

Pentecost Novena

2018



Partnership Prayer

God of all Creation,

You have constantly poured out your Spirit upon our Diocese
and kindled here a light which has spread throughout the world.

Lord Jesus, you gathered disciples to yourself
to learn from you
and to model their lives on you.
Your Holy Spirit empowered them
to continue your work in the world.

Come upon us, Holy Spirit,
deepen the faith you invite us to share
and inspire us to become faithful witnesses.

As we work with you to develop our partnerships,
help each one of us to use the gifts you give us
to nurture one another,
to serve the world
and to live in harmony with the whole of creation.

All of this we ask in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

After the Ascension, we are told that the disciples returned to Jerusalem and spent time together in prayer.

They probably also shared stories of things they had seen Jesus do - the things they had heard people say.

Over the next nine days, we will use the Gospel of each day as a starting point as a time of prayer.

The format is designed to be flexible - for you to use as much or as little as you wish in our journey towards Pentecost.

The outline for each day is similar:

Reading: from ...

Usually a short extract from the day's Gospel but with reference to the full text.

Wondering

A few questions that might be sparked from the reading

Contemplating

Either *lectio divina* - the slow, prayerful reading of Scripture
or

Ideas for using the imagination or for a time of quiet prayer

From *Gaudete et Exultate*

A quote from the Pope's new document and thought for reflection.

Praying for our Partnerships

A prayer invoking the Holy Spirit

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The First Day: Friday after Ascension

Reading: from John 16: 20-23

Jesus said to his disciples:

*"A woman in childbirth suffers because her time has come;
but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering
in her joy that a child has been born into the world.*

*So it is with you: you are sad now,
but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy,
and that joy no one shall take from you."*

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Wondering

How does this image of a woman giving birth speak to me?
Have I experienced or witnessed a birth - and do I agree with Jesus?
How can I help to support people who are labouring
to bring something new into the world
and encouraging them through what may be difficult times?

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Contemplating

Read the passage through slowly
and see if any words or phrases seem to stand out for you
Why might they have spoken to you at this time?
Do they offer any insights into what God might be asking of you?

or

Jesus is saying these words during what is called "the Last Discourse" - trying to say things the disciples may not have understood at the time but would come to understand after his Resurrection and, especially, after the Pentecost event.

Imagine how this day—the day after the first Ascension Thursday—
would have been for those disciples who knew something was going to happen but not
what - nor when.

How might have encouraged each other
as they waited for this "something" that they were waiting for?

From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*Hard times may come, when the cross casts its shadow,
yet nothing can destroy the supernatural joy
that “adapts and changes, but always endures,
even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that,
when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved”. (St Therese of Lisieux)
That joy brings deep security, serene hope
and a spiritual fulfilment that the world cannot understand or appreciate. (125)*

Jesus did not say that faith in him would lead to an easy, comfortable life—
in fact, he said quite the opposite.

What he promised, though, was exactly what St Therese shares with us—
a deep sense of certainty that, whatever difficulties we meet,
nothing can separate us from the unconditional love of God.

*Pray for a renewed sense of that fathomless love of God for you, your family
and the people of our Partnerships.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,
upon all who are labouring to give birth to new ideas and ways of being.

Give comfort to those who are apprehensive,
confidence to those who are preparing for change,
and trust in your guidance.

Give us all a sense of deep security and hope,
founded on our confident trust in God’s everlasting love.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Second Day: Saturday after Ascension

Reading: from John 16: 23-28

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I tell you most solemnly,

anything you ask for from the Father

he will grant in my name.

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.

Ask and you will receive,

and so your joy will be complete...

...the Father loves you for loving me

and believing that I came from God."

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Wondering

Praying in Jesus' name - what does this mean?

When Peter prayed in the name of Jesus, people were healed -

the dead were raised...

How has God used my prayer?

Was it as I expected - or surprising - or confusing...

but ultimately the "right" answer?

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Contemplating

Read through the Reading slowly and see if any words or phrases.

You may like to look at the whole Reading if the extracts do not speak to you. *or*

Find a time and place where you can be quiet.

Read the Reading and build up the scene in your imagination -
sometimes, seeing the scene as a film director might can help.

Listen to Jesus talking to the disciples...

and then invite him to speak to you directly...

What does he say?

