

Trusting Prayer

Our soul waits for the Lord; the Lord is our help and shield. Our heart is glad in the Lord; because we trust in the Lord's holy name. Let your steadfast love be upon us, O Lord, even as we hope in you.

--Psalm 33:20-22

Psalm 33 is assigned to the Vigil of Pentecost, when people pray through part of Saturday night, anticipating the celebration of 'the birthday of the Church' on Pentecost Sunday. Each of the eight sections of Psalm 33 suggest many acts of prayer: verses 1-3 invite our praises, 4-5 our intercessions for justice; 6-7 mention the seas and the skies, and 8-9 the earth and the people of the land. Verses 10-13 survey the nations, their leaders, and especially Israel, God's heritage: this theme continues in verses 13-17 with a special focus on ending warfare. Verses 18-19 bring to prayer the hungry, the poor, the dying, refugees from famine and violence, and those clinging desperately to hope. In the concluding verses quoted above, we who are praying are included as we plead for the Lord's steadfast love to be upon us too. Much to pray! The hours of Vigil are not enough, but it is a good beginning.

This Pentecost we are especially called to accompany in prayer all the hopes and plans of our governments, school divisions, recreation and sport associations, businesses, families, and friendship groups as we move onto the Re-Opening Roadmap. Let us pray for everyone vaccinated, and everyone yet to be vaccinated, and everyone investigating vaccination. Let us pray for children and youth, immunocompromised and other people who are not able to receive vaccination. Let us pray for researchers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and everyone involved in the public health plans. And let us pray for our churches that we may model both patience and hope, and may the Holy Spirit increase in us all the joyful anticipation of worshipping and working together soon.

For those planning for the Vigil of Pentecost, here are the other Scripture passages and the historic prayer: Exodus 19:1-9; Psalm 33:12-20; Psalm 130; Acts 2:1-11; Romans 8:14-27; John 7:37-39.

Let us pray: Almighty and ever-living God, you fulfilled the promise of Easter by sending the gift of the Holy Spirit. Look upon your people gathered in prayer, open to receive the Spirit's flame. May it come to rest in our hearts and heal the divisions of word and tongue, that with one voice and one song we may praise your name in joy and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen