



## Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

*This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families, and in other settings. When more than one person is present, the versicles and responses may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. Prayers that are in bold type are to be prayed by all.*

### **April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 A.D. – The Second Sunday of Easter**

*The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

#### **Invocation**

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

#### **Opening Versicles**

In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;

**In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.**

*Psalm 5:3*

My mouth is filled with Your praise,

**and with Your glory all the day.**

*Psalm 71:8*

O Lord, open my lips,

**and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

*Psalm 51:15*

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located on Bethany's website ([www.bethanycr.org](http://www.bethanycr.org)) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Apostles' Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....*

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#### **Scripture Lesson** – John 20:19-31

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in

his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**Sermon** – *Believing to See* (A copy is included at the end of the service.)

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### **The Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life † everlasting. Amen.**

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

**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 forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Prayers for Others and Ourselves**

#### **Bethany’s Prayer List**

Those suffering during the pandemic; the homeless; the unemployed; our medical professionals and first responders; workers in the Church, here and throughout the world; Katie (*daughter of Mike & Lora Raymon*) - recovering after surgery; Doug Sorenson (*former member*) – recovering from surgery; Maryellen (*mother of Tina Freese*) – cancer; Shirley Hansen - recovering after surgery; Seth (*son in law of Kent & Diane Zenor*) - health issues; Richard Pfeil – hospitalization; Pat (*Bonnie Bubke’s niece*) - cancer; Jerry (*father of Missy Gingrich*) - cancer; Harold (*grandfather of Amanda Segebart*) - health issues, Bev Linman - recovering from illness,

*Glen (brother of Rob Sieck )- cancer; Dave Christian - recovering after hospitalization; Carolyn (mother of Mary Vezina)- shingles; John Hamm - recovering after hospitalization; Kris Dunn - health issues; Vern Happel - health issues; Brenda Heims - recovering after surgery; Joyce Fritz - health issues; Bonnie Bubke - recovering at home after hospitalization; Betty Hein- recovering at home; Stephanie Macke - recovering after radiation treatments; Nadine Wax - recovering at home; Al Bachman – cancer; Wayne & Darlene Schilling – at home; Mark Bornemann – mourning the death of his nephew, Nathan; Aaron Moffett – mourning the death of his friend, Tod; Carol Edwards – mourning the death of her aunt, Ruth; Tailor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) – serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.*

### **Collect of the Day**

Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord’s resurrection may by Your grace and the power of Your Word confess in our life an conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Concluding Prayers**

Almighty God, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day be well pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

Together we pray... **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



**✠ Believing to See ✠**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Perhaps like many of you, my outlook on things always seems to be a little more positive after Easter. For instance, ever since I have been a pastor there has always been a time when I sit down and put my feet up on Easter night and rejoice in all of the activities and celebrations of Lent, Holy Week, and of course Easter morning. I remember all the people who were in the

church, all of the great music, the great food, the great fellowship, energy and excitement that was found in the church during those last few weeks. And having just experienced all of that or, having just remembered all of those good things of a “normal Easter”, it’s easy for me, or for anyone, to be encouraged. Because it is easy to be encouraged when you are surrounded by encouraging things! When the parking lot and the pews are full on Easter morning, when the handbells are ringing and the drums are beating, when the smell of bacon is coming down the hallway from the Family Life Center, everything seems to be great as the Lord pours out His blessings upon us.

But what about this year? What about this Easter when the church parking lot was mostly empty? What about this Easter at Bethany when the organ and praise band and the bells and the horns were silent? When we were at home, isolated, if not from everyone than certainly from some, did we feel the normal encouragement of Easter? Looking back at the Lenten Season, Holy Week and Easter of this year do we feel God pouring out His blessings upon us? If not, we need to hear what Jesus told Thomas in our Gospel lesson from John. We need to hear Jesus when He said, “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*” (John 20:29b).

Jesus, of course, said this to Thomas, who had, like many of us lately, been living in some sort of isolation. When Jesus appeared to the 10 other disciples behind locked doors on the first Easter night, Thomas wasn’t with them. We don’t know why, but it doesn’t seem that it was because Thomas was afraid. You may remember earlier in John’s Gospel (11:16) when Jesus announced His plan to travel to Bethany, near Jerusalem, and thereby putting His life in danger, Thomas spoke up and said, “*Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*” So maybe Thomas wasn’t with the rest of the disciples behind locked doors because he wasn’t afraid, like the others. Or maybe Thomas is like some of us and after seeing what happened to Jesus, He just wanted to be left alone in his grief.