Record any thoughts in a prayer journal if you are keeping one.

From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy,
or putting on a dreary face,
the saints are joyful and full of good humour.*

Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit.(122)

It is very tempting in times of change or difficulty
when things are not going our way,
to let the world know exactly how we feel about it.

It is good to be honest in our discussions about changes in our Partnerships,
but it helps no-one if we do it in a spirit of negativity.

Jesus was a realist—he knew things would be tough sometimes
but maintained throughout that he has given us a deep joy
that nothing should be allowed to take away.

Pray that your Partnership will be a place of joyful realism.

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful with the joy Jesus promised.
As we face new realities, with their challenges and changes,
do not let us give way to timidity or dreariness
but help us to retain the good humour and hopefulness
that speak of us being people who have placed their trust in the Lord.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Third Day: Seventh Sunday of Easter

Reading: from John 17: 11-19

Jesus said:

"As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

*And for their sakes I sanctify myself,
so that they also may be sanctified in truth."*

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Wondering

Do I see myself as being sent into the world?
And what might it be that God wants me to do there?

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Contemplating

Read through the Reading slowly and make a note of any words or phrases that stand out for you. You may wish to find the whole reading in a Bible or Missal. Why do those words speak to you particularly at this time?

or

John's Gospel is rich and multi-layered - and sometimes difficult to understand. Take a few moments to build up the scene of Jesus speaking to his disciples - and try to take yourself into it.

Think about what you might see - hear - smell or touch.

Hear Jesus say the words directly to you - perhaps looking into your eyes:

"I am sending you into the world...."

What do the words mean to you now?

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From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*Do not be afraid to set your sights higher,
to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God.
Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit.
Holiness does not make you less human,
since it is an encounter between your weakness
and the power of God's grace.(34)*

As Jesus prepared to return to the Father,
he promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is what makes all the difference—if we allow it to.
We can be tempted to focus on the small—the familiar—the usual.
But the Spirit give us a freedom to look beyond those
to something new and greater—
and then the power to work for it with the gifts of that same Spirit.

*Pray that your Partnership is one that sets is sights higher
and is ever more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,
and renew our vision;
help us to raise our sights to the new horizons you invite us to explore.

Give us your guidance
as we allow the power of God's grace to encounter our weaknesses
and transform them.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Fourth Day: St Matthias

Reading from John 15: 9-17

Jesus said to his disciples

"You did not choose me but I chose you.

*And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.
I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."*

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Wondering

How do I feel about Jesus choosing me?

What fruit does he want me to bear in my life?

How does love make me and others more fruitful?

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Contemplating

Read through the Reading a few times. Take your time and stay with any words or phrases that stand out for you. You may wish to find the whole reading in a Bible or Weekday Missal. Why might those words be significant for you?

or

Create a possible setting in which Jesus might have said these words - think about the sky and surroundings - sounds and smells.

Where is Jesus - is he sitting or standing? Where are the disciples?

Jesus is preparing to leave the disciples - things are going to happen that will terrify them...

What expressions do you see around you?

What is Jesus' expression?

You may like to "talk" to Jesus about anything that troubles you - and invite his response.

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From *Gaudete et Exsultate*

Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness.

Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation.

Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (15)

Like Matthias, we might wonder what on earth we have undertaken—
and why of all the people on the planet, God has chosen us.

But we never do these things under our own power.

In our baptism, the Holy Spirit was given to us
to make our lives a journey of deepening holiness and closeness to God.

Our task is to be open to that gift
and to trust that it will enable us to do far more than we imagine we can.

*Pray that your Partnership is a place where everyone has the opportunity
to allow the grace of their baptism to flourish and to bear fruit.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,
make us open to the power and guidance of God at work in our lives.

Help all of us to bear the fruits of our baptism
through the gifts that you have entrusted to us.

so that our communities may flourish
and, in turn, bear fruit in the world you have called us to serve.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Fifth Day: Tuesday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Reading: from John 17: 1-11

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said,
"Now at last they know
that all you have given me comes indeed from you;
for I have given them
the teaching you gave to me,
and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you,
and have believed that it was you who sent me."

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Wondering

How did the disciples know that Jesus had come from the Father?
What qualities did they recognise in him?
What helps me to believe that Jesus came from the Father
and choose to follow his teaching?

