, Mother of God = Luke 1:43
- Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. = John 2: 1-11

How to pray the Rosary

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

- Say the Apostles Creed
- Lord's Prayer, 3 Hail Marys and 1 Glory be. (praying for the intention of the Bishops and the Diocese of Sheffield)
- the First Mystery – read the scripture passage, meditation, and prayer intention.
- say 1 Our Father, 10 Hail Marys and 1 glory be,
- Repeat for the other Four mysteries.
- Finish with the diocesan prayer.

NB for those who do not wish to us the Hail Mary, an alternative would be to us the Jesus Prayer instead.

'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God. Have mercy on me a sinner.'

Slowing down the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

- As you start, remember that God loves us like a perfect Father. He is here ready to listen to us, and respond to us.
- In your imagination, put down at his feet any hassles or stresses you have been carrying around. Then look up from them, to him:
- 'Father God you love me and you know me inside out.
- You know the words that I will speak before I speak them out. You are all around me, you hold me in your hand.
- Your love for me is more than I can ever understand.'

Thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

- Pray, asking for God's will to be done:
- Look back at the last 24 hours:
- Give thanks for what has been good.
- Pray for God's healing and God's way forward for things that make you sad.
- Pray for those you know who are ill or in particular need, for God's blessing for them. Give us this day our daily bread.
- Consider the day ahead of you: what you will be doing, people you will see.
- Offer the day to God, asking for his help with anything that worries you, to provide what you need and opportunities to serve him, and keep you safe.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

'Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.'

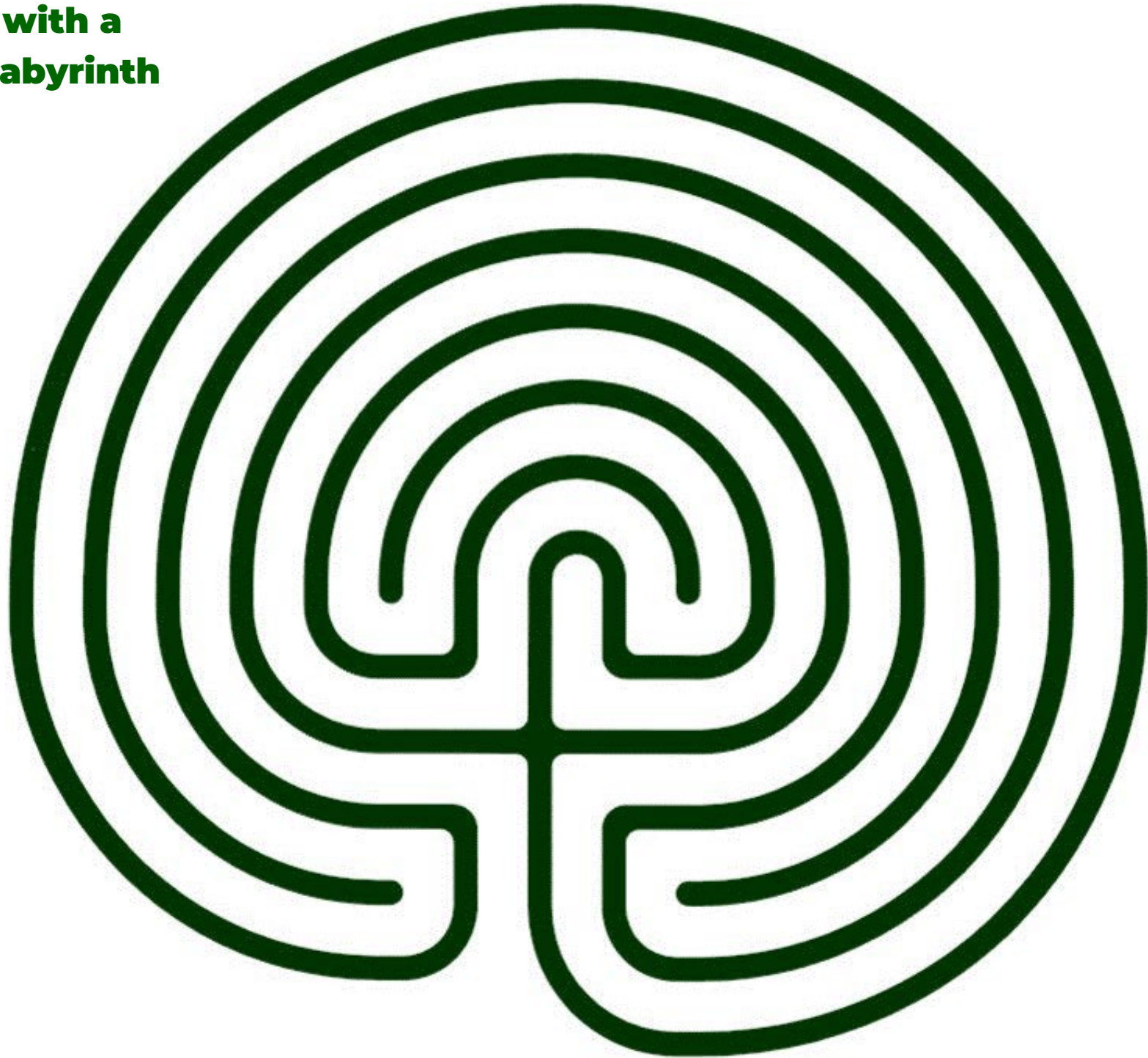
**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

