

# A Way to Pentecost

## A Novena from Ascension to Pentecost

### Introduction



After the Ascension, we are told that the disciples returned to Jerusalem and spent time together in prayer. They probably also shared stories of things they had seen Jesus do - the things they had heard people say. Over the next nine days, we will use the Gospel of each day as a starting point as a time of prayer. The format is designed to be flexible - for you to use as much or as little as you wish in our journey towards Pentecost.

The outline for each day is similar:

#### **Reading: from ...**

Usually a short extract from the day's Gospel but with reference to the full text.

#### **Wondering**

A few questions that might be sparked from the reading.

#### **Contemplating**

Either *lectio divina* - the slow, prayerful reading of Scripture.

or

Idea using the imagination or idea for a time of quiet prayer.

#### **Reflecting**

Thoughts - questions and intentions for prayer.

### **Praying**

A prayer invoking the Holy Spirit.

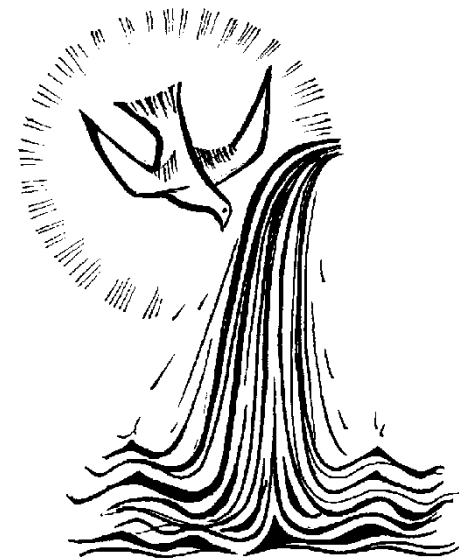
### **Action Point**

A thought to take into the day from Pope Francis.

### **From the Sequence for Pentecost**

Over the nine days, we will pray the whole Sequence in readiness for Pentecost Sunday.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...



# A Way to Pentecost: Friday



## Reading: John 16: 21-23

When a woman is in labour, she has pain, because her hour has come.  
But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish  
because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world.  
So you have pain now; but I will see you again,  
and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.  
On that day you will ask nothing of me.  
Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name,  
he will give it to you.

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## Wondering

How does this image of a woman giving birth speak to me?  
Have I experienced or witnessed a birth - and do I agree with Jesus?  
How can I help to support people through the process - easing their pain  
and encouraging them through what may be difficult times?

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## Contemplating

Read the passage through slowly and see if any words or phrases seem to  
stand out for you. Why might they have spoken to you at this time? Do  
they offer any insights into what God might be asking of you?

*or*

Jesus is saying these words during what is called "the Last Discourse" -  
trying to say things the disciples may not have understood at the time but  
would come to understand after his Resurrection and, especially, after the  
Pentecost event. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Imagine how this day -  
the day after the first Ascension Thursday - would have felt to those  
disciples: they knew something was going to happen but not what - nor

when. What might they have said to encourage each other as they waited  
for this "something" that they were waiting for?

## Reflecting

This may not be the most comfortable Gospel reading to start our Novena  
until Pentecost - but speaking of birth gives us hope.  
For some people, there is apprehension about the future - like a woman  
wondering how she will cope with labour. Others are excited at the  
prospect of new possibilities and see great opportunities beyond any initial  
pain.

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## Praying

*Pray for those for whom the future looks worrying - even terrifying.  
Pray for their consolation and comfort.*

Come, Holy Spirit,  
to all who are preparing to give birth to new ideas and ways of being.  
Give comfort to those who are apprehensive,  
confidence to those preparing for change,  
and trust in your guidance.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,  
From the clear celestial height  
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

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## 'Action Point' from the writing of Pope Francis

Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter  
with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily  
becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and  
difficulties, and our fervour dies out.  
The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer...

*(Evangelii Gaudium 262)*



How might you act on one of Pope Francis' suggestions today?

# A Way to Pentecost: Saturday



## Reading: from John 16: 23-28

On that day you will ask nothing of me.

Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name,  
he will give it to you.

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.

Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

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## Wondering

Praying in Jesus' name - what does this mean? When Peter prayed in the name of Jesus, people were healed - the dead were raised... How has God used my prayer? Was it as I expected - or surprising - or confusing... but ultimately the "right" answer?

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## Contemplating

Read through the Reading slowly and see if any words or phrases. You may like to look at the whole Reading if the extracts do not speak to you. This Gospel follows directly on from yesterday's. Do any of your thoughts today add to those from then?

*or*

Find a time and place where you can be quiet. Read the Reading and build up the scene in your imagination - sometimes, seeing the scene as a film director might help. Listen to Jesus talking to the disciples... and then invite him to speak to you directly... What does he say?

Record any thoughts in a prayer journal if you are keeping one.

## Reflecting

Prayer is powerful - but when we pray we often do not see the whole picture. How can we?

Pray for those who have had to take the big picture into account - and who are concerned about how their decisions will be received.

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## Praying

Come Holy Spirit,

fill the hearts of your faithful.

Bless those charged with discernment about major decisions.

Grant them wisdom and insight

and a deep love of the people entrusted to them.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Come, Thou Father of the poor,

Come, with treasures which endure

Come, Thou Light of all that live!


Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

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## Action Point from the writing of Pope Francis

Standing before the Lord with open hearts, letting him look at us, we see that gaze of love which Nathaniel glimpsed on the day when Jesus said to him: "I saw you under the fig tree" (Jn1:48). How good it is to stand before a crucifix, or on our knees before the Blessed Sacrament, and simply to be in his presence!

*(Evangelii Gaudium 264)*

 Could you find time to stand or sit before a crucifix or spend time

before the Blessed Sacrament today?

# A Way to Pentecost: Ascension Sunday



## Reading: from Mark 16: 15-20

Jesus said to them

'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them,  
was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere,  
while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs  
that accompanied it.

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## Wondering

What does eternal life mean to me? How does the promise of it influence  
how I live? How do I try to share that promise with others?

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## Contemplating

Read through the Reading slowly and make a note of any words or phrases  
that stand out for you. You may wish to find the whole reading in a Bible  
or Weekday Missal. Why do those words speak to you particularly at this  
time?

*or*

John's Gospel is rich and multi-layered - and sometimes difficult to  
understand. Take a few moments to build up the scene of Jesus speaking  
to his disciples - and try to take yourself into it. Think about what you  
might see - hear - smell or touch. Hear Jesus say the words directly to you -  
perhaps looking into your eyes. What do the words mean to you now?

## Reflecting

Eternal life is what we are promised at our Baptism. In our day-to-day  
lives, it is easy to forget our destiny. In times of change, we can also lose  
sight of our ultimate goal - to focus solely on the here-and-now. How can  
we retain a sense of vision - seeing beyond what may seem confusing or  
problematic? How can we help others to set things in a greater context -  
the context of our promise of eternal life?

Pray for your own community and its sense of vision.

Pray for an increased awareness of your eternal destiny and that of others.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
and renew our vision;  
remind us of the great promise made to us in Baptism:  
the promise of eternal life.  
Help us to see all that comes to us in this life  
as preparation for the next.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Thou, of all consolers best,  
Thou, the soul's delightful Guest,  
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be

## Action Point from the writing of Pope Francis

Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity,  
his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is  
precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life.  
*(Evangelii Gaudium, 265)*

👉 What “simple daily act of generosity” might you perform today?

# A Way to Pentecost: Monday



## Reading from John 16: 29-33

Jesus said, 'The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!'

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## Wondering

Jesus said many things to his disciples - and these have been passed on to us. Which of Jesus' words have offered me comfort? Which have challenged me? Which have brought me peace?

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## Contemplating

Read through the Reading a few times. Take your time and stay with any words or phrases that stand out for you. You may wish to find the whole reading in a Bible or Weekday Missal. Why might those words be significant for you?

*or*

Create a possible setting in which Jesus might have said these words - think about the sky and surroundings - sounds and smells. Where is Jesus - is he sitting or standing? Where are the disciples? Jesus is preparing to leave the disciples - things are going to happen that will terrify them... What expressions do you see around you? What is Jesus' expression? You may like to "talk" to Jesus about anything that troubles you - and invite his response

## Reflecting

Change can be frightening. People can be confused and, even unwillingly, suspicious of motives and the reasons behind decisions taken by others. At a time of major change there are fears, doubts, uncertainties - some expressed - others hidden. It is a time for bravery - facing the future in the knowledge that Jesus has indeed conquered the world and given us his Spirit to play our part in building up his Church. What part might you be called to play?

Pray for those who will have to make "brave" decisions over coming months.

Pray for a generosity of spirit - for trust in the work of the Holy Spirit.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
deepen our faith in the One who created us -  
confidence in the One who saved us  
and fill our hearts with your peace.


## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;  
Pleasant coolness in the heat;  
Solace in the midst of woe.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

## Action Point from the writing of Pope Francis

We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.

