

Contemplative Prayer Form

Fifth Sunday of Lent - Year A



The Liturgy Letter

Note: This is for individual or small group use. It is intended to be a form of contemplative “Lectio Divina” based on the scripture readings for the week and the themes of the liturgical season. Repetition, silence, and intercession are utilized to allow space for focus over a short or long period of time. It may be helpful to use your fingers to count the number of scripture phrases you utter during the times of repetition. The Scripture prayer section is structured for easy use with Anglican Prayer Beads for those who might find a tactile expression to be helpful (✚ = Cross ● = Invitatory bead ◇ = Cruciform bead ● = Weeks bead).

Scripture Reading: John 11:1-45 (NIV)

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

“But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Scripture Prayer:

✝ The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Come, let us adore him.

✿ Almighty God, you alone bring order into the world. Grant us grace to love what you command and desire what you promise that our hearts may be fixed on doing your will. Amen.

◇ Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice.
-Psalm 130:1-2a

● **Repeat Seven Times:**

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.
-Psalm 130:2b

◇ If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?
-Psalm 130:3

● **Repeat Seven Times:**

But with you there is forgiveness...
-Psalm 130:4a

◇ I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.
-Psalm 130:5

● **Repeat Seven Times:**

I wait for the Lord...
-Psalm 130:6a

◇ ...put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.
-Psalm 130:7

● **Repeat Seven Times:**

He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.
-Psalm 130:8

◇ Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live...Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.
-Ezekiel 37:13-14

✿ *The Lord's Prayer*

✙ May God grant us forgiveness of sins as we forgive others. Amen.

Silence + Intercessions

Lord Jesus Christ, raise us by your Spirit: gather all the nations into your care.

Keep us steady in faith and lead us to trust in you...

Come, Holy Spirit, and breath new life. Heal our wounded souls and misshaped desires...

Free us from anxiety and self righteousness...

Guide your Church in this place and around the world...

We pray for the leaders of the nations...

Father, support those who are going through trials...

For the oppressed and lonely...

For families and friends, for all who have asked for our prayers and who pray for us...

For our country, our region (village, town...), that the Christians there may be witnesses to your life and unity...

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.