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Contemplating

Read the extract from the Gospel and see if any words or phrases stand out for you. You may like to read the full version in a Missal or Bible.

Why do the words have special meaning for you today?

or

Build up the scene suggested by the Gospel reading.
Picture Jesus amongst the disciples... How does he look?
What does he sound like?
As you look and listen, what strikes you?
What is it about Jesus that shows you the divine within him?

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From *Gaudete et Exsultate*

*A community that cherishes the little details of love,
whose members care for one another
and create an open and evangelizing environment,
is a place where the risen Lord is present,
sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan.(145)*

In the paragraph before this,
Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus was attentive to the little details
the widow's copper coins—
and having a fire lit and fish cooking for friends hungry after a bad night's fishing. While
we need people to see the bigger picture,
we also need to be aware of the little details that make communities work.
And not just work but to witness to the presence of the Risen Lord within them.

*Pray that your Partnership is one the cherishes the little things
that show our love and care for one another.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,
open our eyes and ears—and hearts and minds
to the little details that make our communities work.

Help us to cherish the things that seem unimportant to some
but which make a big difference to the sense of belonging of others.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Sixth Day: Wednesday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Reading: from John 17: 11-19

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

"Holy Father,

I am not asking you to remove them from the world,

but to protect them from the evil one.

They do not belong to the world

any more than I belong to the world.

Consecrate them in the truth;

your word is truth."

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Wondering

What does it mean not to belong to the world?

How does my life show that I have been consecrated in the truth?

How does the life of my community witness to the truth?

How am I protected from the evil one?

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Contemplating

Read the words taken from a much longer passage - which you may wish to read in full in a Missal or Bible. Do any words or phrases speak to you particularly today? What implications might they have for you?

or

Contemplate the scene as we have done over the past few days.

You may like to say the words from the Gospel aloud - savour them and hear Jesus speaking through your voice.

As you say them, how do they touch you?

What expression comes into your voice?

How might that be an echo of the voice of Jesus?

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From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance
among God's holy and faithful people,
for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them,
not as individuals without any bond between them,
but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth
and serve him in holiness" (from Lumen Gentium) (6)*

God loves each one of us with a deep, personal love
but does not set us up to live in isolation.

We are hard-wired to be with others.

It is in working with them—with the joys and challenges of that—
that we form communities in which we can grow in love and faith
and serve God and his world in holiness.

*Pray that our Partnerships are communities
in which people of all ages and all backgrounds
can strengthen the bonds of love between them
and bear strong witness to the love and truth of God.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful.

Give us a sense of the bonds that unite us—
that are stronger than the divisions that seek to divide us.
Draw us together around a common vision of loving service -
of God
and of the world.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Seventh Day: Thursday of the Seventh Week of Easter

Reading: from John 17: 20-26

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

"Holy Father,

I pray not only for these,

but for those also

who through their words will believe in me.

May they all be one.

Father, may they be one in us,

as you are in me and I am in you,

so that the world may believe it was you who sent me."

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Wondering

Who are the people whose lives my own touches? How do my words - my gestures bring others to believe in God? How have the words and gestures and attitudes of others helped me to believe?

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Contemplating

Read the shorter version of today's Gospel slowly and prayerfully. The full version can be found in a Missal or Bible if you would prefer to use that. As we have done over recent days, allow words and phrases to speak to you. Stay with any that do and allow God to speak to you through them.

or

For several days now, John has described Jesus as raising his eyes to heaven. Take time to watch the sky - changing patterns of cloud - or starlight and moonlight. People long believed that heaven was in the sky - we have a different sense of heaven. Allow the time of gazing and contemplating the sky to speak to your soul of heaven and the promise of eternal joy there

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From *Gaudete et Exultate*

Contrary to the growing consumerist individualism that tends to isolate us in a quest for well-being apart from others, our path to holiness can only make us identify all the more with Jesus' prayer "that all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you" (146).

One danger in spirituality is that it can become a search for our own well-being and lead us to become a little short-sighted as regards the well-being of others.

It is absolutely right to look after our own needs but not in the way the media usually focuses on—
"my individual wants matter more than *your* needs".

We are one human family on one small planet—
created and loved by one God.

Pray that our Partnerships will be united—that we may all be one.

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Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,
give us a sense of unity and common purpose
As we have received Faith through other people,
give us the words and actions
that will help others to believe in you.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Eighth Day

Reading: from John 21: 15-19

*Jesus showed himself to his disciples,
and after they had eaten he said to Simon Peter,
'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?'*

He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know I love you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'

A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

He replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Look after my sheep.'

Then he said to him a third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

Peter was upset that he asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?'

and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'

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Wondering

We move away from the Last Discourse today and have a Reading that reminds us of the commission placed on Peter and his successors.

How aware am I of being part of a Church with over 2000 years of history?

How am I playing my part in witnessing to my Catholic heritage -
and in building up the contemporary Church?

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Contemplating

Read through the extract from the Gospel and see what speaks to you today. If you read the rest of today's Gospel, you will read the consequence of Peter's decision. Why might the words or phrases be significant for you today?

or

Spend some time creating the scene of this Gospel.

Where do you imagine that it is set?

What might you see - or hear - touch or smell?

Where are Peter and Jesus in relation to the other disciples?

From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*Often discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things,
since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities.*

*It involves striving untrammelled for all that is great, better and more beautiful, while at
the same time being concerned for the little things,
for each day's responsibilities and commitments.*

*For this reason, I ask all Christians not to omit, in dialogue with the Lord,
a sincere daily "examination of conscience".*

*Discernment also enables us to recognize the concrete means
that the Lord provides in his mysterious and loving plan,
to make us move beyond mere good intentions. (from 169)*

Discernment is about making choices and how we do this.

Sometimes they are big choices

but more often it is the accumulation of small decisions
that show us whether we are drawing closer to God—or not.

We can all have great intentions—

but a pause to look at the choices we actually make
shows us how well we are striving for the "great, better and more beautiful".

*Pray that Partnerships will take pauses to examine their conscience
and see how choices match good intentions.*

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Praying for our Partnerships

Come, Holy Spirit,

fill the hearts of your faithful.

Help us to keep you in our minds and hearts

as we make the day to day decisions

that seem unimportant but each of which take us a step closer to—

or a step away from God's plan for us.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

The Ninth Day: The Eve of Pentecost

Reading: from John 21:20-25

*This disciple (John) is the one who vouches for these things
and has written them down,
and we know that his testimony is true.*

*There were many other things that Jesus did;
if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose,
would not hold all the books that would have to written.*

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Wondering

What were all the other things that Jesus said and did?
Why did John and the other evangelists choose the stories and saying they did? If you
were an eye-witness to one of the events in Jesus' lifetime,
which one would you be most keen to have included in a Gospel?

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Contemplating

Read the shortened passage from the end of John's Gospel - or the full version in a
Missal or Bible. Which word or phrase stands out for you?

Stay with it - letting the words sink into your soul
and allow God to speak to you through them.

or

Call to mind some of your favourite accounts of events or sayings of Jesus. Spend a
while with one of them - building up the scene in your imagination - seeing and hearing
Jesus in action or at prayer.

Invite him to share anything that he wants you to know...
or place before him a concern or worry
and ask him for new insights or advice.

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From *Gaudete et Exultate*

*May you come to realize what that word is,
the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life.*

Let yourself be transformed.

*Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen,
lest you fail in your precious mission.*

*The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps,
provided that you do not abandon the path of love
but remain ever open to his supernatural grace,
which purifies and enlightens. (24)*

These words apply to individuals—and to communities.

We—our parishes—our Partnerships have something to offer the world.

To do it, we have to allow the Spirit to transform us.

We will make mistakes—

but if we are rooted in love and trustful confidence,

God's will shall be done

and his Kingdom will forge deeper roots into the soil of our Diocese.

*Pray that the Partnerships will remain aware of the mission entrusted to them,
not being discouraged by mistakes
but confident that God will bring his plan for them to fulfilment.*

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Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,

fill the hearts of your faithful,

and kindle in them of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created

and you will renew the face of the earth.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Partnership Prayer

Pentecost Sequence

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,
From the clear celestial height.
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor,
Come, with treasures which endure;
Come, thou Light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, Light divine,
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill.

If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour thy dew,
Wash the stains of guilt away.

Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
With thy sevenfold gifts descend.

Give us comfort when we die;
Give us life with thee on high;
Give us joys that never end.

Amen. Alleluia.