'O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day.
Keep us from falling into sin,
or running into danger; order us in all our doings, and guide us to do
always what is right in your eyes,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.**

'God of every time and place, you hold each moment
and shape each day; you hold this diocese,
our bishops and our clergy;
you hold our parishes and deaneries;
you hold our people and our communities.
By the gentleness of your Spirit transform us;
with the gifts of your Spirit equip us;
in the boldness of your Spirit send us out, to serve you and transform the
world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

**Praying with a
Finger Labyrinth**



Praying with a Finger Labyrinth

Instructions

1. Sit comfortably, be still and gently pray: *I place myself in your presence O Lord, my God.*
2. When you are ready... slowly trace the labyrinth path with a finger, use a finger on the hand that you do not write with, just let your thoughts come to the surface and let them flow... Jesus is with you every step of the way, you are never alone. You are always loved by God.
3. When you reach the centre...consider your thoughts...
4. ...stay in the centre for a while and spend some time in prayer and reflection receiving God's love and blessing.
5. When you are ready... return along the same path... return gratefully, prayerfully ... you might like to sing or say aloud a line from the psalms or a favourite hymn.
6. As you exit the labyrinth give thanks and praise to God: *Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end.*

Amen.

You will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in

Your presence... Psalm 16:1

Your labyrinth prayer time can be as open or as focused as you would like it to be.

You might want to simply enter the labyrinth and be with the Lord...

or, before you enter the labyrinth, you might like to take time to:

- Read and reflect on a line or two from Scripture and ponder those words in the labyrinth
- Hold a memory or a photo of a loved one you wish to remember or pray for while you are in the labyrinth
- Consider an experience in your life where you are seeking healing or forgiveness and talk to God in the labyrinth
- Think about a key celebration in your life and walk a prayer of thanksgiving in the labyrinth.

Finger Labyrinth and Prayer Guide

Labyrinths are ancient pathways found across the world.

The winding path helps us to 'unwind', to let go and rest in God. Members of the early church as well as Medieval pilgrims have used them as a support for prayer.



Today, labyrinths are being created in churches, retreat centres, schools, hospices and cathedrals to offer a spiritual space for prayer and reflection providing a stilling space in a busy world.

A labyrinth is different from a maze. A maze is full of dead-ends and designed to get you lost. A labyrinth has only one path that always leads to the centre... if you stay on the path you cannot get lost.

There is no right or wrong way to a labyrinth... no set pace... just follow the path in your own time...

Finger labyrinths can be used for prayerful reflection when it is not possible to walk a full-sized labyrinth.

***...did not our hearts burn within us as he
talked to us on the road... Luke 24:32***

The Sung Lord's Prayer

Sung to the tune of 'Kum Bah Yah' – West Baptist Church NZ

Father God in Heaven
Lord most high
Hear Your children's prayer
Lord most high
Hallowed be Your name
Lord most high
O Lord, hear our prayer

May Your kingdom come
Here on earth
May Your will be done
Here on earth
As it is in heaven
So on earth
O Lord, hear our prayer

Give us daily bread
Day by day
And forgive our sins
Day by day
As we too forgive
Day by day
O Lord, hear our prayer

Lead us in Your way
Make us strong
When temptations come
Make us strong
Save us from all sin
Keep us strong
O Lord, hear our prayer

All things come from You
All are Yours
Kingdom, glory, power
All are Yours
Take our lives and gifts
All are Yours
O Lord, hear our prayer
O Lord, hear our prayer.