

Easter retreat day

We won't suggest you try to follow the exact monastic hours of prayer, but still try and divide your day into 6 parts:

- Early Morning prayer (between 6-9am)
- Mid-Morning prayer (between 9-11am)
- Midday prayer (12:00)
- Mid-Afternoon Prayer (between 2-5pm)
- Evening prayer (between 5-8pm)
- Night Prayer(optional) (9pm)

You can set timings for yourself and here you will find suggestions of what to do and what to pray and reflect on at those timings.

One thing we would suggest – if you are doing your one form of exercise a day – please do it at the midday slot if possible.

Early Morning Prayer

The first thing you notice in the morning when you open your eyes – is the light. Bright sun light, or less intense light if its cloudy, but it is distinctively different to the artificial light we now have due to electricity.

Spend time in quietness and stillness looking around and observing different objects outside and inside your house noticing the different colours and shades. Look and admire how much light gives you the ability to see so many things, noticing small details.

Spend time praying and thanking God for the light that enables us to see things around, see his beautiful creation and his marvellous deeds.

Sing “Light of the world, you step down into darkness”
(you can find it on youtube if you don't like to sing on your own)

Spend time praying and inviting Jesus into this day of prayer and retreat. Pray for Him to bring his light into your day today, enlightening the darkness around you and in you.

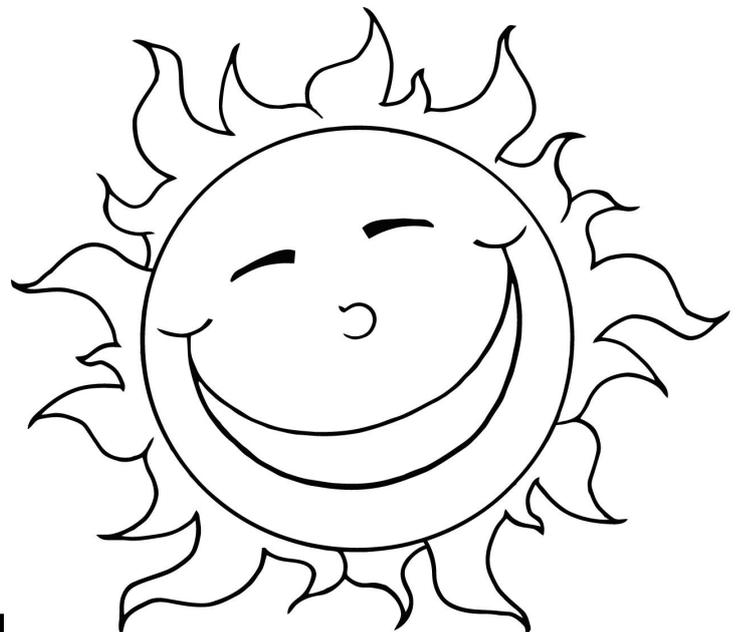
If you find it easier – write down your prayers in your journal or here.

Read: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 4:16, John 8:12, 1John 1:5-9, John 12:35-37, 1 Peter 2:9

Now read them again slowly and notice which words or ideas stand out for you, write them down and think about them during the day:

Talk to God about the things that stood out for you, about your thoughts and maybe memories, examples, worries or joys you were reminded about while you were reading and thinking about the light.

When we think we have hope in a situation we say, “we can see the light at the end of the tunnel”. Where and in what way can you ask God to bring His hope and light in the situations in you, your life, life of your friends and family, your town, country and in the world? Bring all that to God while you draw a sun/candle/torch or any other object that you think of when you think about light.



Mid-Morning Prayer

Read the Easter Story according to Matthew 26-28. Don't rush it but pay attention to all the details. What things have you not notice before? Maybe read in a different language you know or in a different translation that is unusual to you – that will help you to concentrate better.

List the things that you had not noticed before:

Find some coins. Maybe you have a piggy bank or other place where you store coins. Think of their value now. What could you buy for them 20-50 years ago and what can you buy for them now? What can you buy for them in your country and compare it maybe with some other countries?

Judas and money were always an interesting combination...

Think about money relation to the world now. Lots of people use different situations and sometimes people to gain more money. Judas has betrayed Jesus – he got what he wanted (or he thought what was right) and got paid for that as well. But how quickly that money lost its value...He didn't enjoy gaining those money, on the contrary - he felt terribly guilty.

Who are the people or what are the values that you betray for the sake of gaining more? What compromises do you accept?

You can put a few coins aside (or give them to somebody else or hide them) as a symbol of being happy to have less but not betraying the principles and values of God's Kingdom in your life. Spend time praying about that:

Think about the world today. According to the [International Labour Organization](#) by their definitions, over 40 million people are in some form of slavery today. People use other people to gain more money or stuff and don't think about the Kingdom of God.

Please pray Lord's Prayer and pause especially on the words "Your Kingdom come" – bring to God those places where injustice and slavery are still ruling.

Pause especially on the words "give us today our daily bread" and bring to God those who suffer from hunger or don't have enough food, - may those who have start to share more.

Pause especially on the words "lead us not into temptations" and bring to God your personal temptations and concerns for money or possessions.

Midday prayer

We suggest to you to do this either walking around your neighbourhood area or sitting in your garden. Listen or read the Easter Story according to Mark 14-16. Don't rush it but pay attention to all the details. What things have you not noticed before? Maybe listen or read in a different language you know or in a different translation that is unusual to you – that will help you to concentrate better.

