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A TIME TO HEAL

50 Prayer Services for the Sick and Homebound

Arranged According to the Church Year and
Including Special Prayers for Use by
Lay Ministers and Other Caregivers

John McQuiggan



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Notes for Visiting the Sick and the Homebound



Many people when using these prayer services employ a lighted candle as a symbol of enlightenment and the power of light over darkness. A candle might not be practical when making calls to hospital settings (candles are not welcomed in hospitals and some nursing homes because of the fire risk, and the sensitivity of any patients with breathing difficulties).

If, however, a candle is permissible and used, a brief prayer may be said at the time the candle is lit. Two such prayers are presented below.

Candle Prayers

Lord, by the light of this candle, through the prayers of Mary, Virgin and Mother, we place in your care those we pray for, especially (*insert name or names*). Amen.

Lord, may this candle be a light for you to enlighten us in our difficulties and decisions. Amen.

Ensure that the people you are visiting know when you are coming. If you have an appointment and are unable to meet it, try to arrange for a substitute so that the recipients are not disappointed.

If you are unwell on the day, it is better to arrange for a substitute. The infirm and the sick are vulnerable, and you should not visit if the possibility exists that you might pass on an illness.

On arrival, look cheerful and greet the patient and anyone present, introduce yourself to anyone you do not already know. Be relaxed and friendly, this helps put everyone at ease. If appropriate, inquire about the patient's health out of courtesy, but avoid conversation on other topics until you finish the prayer service.

It is best to avoid involvement in medical matters, but listen politely if the patient wants to talk to you. Often the housebound can be very lonely and have a need to talk to somebody, so it is helpful to listen. If there appears to be a serious problem, consider referring it later to a relative or doctor. If you see a patient whose medical condition is deteriorating, you should inform the appropriate priest promptly.

Make best use of this book of services by commenting at the start of the service on the significance of the subject matter for that particular week. This will help the patient feel less isolated and more in touch with the main body of the Church.

As you leave, remember to thank the patient for allowing you the privilege of making the visit.



Prayer Services

World Day of the Sick

This observance is held on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Arrange, if possible, to bring holy water blessed at Lourdes or another shrine of Our Lady with you.

Greeting

The leader offers a greeting to all present.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all as we pray here together.

R. Amen.

Gathering Prayer

The leader begins by saying this opening prayer.

O God, who has given us into the special care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant us the particular favors that we ask through her intercession. May we rejoice on her special feast day and look forward to the vision of her in heaven.

R. Amen.

First Reading

The leader reads a passage from sacred Scripture. This text tells about God's healing power.

A reading from the Second Book of Kings 20:1–6

King Hezekiah fell ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, “The Lord says this, ‘Put your affairs in order, for you are going to die, and you will not live.’” Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and addressed this prayer to the Lord, “Ah, Lord, remember I beg you how I have behaved faithful and with sincerity of heart in your presence and have done what is right in your eyes.” And Hezekiah shed many tears.

Isaiah had not left the middle court, before the word of the Lord came to him, “Go back and say to Hezekiah, prince of my people, the Lord, the God of David your ancestor, says this: ‘I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will cure you: in three days’ time you shall go up to the Temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. I will save you and this city from the hands of the king of Assyria, I will protect this city for my own sake and the sake of my servant David.’”

R. Word of the Lord.

Psalm 45:3

The leader prays a brief psalm.

You are the finest among all others,
your lips are anointed with graciousness,
for God has blessed you forever.

Our Father

The leader introduces the Lord's Prayer.

We commend all whom we love, or who have been entrusted to our prayers, to the unfailing love of God, and say together, as Christ himself has taught us:

*R. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

Second Reading

The leader reads this brief quotation.

We have the Blessed Virgin as our model—she has suffered much, she has loved to suffer to be more close to her Son, but she never complained. Not only did she not protest against the worries and complications of her life, which however difficult, left her heart free.

MOTHER MARIE DES DOULLEURS

Prayer for Comfort

The leader shares this prayer with those present.

Father, you are the unfailing refuge of those who suffer—bring peace and comfort to the sick and the infirm. Give all those who look after them knowledge, patience, and compassion. Inspire them with actions which will bring relief; words which will enlighten; and love which will bring comfort. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

Prayer for Pre-Surgery

Use this prayer where appropriate.

O God, you understand my feelings at this moment; you know my fears and my nervousness; you know the thoughts that I cannot put into words. I thank you for all the skill and wisdom of the surgeon, the anesthetist, and the nursing staff. Give them strength for their work today, and help me to place myself in their hands. I now place myself confidently in your loving hands, knowing that nothing can separate me from your love in Christ Jesus. I say, as long ago Jesus said, “Father, into your hands I commit myself. May your will be done.”

R. Amen.

Let us remember in these prayers all who are sick and in need, our doctors, nurses, and caregivers, all our

relatives and friends, living and dead, and the souls of all those recently deceased, as we seek the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and say together:

*R. Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Prayer to Avoid Anxiety

After the assembly makes the sign of the cross, the leader says this prayer of Saint Francis de Sales.

Do not worry about what might happen tomorrow;
the same Everlasting Father who cares for you today
will take care of you tomorrow and every day.
Either he will shield you from suffering,
or he will give you unfailing strength to bear it.
So be at peace, then,
and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.

The leader concludes by saying to those present:

May the Lord be with you always,
to be your strength and your peace.

R. Thanks be to God.

Annunciation of the Lord

This solemn feast of March 25 commemorates the announcement by the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she was to become the Mother of God.

Greeting

The leader offers a greeting to all present.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all as we pray here together.

R. Amen.

Gathering Prayer

The leader begins by saying this opening prayer.

O God, who sent an angel to convey the message of your Word-Made-Flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant that we her children also may be helped by her intercession with you.

R. Amen.

First Reading

The leader reads a passage from sacred Scripture. This text recounts the Annunciation of the Lord to Mary.

***A reading from the Gospel according to
Luke 1:26-38***

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favored! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words, and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?"

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you," the angel answered, "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too, your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, *for nothing is impossible to God.*"

"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

R. The Gospel of the Lord.

Psalm 45:11–14

The leader prays a brief psalm.

Listen, O daughter, pay attention;
forget your father's house and your nation,
and your beauty will charm the King....
The people of Tyre will bow before him.
The wealthiest nations will seek your favor.

Our Father

The leader introduces the Lord's Prayer.

We commend all whom we love, or who have been entrusted to our prayers, to the unfailing love of God, and say together, as Christ himself has taught us:

*R. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

Second Reading

The leader reads this brief quotation.

In what words did the angel break the happy news of Redemption? “Hail, thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” The messenger of joy in his first word bids her to rejoice. He knew well that his message was of good tidings of great joy...to all creatures. ...He knew well that it broke the power of corruption. He knew well that it brought victory over hell.... Therefore, when he began to speak, he spoke in tones of rejoicing. Therefore, he made the name of joy to herald the tidings of good, which were to be a joy unto all people.

SAINT SOPHRONIUS

Prayer for the Afflicted

The leader shares this prayer with those present.

Dear Mary, our Mother,
we pray to your Son
for all the cares and anxieties
of those who have asked for our prayers:
Succor and restore the suffering in body and mind,
pity those who are tried by ill-health and disease,
give them light in darkness,
and in your great compassion,
lead them close to the strength of Jesus Christ,
your Son, our Lord.

R. Amen.

Let us remember in these prayers all who are sick and in need, our doctors, nurses, and caregivers, our relatives and friends, living and dead, and the souls of all those recently deceased, as we seek the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and say together:

*R. Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Prayer for Those Who Are Lonely

After the assembly makes the sign of the cross, the leader says this prayer.

Dear Father in heaven, I am often alone
and it can be a time for dreaming,
for praying,
for catching up on things.
But I am thinking of those who are really alone,
alone in their loneliness,
alone even when surrounded by people;
desperately lonely, lonely in heart and in mind.
For those within our community who feel isolated,
Lord, let them know your healing love.

O beloved Lord,
whoever they may be, wherever they may be:
touch the sadness of their loneliness
with your presence.
Please hold them in your arms,
so that they may feel the sweet comfort
of your nearness,
and the depth of your everlasting love.
We ask this through Christ your Son.

R. Amen.

The leader concludes by saying to those present:

May the Lord be with you always,
to be your strength and your peace.

R. Thanks be to God.

Ash Wednesday

A movable observance that begins the penitential season of Lent—a period of forty days before Easter. Lent lasts until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

Begin by asking those present to think for a moment of the first Station of the Cross: Mary sorrowing, hears the death sentence. "Crucify him, his blood be on us." Pray: "Mary, hear my prayer. Let the blood of Jesus be my redemption."

Greeting

The leader offers a greeting to all present.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all as we pray here together.

R. Amen.

Gathering Prayer

The leader begins by saying this opening prayer.

Lord, grant that we may successfully observe the works of Lent, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Let us reach out for the grace offered by your Son and, during this time, protect us from all evil, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

First Reading

The leader reads a passage from sacred Scripture. This text tells us that our day of salvation is at hand.

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 5:20–21, 6:1–2

We are Ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

As his fellow workers, we beg you not to neglect the grace of God that you have received for he says: at the favorable time, I have listened to you; on the day of salvation I came to your help.

Well, now is the favorable time; this is the day of salvation.

R. The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 51:3–4, 10–11

The leader prays a brief psalm.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your love.
In your great compassion blot out my sin.
Wash me thoroughly of my guilt;
cleanse me of evil....

Fill me with joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Turn your face away from my sins
and blot out all my offenses.