Regardless, when Thomas comes out of his isolation and sees the disciples again, they tell Him that they had seen Jesus alive! But instead of rejoicing, instead of being encouraged by this Good News, Thomas does what most of us would have done – he says he wants proof. Hearing such a fantastic claim, he wants to see the nail marks and feel the spear wound. He wants that empirical evidence that Jesus is alive because in his mind, you can only believe after you see the evidence. He may have wanted to believe that Jesus was alive. He may have wanted to think that all of the terrible things that happened to Jesus were now all undone. But that’s not what he had seen. That’s not what he had experienced. So, he wouldn’t believe and he certainly would not be encouraged.

But out of His patience and love for Thomas, the Lord waited 8 days and then appeared to all of the disciples, including Thomas, once again. And now, Jesus tells Thomas to see and to feel the proof of His resurrection. Jesus met Thomas where he was at; met him in the midst of his doubt and discouragement, and gave him what he needed to believe. And believe he did. Christians have often debated whether or not Thomas actually put his fingers in Jesus’ wounds. The fact is we just don’t know. But what we do know is that seeing the resurrected Christ, Thomas not only believed that Jesus was raised from the dead, but that he also understood the implications of the resurrection. For when He sees the resurrected Jesus, He does something no one had previously done before – He called Jesus “My God”.

Thomas responded to seeing the resurrected Lord by calling Him, “*My Lord and My God*” (John 20:28)! This was an incredible leap of faith for someone who only moments ago was in disbelief. But Thomas knew that mere men do not rise from the grave in this way. He

knew that the One who stood before him alive, who once was dead on the cross and in the tomb, had to be addressed in the language of worship – My God!

For Thomas, this was his Easter moment. This was him pulling into the parking lot and seeing all of the other cars there. This was him walking into the sanctuary and not being able to find a seat, but seeing all of his friends. This was walking out of the church humming those great Easter tunes and headed on down the hallway to Easter breakfast. There it was easy for Thomas to believe and be encouraged as he stood before and beheld the risen Christ.

But what about us? What about this year? What can Thomas teach us when we don't see the encouraging things that he saw or that we normally see on Easter, or on any other day of our lives for that matter? Well, the truth is, Thomas might not be able to teach us all that much. But our Lord and our God can. You see, after Thomas saw the risen Jesus and made his great confession, Jesus said, "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*" (John 20:29). The first president of the Missouri Synod, CFW Walther, wrote that this means Christians should never look to blessings or encouraging things as evidence of or to strengthen their faith. Forget about the full sanctuaries on Easter and the bacon down in the kitchen. Jesus' words to Thomas mean that we must always believe first, and then we will see and feel God's blessings and be encouraged in our lives of faith. We don't see the blessings of God and then believe and trust in Him. It just doesn't work that way. Rather Jesus tells us we first believe so that we can see!

After all, we are in a terrible state if our faith is only based on encouraging things that we can see or feel. Because so much of what we experience with our senses is only temporary at best or deceptive at worst. If our faith is based on these things, our faith can be fleeting when we need it the most. Fleeting at the time of death or during a pandemic or isolation because very often during those times we can no longer see or experience them.

But God's Word is eternal and is always there. It was there at Creation, as well as when the Holy Spirit created faith in our hearts. Jesus taught and continues to teach this Word, showing that all of Scripture is fulfilled through His death and resurrection. Therefore, our faith rests on what God teaches, not on what we experience. And Jesus promises that when we believe in Him through His Word without seeing, it is then that we actually become truly blessed. Not with the things of this world that we may or may not enjoy. But blessed with the forgiveness of our sins and eternal salvation. Blessed with a sincere desire to accept what He gives or takes and to live according to His will. And blessed with a strong faith and trust in God, no matter where we are, or who we're with, or what at we face.

Thomas needed to see so he could believe and be encouraged in life, and it seems that he was. Tradition holds that he traveled all the way to India proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' resurrection. Today, when not many of us can travel anywhere and the evidence of God's blessings might not be as apparent as they were last year or last month, Jesus reminds us that we don't have to see those things to believe and trust in Him. Rather through His Word we believe and then He promises that we will certainly see His blessings. Therefore, in the good times and in the bad; in the times of togetherness and loneliness; may we always look only to this Word as the source of our faith and trust in Him. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds forever in Christ Jesus. Amen.