

# A Celebration of the



# Word of God

## **Introduction**

*“A Celebration of the Word of God” has been prepared for times when families, groups, or individuals gather at home to prayerfully reflect on the Word of God from the readings for the Mass, particularly in a time when attending Mass is impossible.*

*This prayer service is intended to be led by a lay person. As such, the leader must strive to avoid any posture, gesture, position, and words that would cause confusion of their role with the role appropriate to an ordained minister. The prayers and instructions provided in this text are appropriate to the exercise of the common priesthood of the lay faithful leading prayer in their own homes.*

*Use of this prayer service is suggested when two or more are gathered. If you are alone, simply read the readings and daily prayers. In the order of prayer that follows, the red text offers direction or indicates what actions or gestures are to be made; the black text indicates what is to be spoken.*

## **Preparation & Instruction**

*Before leading the celebration, the following should be prepared:*

*1. Set the Lectionary for the readings of the day. You may use a missalette like Living in Christ or Magnificat or you may find the readings on a website such as [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com) or [www.usccb.org/bible/readings](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings)*

*2. Get the “proper” prayers for the day, that is, the “Entrance Antiphon” and “Collect” (Opening Prayer). This can be found in your missalette or online at [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)*

*3. A text may be found to be read as a reflection after the reading of the Gospel. Look on your local diocesan website for homilies given by your bishop or priests, or for Pope Francis’ homily for the day, see: [zenit.org/articles/category/pope-holy-see/popes-morning-homily/](http://zenit.org/articles/category/pope-holy-see/popes-morning-homily/). The daily reflection from Magnificat might also be used, see [www.aleteia.org](http://www.aleteia.org)*

*4. Prepare and designate who will lead the prayers, who will read, who will lead music, etc.*

*5. A simple cross or crucifix should be displayed and a candle may be lit during the Celebration of the Word of God. Flowers or other decorations are appropriate as a simple sign of joy.*

# A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

## ENTRANCE CHANT

*An opening song may be sung*

*All may be invited to stand if possible.*

*If a song is not sung, the appropriate Entrance Antiphon of the day may be prayed.*

## GREETING

*All stand and make the sign of the cross, as the leader says:*

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

*All respond:*

**Amen.**

*The leader greets those present:*

Blessed be the God of all consolation,  
who has shown us his great mercy.

Bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

*All respond:*

**Blessed be God for ever.**

*The leader introduces the celebration in these or similar words:*

We gather now,  
as the People of God,  
united in prayer.

Though we cannot at this time  
gather for the celebration of the Holy Mass,  
we take this opportunity to reflect on God's Word.

We prepare our hearts and minds  
to make an act of Spiritual Communion this day  
with a deep longing to be united again  
in the celebration and reception  
of the Holy Eucharist.

## PENITENTIAL ACT

*The leader invites the faithful, saying:*

Brothers and sisters,  
let us acknowledge our sins,  
and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the Word of God.

*A brief pause for silence follows.*

*Then all recite together the formula of the Confiteor:*

I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

*And, striking their breast three times, as they say:*

through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;

*Then they continue:*

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

*The leader prays the "Lord, have mercy" invocations:*

Lord, have mercy. **R:** Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. **R:** Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. **R:** Lord, have mercy.

## COLLECT

*Inviting the people the leader says:*

Let us pray...

*The leader joins his hands together in prayer, pauses for a moment then says the Collect (Opening Prayer) for the day.*

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD OF GOD

*All are invited to sit. After each reading a brief silence is observed.  
One or more participants may be designated to read a reading.*

### FIRST READING

*The reader begins by saying:*

A reading from [the book of N.].

*After the reading, the reader concludes by saying:*

The Word of Lord **R: Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*The Psalm may be read or sung, a cantor leading the verses and all responding with the antiphon.*

### SECOND READING (for Sundays or other special occasions)

*The reader begins by saying:*

A reading from [the book of / the letter of N.].

*After the reading, the reader concludes by saying:*

The Word of Lord **R: Thanks be to God.**

*All are invited to stand.*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION or ALLELUIA (optional)

### GOSPEL

*The leader or another participant begins by saying:*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to [N].

*All Respond:*

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

*The Gospel is read*

*After the reading, the reader concludes by saying:*

The Gospel of the Lord.

*All respond:*

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ**

*All are seated, and a period of silence is observed.*

## **REFLECTION ON THE WORD**

*Lay people are not permitted to offer a homily; however, the leader may offer a reflection from spiritual reading, the writing of a saint, or a homily given on the readings by the Pope, a bishop, or priest, for example. Alternatively, the leader may facilitate a 'Lectio Divina' for the participants prior to this time of silent prayer and contemplation of the Word, inviting the participants to share their reflections and insights with one another.*

## **PROFESSION OF FAITH**

*Inviting the people to stand, the leader says, with hands joined:*

As a remembrance of our Baptismal promises, let us stand and profess our faith.

*All respond by reciting the Apostle's Creed.*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,**

*All bow, as they say:*

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,**

*Then they continue:*

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
He descended into hell;  
on the third day He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Holy Catholic Church,  
the communion of Saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

## INTENTIONS

### *The leader says:*

Confident that Jesus Christ hears our prayer,  
let us offer our petitions with open hearts:

For the Pope, bishops, priests and all who serve in the Church: may they know the intimacy of the Lord in their lives, and embrace the call to humble service within the Mystical Body of Christ.

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who serve in our community and country in positions of authority: may they work for the common good of all people, especially the poor and marginalized of our society.

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit: may they know the great compassion of God through those who care for them.

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all families and communities: may they be a reflection in daily life of the communion of life and love that is the Holy Trinity.

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have died and those who grieve them: may they know the peace and consolation that is the fruit of hope in Christ.

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our own needs this day...

***Personal intentions may be offered aloud by the participants.***

***After each, the participant says:***

We pray to the Lord— **R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

***After the personal intentions, the leader then says:***

Almighty God, hear our prayers—those spoken and those held within our hearts—as we unite them with the words that Jesus, our Saviour, taught us:

***All respond:***

**Our Father, who art in heaven...**

**Amen**

## **PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION:**

*With the people either kneeling, if possible, or standing; the leader then invites the people to pray with these or similar words followed by a moment of silence:*

Though we cannot come at this time to the Altar of our Lord to receive the Holy Eucharist—let us take this moment to offer an act of Spiritual Communion with our Lord Jesus Christ.

*All respond by praying one of the prayers of Spiritual Communion, or by saying “Amen” at the end (the Blessed Sacrament Chaplet may be prayed at this point):*

**I prostrate myself at your feet, O my Jesus,  
and I offer you the repentance of my contrite heart,  
which abases itself in its nothingness in Your Holy Presence.  
I adore you in the Sacrament of Your Love;  
I desire to receive You  
in the poor abode that my heart offers You.  
While waiting for the happiness  
of a Sacramental Communion,  
I want to possess You in spirit.  
Come to me, O my Jesus,  
that I may come to You.  
May Your Love inflame my whole being,  
in life and in death.  
I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You.  
Amen.**

*(by Raphael Cardinal Merry del Val)*

**Or**

**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.**

*(by St. Alphonsus Maria de' Ligouri)*



## FINAL BLESSING

***The leader, with hands joined in prayer, says the blessing in the name of all:***

Through the intercession of St. [N] (or Sts. [N and N, etc.])  
***[saint(s) of the day, patron saint of parish, diocese, or country],***  
and of all the saints of God,  
May the God of perseverance and courage  
grant us to manifest throughout our lives  
the spirit of sacrifice, compassion, and love  
of Christ Jesus.

Thus, in the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
we will give glory to God,  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for ever and ever!

**Amen.**

***All standing, the leader prays the following words while blessing himself in the sign of the cross + while the people present also make the sign of the cross, blessing themselves:***

May the Lord bless us,  
protect us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

***All respond:***

**Amen.**

## FINAL SONG

***A final song of thanksgiving may be sung. If no song is sung, one of the prayers such as the Benedictus (Luke 1:68-79) or the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55); or prayer in honour of Our Lady may be recited (e.g. Salve Regina/Hail Holy Queen, Ave Maria/Hail Mary, etc.).***

## ***Lectio Divina – Divine Reading***

*Lectio Divina means divine reading. This ancient practice of the Church encourages a personal encounter of the Christian with the presence of Christ the Word in Sacred Scripture. The structure of Lectio Divina is founded upon a simple prayerful openness to the same Spirit that inspired the holy texts.*

*There are traditionally four steps in Lectio Divina:*

- 1. Lectio—read the passage;*
- 2. Meditatio—reflect upon the message, that is ponder the Word of God;*
- 3. Oratio—respond in prayer, that is commune and communicate with the Word of God;*
- 4. Contemplatio—rest in contemplation of Christ’s presence in the Word.*

*While Lectio Divina is primarily for the purpose of individual, personal prayer with the Scriptures, within the context of a Celebration of the Word of God, the leader might use the following approach to “group lectio divina” with the Gospel of the day over a period of 10-15 minutes:*

- 1. Lectio—the Gospel is proclaimed in the context of the Celebration of the Word;*
- 2. Meditatio—The leader leads a prayer to the Holy Spirit and invites people to take note of significant passages or words and any image that attend their reflection as the Gospel is re-read slowly line by line;*
- 3. Oratio—During a period of silence, people turn in prayer to respond to God in the reflections that arose from meditation;*
- 4. Contemplatio—Prayer will lead to rest in the Word, a silent contemplation of Christ’s presence to the individual in the Word of God;*
- 5. The leader might invite participants to share any thoughts or insights that arose from the time of lectio with the Gospel passage.*

# The Blessed Sacrament Chaplet for Spiritual Communion



*This chaplet consists of a medal  
of the Blessed Sacrament and 33 beads,  
recalling the 33 years of Christ's life on earth.*



*On the medal one makes a Spiritual Communion as follows:*

**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.**



*On each bead say:*

**Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament,  
have mercy on us!**



*End by reciting:*

**Glory Be (Doxology)**







**Ah! I cannot receive Holy Communion  
as often as I desire, But, Lord,  
are you not all-powerful?  
Remain in me as in a tabernacle  
and never separate yourself  
from your little victim.**

**from *The Act of Oblation to Merciful Love*,  
St. Thérèse of Lisieux, June 9, 1895**