If you are in the garden list the things that you had not noticed before (or write them down after you comeback):

Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray because He was overwhelmed with the task that was laid on Him. He needed the support of the Father and He asked his friends to pray with Him and for Him.

While you are walking or sitting in the garden, think of those people, who have very important, dangerous, significant roles in our society: NHS, Police, Fire fighters, teachers, shop workers, pharmacists, post men, politicians, PM, military etc. Pray for them to have courage to continue their roles and duties. Pray specifically for those who you know personally in those roles.

Pray as well for those people who you know personally who struggle with their roles in life: fathers, mothers, children, friends etc.

Pray for yourself – for your ability and willingness to fulfil the obligations God put on you in this life. Pour out your heart before Him, as Jesus did and receive His grace.

Mid-afternoon prayer

Read the Easter Story according to Luke 22-24. Don't rush it but pay attention to all the details. What things have you not noticed before? Maybe read in a different language you know or in a different translation that is unusual to you – that will help you to concentrate better.

List the things that you had not noticed before:



Make a cross. Here is an example for you – it's very easy to do. You can use any sticks you can find in your house or garden, some thread and a piece of paper.

Write on one side of the label a verse from the Bible about Jesus' sacrifice (for example John 1:29 or any other verse that you were reminded of). And on the other side write "Thank you"

Put this cross in front of you and think about your life. You can create your life story. Its simple. You need a piece of A4 paper. Draw a horizontal line where on the left is the day when you were born, and on the right is the today. Put on your story line as many significant events or people as you can remember.

When you finish – thank God for each event and for the people who have had an impact on your life. Thank God for His amazing gift of life to you.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" John 10:10

Evening prayer

Read the Easter Story according to John 18-20. Don't rush it but pay attention to all the details. What things have you not noticed before? Maybe read in a different language you know or in a different translation that is unusual to you – that will help you to concentrate better.

List the things that you had not noticed before:

Spend time thinking about bread. Bread is a vital food for most countries in the world. It's not as vital as water, but still it plays huge role in the nutrition of every person. There are vast amount of types and kinds of bread. Which one is your favourite? If you can then spend time making your own bread. There are lots of methods, but here you can find an easy and quick one:

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp table salt
- 310 ml water
- 1 tbsp vegetable (or olive) oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 190°C. Lightly flour a baking tray.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt. Whisk until evenly combined. Add in water and vegetable oil.
3. Stir wet ingredients into dry ingredients using a spoon until wet ingredients are absorbed. Use your hands to knead dough a few times until it comes together and has a uniform consistency.
4. Shape the dough into a round disc that is no more than 1 ½ inches thick. Place dough onto floured baking tray. Using a sharp knife, score the top of the dough, cutting an "X" that is about ¾ inches deep.
5. Place bread into oven and bake 35-40 minutes, or until bread is done. Bread will turn slightly brown on the surface but will remain quite pale and still look undone since this is not a traditional bread. To check for doneness, tap the bottom of the loaf and it should sound hollow.

Take a piece of bread (the one you've made or the one you have at home) – put it in front of you and think about Jesus' body. Jesus said that bread symbolises his body, and we should remember what He has done for us. Spend time thinking and remembering all you have read and noticed from the gospels about Jesus body in the last day of his life and after that. Praise Him for the courage, perseverance and patience that He showed to us.

On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, His tomb was empty, and His body was changed. This is what Jesus promises to us – that our bodies will be transformed after our death and resurrection. Eat your piece of bread as the symbol of acceptance and thankfulness for Him to take care of our bodies even after our death.

Pray about your body now – about all your weaknesses, illnesses and challenges you have in your body. Ask Jesus to continue the transformation of our bodies in this life – both physically and spiritually.

Night prayer (Lectio Divina)

Light a candle and spend time sitting quietly and still watching the flame. Try to calm down inside your head as well. Let go of every thought and worry. Just enjoy and look at the candle flame.

Make sure you sit comfortably and breath slowly.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

The reading is Matthew 5:11-16

This is a way of praying that starts with our silence. We often make the mistake of thinking prayer is about what we say to God. It is actually the other way round. God wants to speak to us. He will do this through the Scriptures. So don't worry about what to say. Don't worry if nothing jumps out at you at first. God is patient. He will wait for the opportunity to get in. He will give you a word and lead you to understand its meaning for you today.

First reading of the passage: Listen

As you read the passage listen for a word or phrase that attracts you. Allow it to arise from the passage as if it is God's word for you today. Sit in silence repeating the word or phrase in your head.

Then say the word or phrase aloud.

Second reading of the passage: Ponder

As you read the passage again ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you. Ponder it carefully. Don't worry if you get distracted – it may be part of your response to offer it to God. Sit in silence and then frame a single sentence that begins to say aloud what this word or phrase says to you.

Third reading of the passage: Pray

As you read the passage for the last time ask what Christ is calling from you. What is it that you need to do or consider or relinquish or take on as a result of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase? In the silence that follows the reading pray for the grace of the Spirit to plant this word in your heart.

If you are on your own speak your prayer to God either aloud or in the silence of your heart.

You can write down your thoughts and prayers here:
