

# Sunday Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Lent (known as *Laetare Sunday* and ***Mothering Sunday***)

14 March 2021

*The Gathering*<sup>1</sup>

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Hear our voice according to your faithful love;  
**according to your judgement, give us life.**

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.

In the darkness of our sin,  
your light breaks forth like the dawn  
and your healing springs up for deliverance.

As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,  
sustain us with your bountiful Spirit  
and open our lips to sing your praise.

Blessed be God, Source, Word, and Spirit.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## The Psalm

O give thanks, for the Lord is gracious; •  
God's steadfast love endures for ever.

**So let the people say whom the Lord has redeemed, •:  
whom the Lord has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,**

and gathered out of the lands, •  
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

**Some were sick because of their sins, •  
afflicted on account of their wrongdoing.**

They loathed every kind of food, •  
and drew near to the gates of death.  
**Then they cried to you, O Lord, in their trouble, •  
and you rescued them from their distress.**

You sent forth your word and healed them, •  
and saved their life from the grave.  
**Let them thank you, O Lord, for your steadfast love, •  
for the wonders that you do for us.**

Let them offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, •  
**and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.**

*Psalm 107.1—3, 17—22*

**Glory to God,  
Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

## *The First Reading*

A reading from the book of Numbers.

From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’

Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.’

So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

*Numbers 21.4—9*

Listen for the leading of the Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Gospel

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Saint John.

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said, 'And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

*John 3.14—21*

The gospel of Christ.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## The Reflection

## The Prayers of the People

Versicle and Response:

**V** Hear us, O God.

**R** Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you,  
O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

As Jesus teaches us, so we pray:

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin  
against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

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

## *The Collect<sup>2</sup>*

Steadfast God,  
you reach out to us in mercy even when we rebel against your holy call  
and prefer to walk in disobedience rather than in the way of your divine truth.  
Soften our hearts with the warmth of your love,  
that we may know your Son alive within us,  
redeeming us and raising us up into your eternal presence;  
through the same Jesus the Christ  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;  
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.  
Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.  
Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
your touch makes sinners righteous.  
Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;  
in your love and tenderness remake us.  
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,  
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.<sup>3</sup>

**Amen.**

## *The Solemn Prayer over the People<sup>4</sup>*

Let us bow down before the Lord.

Look down in mercy, Lord, on your people who kneel before you;  
and grant that those whom you have nourished by your Word and Sacraments  
may bring forth fruit worthy of repentance;  
through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## *The Dismissal*

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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- <sup>1</sup> *Common Praise: Daily Prayer*. Church of England. “Morning Prayer. Lent.” 238—39.
- <sup>2</sup> *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*. Consultation on Common Texts.
- <sup>3</sup> Anselm of Canterbury (1109). Translation from *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* 66.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Book of Occasional Services* 2018. The Episcopal Church of the United States.