 How might you help someone to appreciate the treasure of life and love today?



# A Way to Pentecost: Tuesday



## Reading: from John 17: 1-11

Jesus said, 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me.

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## Wondering

How did the disciples know that Jesus had come from the Father? What qualities did they recognise in him? What helps me to believe that Jesus came from the Father and choose to follow his teaching?

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## Contemplating

Read the extract from the Gospel and see if any words or phrases stand out for you. You may like to read the full version in a Missal or Bible. Why do the words have special meaning for you today?

*or*

Build up the scene suggested by the Gospel reading. Picture Jesus amongst the disciples... How does he look? What does he sound like? As you look and listen, what strikes you? What is it about Jesus that shows you the divine within him?

## Reflecting

Jesus' teaching has been handed on from apostle to apostle - disciple to disciple. Over the years, people have gathered - prayed - discussed and discerned.

How can we continue to grow in discipleship and responsibility based on Jesus' teaching? How can we foster a practice of discernment rooted in Scripture and Tradition?

Pray for the gifts of openness to the Word of God and willingness to be guided by it.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
inspire our minds with love for the Word of God,  
for the rich heritage of Tradition,  
and with love for those with whom we long to share the Good News at the heart of our Faith.


## Prayer from the Sequence for Pentecost

Light immortal, light divine,  
Visit thou these hearts of thine,  
And our inmost being fill.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

## Action Point from the writing of Pope Francis

(True missionaries), who never ceases to be disciples, know that Jesus walks with them, speaks to them, breathes with them, works with them. They sense Jesus alive with them in the midst of the missionary enterprise. Unless we see him present at the heart of our missionary commitment, our enthusiasm soon wanes and we are no longer sure of what it is that we are handing on; we lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody. (*Evangelii Gaudium* 266)

 How might you be more aware of Jesus alive with you in all you do today? And share that with one other person?

# A Way to Pentecost: Wednesday



## Reading: from John 15: 9-17

Jesus said. 'You are my friends if you do what I command you.  
I do not call you servants any longer,  
because the servant does not know what the master is doing;  
but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you  
everything that I have heard from my Father.  
You did not choose me but I chose you.  
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

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## Wondering

What does it mean to be Jesus' friend? What does it mean to me that  
(contrary to what I might think) I did not choose Jesus but he chose me?

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## Contemplating

Read the words taken from a much longer passage - which you may wish  
to read in full in a Missal or Bible. Do any words or phrases speak to you  
particularly today? What implications might they have for you?

*or*

Contemplate the scene as we have done over the past few days. You may  
like to say the words from the Gospel aloud - savour them and hear Jesus  
speaking through your voice. As you say them, how do they touch you?  
What expression comes into your voice? How might that be an echo of the  
voice of Jesus?

## Reflecting

We are, it is often said, "in the world but not of it" - a phrase that comes  
down the centuries to us from Jesus. What does it mean? Our  
contemplative communities are certainly clear signs of one way of living  
this truth. But most of us are called to live in the world - the mission of lay  
people being to sanctify it.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful.  
Consecrate us afresh in your truth,  
protect us from the temptations of our time  
and show us ways in which to make our world a happier and holier place.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

If thou take thy grace away,  
Nothing pure in us will stay:  
All his good is turned to ill.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

## Action point from the writing of Pope Francis

When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which  
exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin  
to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his  
people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw  
closer to his beloved people.

*(Evangelii Gaudium 268)*

✚ Who needs you to share the loving gaze of Jesus today – and  
perhaps accompany it with positive action?

# A Way to Pentecost: Thursday



## Reading: from John 17: 20-26

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

'I ask not only on behalf of these,  
but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,  
that they may all be one.

As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,  
so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

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## Wondering

Who are the people whose lives my own touches? How do my words - my gestures bring others to believe in God? How have the words and gestures and attitudes of others helped me to believe?

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## Contemplating

Read the shorter version of today's Gospel slowly and prayerfully. The full version can be found in a Missal or Bible if you would prefer to use that. As we have done over recent days, allow words and phrases to speak to you. Stay with any that do and allow God to speak to you through them.

*or*

For several days now, John has described Jesus as raising his eyes to heaven. Take time to watch the sky - changing patterns of cloud - or starlight and moonlight. People long believed that heaven was in the sky - we have a different sense of heaven. Allow the time of gazing and contemplating the sky to speak to your soul of heaven and the promise of eternal joy there

## Reflecting

It is a staggering thought that our lives can touch other people's in ways that speak to them of God. The fact that we may say something that helps people to come to know Jesus and kindle that spark that the Spirit has planted in them. How can we build up relationships that will encourage and support us and others as we fulfil the commission that Jesus has invited us to take?

