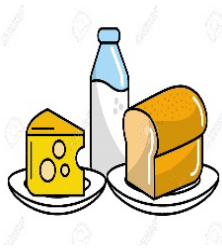




Setting our table for our Sunday lunch service.

Sometimes we eat, in front of the TV either together or alone; we eat on the run; we eat out in restaurants or even in our car; but today we sit at a table that we have set for our Sunday lunch meal. It is our everyday altar of life-giving food.



Let us prepare our table with thanksgiving and prayer as we worship during the Lenten Season, define the occasion by adding something special to our table. Give some thought to the presentation of our meal as a meditation on the importance of the time we are setting aside for worship.

If you are celebrating this meal without people physically present, please be aware that **God Is With You**.

THE CONFLICTED SON

We have all heard of the return of the prodigal. Son. A kid tells his Dad he knows best, takes what his Dad gives him and blows the lot. He comes home feeling useless and his Dad throws a party. You'd think he'd get a kick in the pants. When we tell God we think we got living for him all worked out, God grieves; because we have forgotten to listen. When we tell God that we feel inadequate, God gives us all his attention. It is then that we come to know how much we need Him.



opening prayer — consciously drawing together in our mind our Parish community around our table.

Be still and silent. Visualise in your mind, those whom you invited to share with you. Pray:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Here, and throughout the world, We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world. Amen

Bless this food, both physical and spiritual. Bless all who gather at your table, both seen and unseen, In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

• **Let us read and reflect on our cycle of readings.**

reading from the book of Joshua, Chapter 5 beginning at Verse 2

²At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites a second time." ³So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the warriors, had died during the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵Although all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people born on the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶For the Israelites travelled forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the

warriors who came out of Egypt, perished, not having listened to the voice of the Lord. To them the Lord swore that he would not let them see the land that he had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.



⁸ When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹ The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God**

Psalm 32

1 Blessed are those whose sin is forgiven: whose iniquity is put away.
2 Blessed are those to whom the Lord imputes no blame: and in whose spirit there is no guile.
3 For whilst I held my tongue: my bones wasted away with my daily complaining.
4 Your hand was heavy upon me day and night: and my moisture was dried up like a drought in summer.
5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and my iniquity I did not hide;
6 I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord': and so you forgave the wickedness of my sin.
7 For this cause shall everyone that is faithful make their prayer to you in the day of trouble: and in the time of the great water-flood, it shall not come near them.
8 You are a place to hide me in, you will preserve me from trouble:
you will surround me with deliverance on every side.
9 'I will instruct you, and direct you in the way that you should go:
I will fasten my eye upon you, and give you counsel.
10 'Be not like horse or mule, that have no understanding:
whose forward course must be curbed with bit and bridle.'
11 Great tribulations remain for the ungodly: but whoever puts their trust in the Lord, mercy embraces them on every side.
12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and be glad:
and shout for joy, all you that are true of heart.



A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians, Ch 5 beginning at Verse 16

Whoever is in
Christ is a
new creation
2 Corinthians 5:17



¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Corinthians 5:16–2

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

¹¹ Then Jesus¹ said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant



country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But

when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father¹ said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

[NRSV Luke 15.11–32]

This is the Gospel of the Lord,

praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Sentence

God has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Let us now engage in some quiet reflection, or conversation and sharing, responding to the Gospel passage. We may like to write down some key thoughts for further reflection.

Luke 15:21 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

2 Cor 5:16a, 17a: we regard no one from a human point of view; so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.



The prodigal son had to come to a place where he realised he needed his father. When we realise that our lives need God's action in every way to live, God knows we are in the right place. Isaiah tells us our righteous acts are as filthy rags compared to God. The prodigal had to realise doing things his own way, he might

as well be living in a pig pen. When we come to God and say, God I'm not worthy, how can you love me, I let myself down let alone you. Then God knows we are ready to hear from him. To allow Him to do His work in us. He is overjoyed, because through our weakness we don't get in the way and He is able to give us His strength.

prayer-time

Now let us continue to offer our prayers for healing of the world; God of peace and justice, who changes the hardened heart and breaks the power of violence, we pray for the world, remembering especially the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Africa and the Middle East, we pray for a ceasefire and for peace in all areas of conflict and war.



We remember all those recovering from the storm and floods in Queensland and NSW and give thanks for all those assisting in the recovery and rebuild in those areas.

We pray for family; for members of the parish and wider community, for the life and ministry of the Church, for encouragement in our journey of faith.

We pray alongside those in our parish asking for prayer, Neville B, Mary and family, Lisa W, Jan Y, Michael, Andrew, Jo, Colin Cathy M, Pratibha K, Jeanette B, Lynn H, Barbara A, Jo M, Barbara W, Sue Mc, Griselda, Patrusca, Lorraine, Rachel, Steve, Ebony, Jean T, Nicole, David, Takoohi, Glenda, Margaret, Wendy, Gweneth, Jo and Ginne, Joyce and Ted, Matthew, Ann, Kathryn and Keiran, Ruth, Jean N, Colin, Georgia, Pat V, Brenda, Joanie, Jo, Jan, Joy I, Jac B; Eileen, Ursula P, Tom A, Nicholas & Ben; Sue & Frank G, Emily and her family; Trish S, Christina and any others we wish to remember, either silently or aloud.

Let us say the Lord's Prayer Together.

Our Father

Prayer for Lent 4 Mothering Sunday

God of compassion,
you are slow to anger, and full of mercy,
welcoming sinners who return to you with penitent hearts:
receive in your loving embrace all who come home to you,
and seat them at your bountiful table, that, with all your children,
they may feast with delight on all that satisfies the hungry heart.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Conclude the meal with the following prayer together.

***May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be amongst us and remain with us always. Amen.***

Intentional connection beyond your home After our Table Service, take the time to contact other people you know, especially those on their own or separated from family and friends. Let God guide you to the person or persons with whom you should connect. Contact them. Start a conversation: How have you been keeping, what about this changing weather or hope you are keeping well, or I was just thinking of you and decided to call.

