

## Maundy Thursday Prayer Vigil | April 9-10, 2020

All Saints Episcopal Church, Concord, North Carolina

### Prayer in a Biblical Context

*“Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?” - Matthew 26:36-46*

To set the stage for this passage, Jesus and the disciples have just finished the Last Supper and they are in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus says to the disciples:

“Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Then he returned to his disciples and found them *sleeping*. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” When he came back, he again found them *sleeping*, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still *sleeping* and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer.”

Three times the disciples failed to stay awake with Jesus in his time of anguish. The Maundy Thursday Prayer Vigil is our answer to Jesus’ plea to his disciples, “Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?” This year we have signed up for one-hour time periods to pray, not in our sanctuary, but rather, “wherever we can be present with God” so that we have at least one person awake with Jesus between the two most somber days of Holy Week. Over the years I have learned that I really can’t appreciate the full joy of Easter without walking with Jesus through Holy week.

-Mark Robinson

## What is prayer?

In her book [An Altar in the World](#), Barbara Brown Taylor writes, “Brother David Steindl-Rast was the first person to tell me that prayer is not the same thing as prayers...Prayer according to Brother David is waking up to the presence of God no matter where I am or what I am doing. When I am fully alert to whatever or whoever is right in front of me; when I am electrically aware of the tremendous gift of being alive; when I am able to give myself wholly to the moment I am in, then I am in prayer.”

## What is a Prayer Vigil?

In “Rediscovering the Prayer Vigil,” Dr. Ralph Watson writes, “Vigil indicates a time of vigilance, wakefulness, a watch, originally kept on the night before a religious feast with prayer or other devotions.” He goes on to write, “Many people are uncertain how they could possibly pray for a whole hour because they feel inadequate about prayer... After one successful experience they’re eager to sign up the next time... We encourage people to pray the way they feel most comfortable... and though most people pray sitting with bowed heads some walk while they pray.” I do both. In the past when praying in the sanctuary, once I tire of sitting, I get up and walk the stations of the cross that are located around the outer aisles of the church. I pray at the communion rail. I pray from the prayer book. This year I will pray from home. -Mark Robinson

## Resources for Your Own Prayer Vigil

From Mathew 6:5-9: And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do: for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way;

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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

### A collect for peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A collect for knowledge of God's creation

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A collect for the conservation of natural resources

Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations

yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A collect for those who are materially poor and those who have been neglected

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all materially poor and those who have been neglected for whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A collect for the evening

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

### A collect for those who are unemployed

Heavenly Father, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our public and private wealth that all may find suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive just payment for their labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A collect for those who influence public opinion

Almighty God, you proclaim your truth in every age by many voices: Direct, in our time, we pray, those who speak where many listen and write what many read; that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous; to the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for the care of children

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

## A collect for young persons

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for those who live alone

Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for the aged

Look with mercy, O God our Father, on all whose increasing years bring them weakness, distress, or isolation. Provide for them homes of dignity and peace; give them understanding helpers, and the willingness to accept help; and, as their strength diminishes, increase their faith and their assurance of your love. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for those we love

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for a person in trouble or bereavement

O merciful Father, who hast taught us in your holy Word that you do not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men: Look with pity upon the sorrows of your servants for whom our prayers are offered. Remember (add names here), O Lord, in mercy, nourish their souls with patience, comfort them with a sense of your goodness, lift up your countenance upon them, and give them peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A collect for the victims of addiction

O blessed Lord, you ministered to all who came to you: Look with compassion upon all who through addiction have lost their health and freedom. Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing mercy; remove from them the fears that beset them; strengthen them in the work of their recovery; and to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love. Amen.

## The Serenity Prayer by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

## A Prayer attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, union;  
  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

### A favorite prayer from Compline

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

### The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Hymns are prayers prayed twice: pray or sing some of your favorite hymns during your prayer time.

A favorite of Presiding Bishop, The Most Reverend Michael Curry:

There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus, and say, "He died for all."

There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.

If you would like to submit specific prayer requests to The All Saints Prayer ministry click here:

<https://www.allsaintsconcord.org/prayer-requests/>