

PRAYING

Silence is kept for several minutes, to allow people to pray for the 5 people they have chosen to pray for throughout the Novena. It may be appropriate to invite people to speak those names aloud if they wish to.

We meet your word in weakness, knowing that only your grace can teach us true mercy.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give you thanks for the inspiration we find in stories of courageous forgiveness.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We pray for prisoners, and for rehabilitation and restorative justice initiatives.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you all who long to know themselves forgiven.

(Pause)

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

Generous God,

At the first Pentecost you blessed humanity with the rich gift of the Holy Spirit.

Today, may we be blessed again with the richness of the Spirit

That, like those who first received this precious gift,

We may change the lives of those around us

To know the reality of your Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all Amen..

(Prayer written by The Venerable Darren Miller - Archdeacon of Ashford)

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with merciful hearts.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with boldness to preach the Gospel of reconciliation.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with kindness.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**

DAILY WAITING

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).

This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and additional prayers may be added as you wish. Italic text is intended as an instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together. Since the theme of Thy Kingdom Come 2025 is The Lord's Prayer, these liturgies invite us to pray that prayer immediately after the Scripture reading, rather than during the Intercessions, to allow us to bring it into focus before we meditate on it in the Reflection.

The Reflections are taken from the Thy Kingdom Come 2025 Novena booklet by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, and the Intercessions include prayers from our June Prayer Calendar, written by people from around the Canterbury Diocese.

GATHERING

As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus gives to all his disciples. Read the following from John 14 together:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light a candle, open a Bible, share the peace...

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

Pause for a few minutes in silence to welcome the leading of the Holy Spirit, and bring to mind the names of 5 people you will commit to praying for over the coming days.

CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2025

LISTENING: Matthew 18:23-33, NRSV

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’

We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord’s Prayer together:

**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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

REFLECTING

We give from the overflow of what we have received

‘As we forgive those who sin against us.’ Matthew 6:12 2

‘Blessed are the merciful,’ said Jesus, ‘they will receive mercy.’ (Matthew 5:7) To which we might also add: ‘Blessed are those who receive mercy, they shall be merciful to others.’ For this is the one petition in the Lord’s Prayer which comes with a condition attached: ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.’ (Again, the actual word in the bible is debt.)

This is hard. We like the idea of our sins being wiped away. We are less keen on offering this mercy to others. Paul reminds us that Jesus died for us, making peace with God ‘while we were still sinners.’ (Romans 5:2) i.e. when we were unpenitent; when we didn’t even know about the grace and goodness of God, let alone seek it.

So it remains true, that in Jesus every person is offered the liberating gift of forgiveness and perhaps our best and most honest response to the challenge of this petition in the Lord’s Prayer is to make sure we are ready to offer forgiveness and ready to seek out ways of truth and reconciliation so that there can be honesty, understanding, and penitence. In this way we are ready and able to give to others the mercy we know we need ourselves and have so gratefully received. There is no other way to break the cycle of retribution and revenge that fuels the conflicts and conquests of the world, hardening people against one another and creating only more misery and violence.

Hence, we cannot ask for forgiveness without also praying for the grace to be forgiving. ‘How many times?’ Peter asked Jesus. ‘As many as seven?’ ‘No,’ said Jesus. ‘Seventy times seven.’ (Matthew 18:21-22)

So go on asking for forgiveness. Go on being ready to give that forgiveness to others.

Generous and forgiving God, cleanse our hearts and forgive our sins and make us ready to forgive others. We particularly pray that more people will come to know you and receive your gift of forgiveness, especially the five people we are praying for at the moment.

Psalm 63:1-8, NRSV

1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;

my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,

beholding your power and glory.

3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,

my lips will praise you.

4 So I will bless you as long as I live;

I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,

and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

6 when I think of you on my bed,

and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

7 for you have been my help,

and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

8 My soul clings to you;

your right hand upholds me.

Glory to the Father and to the Son,

And to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now

And shall be for ever.

Amen.