Our Father

The leader introduces the Lord's Prayer.

We commend all whom we love, or who have been entrusted to our prayers, to the unfailing love of God, and say together, as Christ himself has taught us:

*R. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

Second Reading

The leader reads this brief quotation.

The presence of God is the soul's life and nourishment, which can be acquired by the Lord's grace. Here are the means: a great purity of life, keeping constant

guard not to do, say, or think anything that might displease God; and when something like that happens, to humbly ask him pardon and do penance for it; a great fidelity to the practice of this presence and to the fostering of this awareness of God within must always be carried out gently, humbly, and lovingly.

BROTHER LAWRENCE, *PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD*

Prayer for Repentance

The leader shares this prayer with those present.

Lord, give us the grace to keep Lent faithfully,
and protect us in our struggle against evil.

As we begin the discipline of Lent,

make this season holy

by our continued suffering and self-denial.

Father in heaven,

the light of your truth bestows sight

to the darkness of sinful eyes.

May this season of repentance

bring us the blessing of your forgiveness

and the gift of your light.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

Let us remember in these prayers all who are sick and in need, our doctors, the nurses, and caregivers, our relatives and friends, living and dead, and the souls of all those recently deceased, as we seek the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and say together:

*R. Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Prayer for Serenity

Making the sign of the cross, the leader says this prayer.

Father, you do not protect us against catastrophes,
but in them you come to our aid.

It is in the very midst of tempest and misfortune
that a wonderful zone of peace, serenity, and joy
bursts in on us if we dwell in your grace.

You do not help us
before we have helped ourselves,
but when we are at the end of our resources,
you manifest yourself, and we begin to know
that you have been there all the time.
We thank you, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The leader concludes by saying to those present:

May the Lord be with you always,
to be your strength and your peace.

R. Thanks be to God.

Lent Week 1

In preparation, recall Christ's wounded shoulder from the second Station of the Cross. Mary sees the precious blood flow from the wounded shoulder. "O Mary, help us to shoulder our cross patiently, in union with Jesus."

Greeting

The leader offers a greeting to all present.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all as we pray here together.

R. Amen.

Gathering Prayer

The leader begins by saying this opening prayer.

O God, help us to put aside any suggestion of evil so that we may follow our Lord in his vanquishing of temptation. If we fail, bring us back from evil and heal us in our repentance.

R. Amen.

First Reading

The leader reads a passage from sacred Scripture. The theme of this text is endurance.

***A reading from Paul's Letter to the
Hebrews 10:32–36***

Remember all the sufferings that you had to meet after you received the light, in earlier days; sometimes by being yourselves publicly exposed to insults and violence, and sometimes as associates of others who were treated in the same way. For you not only shared in the sufferings of those who were in prison, but you happily accepted being stripped of your belongings, knowing that you owned something that was better and lasting. Be as confident now, then, since the reward is so great.

You will need endurance to do God's will and gain what he has promised.

R. The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 91:9–12

The leader prays a brief psalm.

If you have made the Lord your refuge,
the Most High your stronghold,
no harm will come upon you,
no disaster will draw near your home.
For he will command his angels
to guard you in all your ways.
They will lift you up with their hands
so that your foot will not hit a stone.

Our Father

The leader introduces the Lord's Prayer.

We commend all whom we love, or who have been entrusted to our prayers, to the unfailing love of God, and say together, as Christ himself has taught us:

*R. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

Second Reading

The leader reads this brief quotation.

Whenever, for love of me, you willingly submit to the calamities which other men cause you; accept with lamblike meekness and silence the violent rage of all men; are indifferent as to the instigators of the plot against you, its violence, and whether you are in the right or in the wrong; and by your gentle spirit, meek words, and gracious demeanor conquer the malice of

your adversaries: behold, then the true representation of my death is effected in you....

BLESSED HENRY SUSO

Prayer for Strength

The leader shares this prayer with those present.

Lord, help those in pain, suffering, and illness
to know that the father cares for them
for He loves them as He loves his own son Jesus.

Lord your servant Paul said,
“When I am weak, then I am strong.”

We feel so weak,
pray God that we may be strong.
Father of love, hear our prayers.
Help us to know your will,
and to do it with courage and faith.
We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

Let us remember in these prayers all who are sick and in need, our doctors, nurses, and caregivers, all our relatives and friends, living and dead, and the souls of all those recently deceased, as we seek the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and say together:

*R. Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb Jesus.*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Prayer for Salvation

*After the assembly makes the sign of the cross, the leader
says this prayer.*

Lord, may this Lenten undertaking,
free us from our old life of sin,
and make us your new creation.
Help us to be pilgrims,
on the way that leads to eternal life,
and be with us now and always.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The leader concludes by saying to those present:

May the Lord be with you always,
to be your strength and your peace.

R. Thanks be to God.