Pray for people in neighbouring parishes.

Pray for wisdom and enthusiasm for people who will be working together.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
give us a sense of unity and common purpose  
As we have received Faith through other people,  
give us the words and actions  
that will help others to believe in you.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Heal our wounds, our strength renew,  
On our dryness pour thy dew;  
Wash the stains of guilt away.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

## Action point from the writing of Pope Francis

Jesus takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity. He himself is the model of this method of evangelization which brings us to the very heart of his people. How good it is for us to contemplate the closeness which he shows to everyone!

*(Evangelii Gaudium, 268)*

- ✎ Think about the kind of people Jesus drew close to in his earthly life. Who are the people he might want to grow closer to through you today? How can you help him to do it?

# A Way to Pentecost: Friday



## Reading: from John 21: 15-19

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,  
'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'  
He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.'  
Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'

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## Wondering

We move away from the Last Discourse today and have a Reading that reminds us of the commission placed on Peter and his successors. How aware am I of being part of a Church with over 2000 years of history? How am I playing my part in witnessing to my Catholic heritage - and in building up the contemporary Church?

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## Contemplating

Read through the extract from the Gospel and see what speaks to you today. If you read the rest of today's Gospel, you will read the consequence of Peter's decision. Why might the words or phrases be significant for you today?

*or*

Spend some time creating the scene of this Gospel. Where do you imagine that it is set? What might you see - or hear - touch or smell? Where are Peter and Jesus in relation to the other disciples? What emotions do you sense - in the disciples - in Peter and in Jesus?

## Reflecting

Although the call to "feed my sheep" and to "feed my lambs" was given to Peter in a very special way, it is one that is given to all Christians. It may be the food of the prayer of our contemplative communities - or the sacramental ministry of our priests - the pastoral care of deacons and parish religious - or the day-to-day sanctification of homes and workplaces by lay people of prayer. How can we do both - feeding ourselves and feeding the world? What skills will be called for in people? How will we, like Peter, express our love for Jesus by feeding those amongst whom he has placed us?

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful.  
Give us ears to hear the call of Jesus  
and minds, hearts and wills ready and willing to respond to it.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Bend the stubborn heart and will  
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;  
Guide the steps that go astray.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

## Action point from the writing of Pope Francis

Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world. But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives.

*(Evangelii Gaudium 269)*

Who might you rejoice with today – or weep with today?

# A Way to Pentecost: Pentecost Eve



## Reading: from John 21:20-25

This (John) is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.

But there are also many other things that Jesus did;  
if every one of them were written down,

I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written..

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## Wondering

What were all the other things that Jesus said and did? Why did John and the other evangelists choose the stories and saying they did? If you were an eye-witness to one of the events in Jesus' lifetime, which one would you be most keen to have included in a Gospel?

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## Contemplating

Read the shortened passage from the end of John's Gospel - or the full version in a Missal or Bible. Which word or phrase stands out for you? Stay with it - letting the words sink into your soul and allow God to speak to you through them.

**or**

Call to mind some of your favourite accounts of events or sayings of Jesus. Spend a while with one of them - building up the scene in your imagination - seeing and hearing Jesus in action or at prayer. Invite him to share anything that he wants you to know... or place before him a concern or worry and ask him for new insights or advice.

## Reflecting

Our Novena is drawing to a close

Tomorrow - on Pentecost Sunday - our journey does not end. Instead, our times of prayer have helped to prepare us for a new beginning - a new Pentecost. Like the early Christians, there are uncertainties - there will be disagreement and the need to take time to build up trust and new relationships. But we do it having reflected on events in Jesus' life which offer both challenge and promise. These challenges and promises are laid before us too.

Pray for a sense of joy as people see God fulfilling his promises.

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## Praying

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful,  
and kindle in them of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created  
and you will renew the face of the earth.

## From the Sequence for Pentecost

Thou, on us who evermore	Give us comfort when we die;
Thee confess and thee adore,	Give us life with thee on high;
With thy sevenfold gifts descend:	Give us joys that never end.
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...	

## Action point from the writing of Pope Francis

At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apostles go forth from themselves and turned them into heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesía*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence.

✚ An evangeliser is simply someone shares the good news about Jesus with others – something all baptised people are called to do. How might you call on the Holy Spirit today to give you what you need to fulfil your mission in everyday life?