

A photograph of a harbor at sunset. The sky is a deep, vibrant red and orange, with a thin layer of clouds near the horizon. The sun is low, creating a bright glow. In the foreground, several sailboats are docked at a pier, their masts and rigging visible. The water is calm, reflecting the colors of the sunset. In the background, there are silhouettes of buildings and a bridge.

PRAYERS TO CLOSE MY DAY

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Prayers to Close my Day

*Pray much, and really from your heart:
Remember that prayer is the key
that opens the treasures of heaven.*
St Mary Mazzarello

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All readings based on Scripture and Saint Francis de Sales have been paraphrased, references are given as indications of source.

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Introduction

*Salesian prayer is joyful, creative,
simple and profound.
It is drawn from life experience
and flows back into it.*

Some years ago we published a book called *Prayers to Close the Day*. It proved very popular. With the advent of ebooks, we decided to produce a personal version of this book and entitle it *Prayers to Close My Day*.

The quotation above is from the Salesian Constitution 86, it invites us to keep our prayer lively and available to sharing with others. For some time the need for an occasional alternative to *The Prayer of the Church* has been expressed by a number of individuals and communities.

This book is an attempt to respond to that need, whilst still keeping a general shape that corresponds to *The Prayer of the Church*. At the end there are some more short readings and some direct reflections on life experience.

This book offers a way to reflect on the day, or to use as a personal bedside prayer book. The format has emerged from use in Salesian communities, and much of the spirituality comes from the optimistic and gentle inspiration of St Francis de Sales.

It challenges us to find God in the evening and grow in awareness of God's abiding presence throughout the day.

Using these Prayers

*In prayer there is more listening to be done,
than speaking.*
St Jane Frances de Chantal

Pauses for reflection

The use of a pause, a time of inner silence, helps to establish a rhythm to our prayer, and encourages reflection.

The events of each particular day will determine the length of the pause needed after the reflection entitled, **Thinking about the Day**.

Choices

There are a number of choices available. You can choose one, or none, of the structured reflections for **Thinking about the Day**. Similarly you can choose to add one or two readings from the Salesian tradition at your discretion. The intercessions can be used as in the text, or be the starting point for one's own spontaneous prayers.

Links

The words "Thinking about the Day", "Salesian Readings", "Magnificat" and "Our Father" are underlined and in inverted commas to remind us that they are links to the appropriate pages.

Saturday

The usual format is abandoned on Saturday, in favour of a simple reflection on the Gospel for Sunday, or other appropriate Gospel passages. This practice, sometimes called *Lectio Divina* is encouraged by the Church as a preparation for the main liturgy of the week, on Sunday.

Sunday - Week One

Week One

*In quiet prayer,
talk to God if you can.
If you can't, just stay there,
let God look at you,
and don't worry about anything.*
St Francis de Sales

Opening Prayer

As Sunday slips away,
My mind turns towards a new week,
where God waits to meet me.
Come to me Lord this evening,
Prepare me to recognise your presence,
in the normal and novel events of a new week.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you a new and untouched week.
Help me to unwrap this gift each day,
with care and gratitude for all that it might bring.
May I lose none of the hope it carries for new life and healing.
Give me enough wisdom
to uncover your Gospel plan in all that happens.

Choral Prayer

I Samuel 2

My life celebrates God's love
I find new heart in my God.
No challenge or setback can change
The joy of knowing God's presence.

God alone knows the depths
Of each person's life story.
It is useless to boast or pretend
Before God's rock-solid truth.

Those who trust in their own strength
Will find themselves weak and alone,
Those who know their own weakness
Will find a deeper strength in God.

It is God who lifts us up from misery,
Rescues us from the rubbish of each day,
Places us among the fortunate,
Who live, hour by hour, in God's presence.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Galatians 5:13

It is absolutely clear that we have been called by God to freedom. Please, don't make that freedom an excuse to do just what you want to do. Pleasing only yourself will destroy your freedom. Instead, use your freedom to serve others in love, because that is how the freedom of God's children will grow. The whole Gospel is summed up in the simple phrase; *love others as you love yourself.*

“Salesian Readings”

“Magnificat”

Focus Moment

What am I looking forward to, in the next week, and why?

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for those who face this week with anxiety and fear.
— *May they find peace in your presence for what lies ahead.*
Lord, I pray for those who start this week tired or hungry.
— *May they find strength in others, moved by your Gospel love.*
Lord, I pray for young people, as a new week begins.
— *Increase their optimism and honesty, help them to grow in love.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me as I begin a new, untouched week.
As I unwrap the gift of each day, help me to trust you in all that I find,
and give thanks for the privilege of living in your presence.
I ask this through Christ, the Lord of all time,
and my companion on each day's journey. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Bless them with rest
to renew them in strength and faith. *Amen*
Guide them in the week that lies before them. *Amen*
Draw them close to yourself each day. *Amen*

Monday - Week One

Opening Prayer

Thank you Lord for the touch of your hand,
Calling me to peace and joy in your presence.
Thank you for staying with me,
When I have lost balance and fallen flat on my face.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, thank you for the gift of this day, for all the blessings it has brought.
Forgive me when I have lost my balance today,
when I have taken myself too seriously, lost my temper,
or refused to learn or to relax with others. Help me to be more aware of
your presence, and live with more balance tomorrow.

Choral Prayer

Philippians 4

I want you to be happy,
Always happy in the Lord.
I will say it again,
I want you to be happy.

Let your openness be clear to everyone,
Because your God is very close.
There is no need for anxiety,
Ask God for what you need.

Ask God with gratitude
And the peace of God
Will guard your hearts
And keep you close to Christ.

Fill all your waking hours
With what is good and honest,
What is life-giving and worthy of praise,
Then the God of peace will be with you.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 7:21

Jesus said 'It is not those who say to me *Lord! Lord!* that will live in the kingdom but those who do the will of my Father. Therefore, everyone who listens to my words and puts them into action is like the sensible builder who sets the house on rock. Rain may come, even floods and hurricanes and the house will not fall because it is founded on rock.'

"Salesian Readings"

Focus Moment

What keeps me balanced in life and spirit?

"Magnificat"

Intercessions

For those who have lost their balance today through anger.

— *Lord, bring them peace this evening.*

For those who have become sad and depressed by the events of the day.

— *Lord, renew their optimism and sense of purpose.*

For those who have to carry anxieties and worries about health.

— *Lord, reassure them of your presence in their struggle.*

"Our Father"

Final Prayer

Lord, help me to live a balanced life tomorrow: close to you and yet in touch with others. Keep me active and involved with the serious business of building your kingdom, and yet cheerful too, because I am working to your wise plan. Help me to rest in peace tonight, and live gracefully in your presence tomorrow. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord grant them a quiet night and a cheerful heart in the service of the Gospel. *Amen*

Tuesday - Week One

Opening Prayer

Thank you Lord for your presence
in the choices and the struggles of this day,
for allowing me to stumble into you this evening.
Thank you for the gentleness,
with which you surround me in this evening's silence.
May it penetrate and settle my thoughts and feelings.

"Thinking about the Day"

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day,
with all its challenges, opportunities and setbacks.
May I accept both the success and failure I have met today.
Help me to remember not to break the bruised reeds of the day,
but deal gently with all that has happened.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 131

O Lord my heart is not proud,
My eyes are not cold and hard.

I have not chased after things too great,
Or let pride lead me to humiliation.

I have held myself, heart and soul,
In silence and peace.

As a child clings in its mother's arms,
So I cling in trust to a gentle God.

All people trust in the Lord,
Cling to God now and forever.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Wednesday - Week One

Scripture Reading

Matthew 11:28

Tired? Worn out? Come to me you who are weary and exhausted with worries, and you will find peace and rest for your soul. Walk with me, work with me, learn from me. I am gentle and have a loving heart. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I will not lay upon you any burden too great for you. Come to me and learn to rest in my presence.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How has gentleness emerged in my thoughts and activity today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for those who are in need of the basic things in life.
— *Help me to respond practically and raise awareness of their need.*
Lord, I pray for all who have touched my life in confusion or pain today.
— *May I be honest and gentle with what is damaged in others.*
Lord, I pray for those who must make a new start after a setback.
— *May the courage of Mary, at the cross, inspire them for the future.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, help me to trust your quiet and gentle presence.
May I live in the rhythm of your goodness tomorrow,
and find you in the quiet and simple pauses in my busy day.
May I put others in touch with your presence
through my gentleness and friendliness to all. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Be with them in the evening — *with your gentleness.*
As they see what they have achieved — *bring them your humility.*
As they look towards a new day — *bring them your optimism.*

Amen

Opening Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of this day,
For each moment that has made it unique,
For each step shared in your presence.
Thank you for the times when you walked with me,
Spoke to my heart and led me gently,
Toward the most loving thing to do and be.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Father, thank you for the privilege of living with Jesus.
Take this day and show me where my path
has run alongside the way of Jesus.
Help me to recognise where my heart has come to life in your love.
Remind me, this evening, of your presence hidden in each day.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 23

God my shepherd,
I do not need a thing.
You have brought me to a place of rest.
True to your word,
You have let me catch my breath,
Shown me the right direction.
So even when the pathway
Dips into darkness, I am not afraid.
I know you are always at my side.
You refresh me and celebrate our friendship.
In the sight of my enemies and problems,
You revive my spirits.
Your goodness and love
Pursue me through every day.
I will be at home in your presence forever.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd, so I know my sheep and my sheep know me. In the same way I know the Father and the Father knows me. I put my sheep before me, sacrificing myself if necessary. The true shepherd walks right up to the sheep and they are not afraid. They follow him because they recognise his voice. They don't follow a stranger's voice, but will scatter, because they don't know his voice.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

In what way have I lived with Jesus today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, thank you for your living presence and walking with me every day.

— *Help me to learn the lessons that this day has brought.*

Lord, I offer you each person that has shared my journey through this day.

— *Help me to recognise your presence in them.*

Lord, I thank you for those people who have been difficult with me today.

— *May I see, in them, a chance to show your patient love.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Father in heaven, I thank you for the presence of your Son Jesus, who has walked with me throughout this day.

Help me to live with Jesus every moment, cheerfully confident that in Him, all will be well.

May I leave my troubles safely in your hands tonight, and rest in the presence of Jesus, who lives and reigns, for ever and ever. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May they find peace in their hearts — *The peace of Christ.*

May they find rest for their souls — *In the presence of Christ.*

May they leave all worries behind — *In the providence of Christ.*

Amen

Thursday - Week One

Opening Prayer

Thank you Lord for a day

Filled with opportunities

To put love into action.

Thank you for your abiding presence

Living in other people,

And your love alive in me today.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, thank you for another day of life.

Thank you for the chance to immerse myself

in your loving kindness, in prayer, activity,

and in relationship with others.

Take everything I have done

and give it a place in your plan of love.

Choral Prayer

Corinthians 13

Aim for the gifts that really matter.

Keep looking for the best gift of all,

The gift of love.

If I am clever with words,

But speak without love,

It is all empty noise.

If I can predict what will happen,

And penetrate deep mysteries,

Without love, I am still nothing.

Love is always patient and kind,

Avoids jealousy and boasting,

Is never rude or selfish.

Real love enjoys not the failures of others,

But chooses to excuse them,

To hope and trust in the future.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Friday - Week One

Scripture Reading

Luke 6:27

Love the ones whom you call enemies.
Show kindness to those who target you with hatred.
Pray for those who treat you badly.
If someone slaps you on one side of the face offer them the other side too.
If someone takes your coat, offer him your shirt too.
Give to everyone who asks,
and treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.
If you only love those who love you, what thanks do you deserve?

“Salesian Readings”

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

For those who do not know that they are loved.
— *Lord, show them your love today.*
For those who cannot show love to others.
— *Lord, show them your love today.*
For those in my community who do not feel loved this evening.
— *Lord, show them your love today.*
For young people and parents, starved of love in their homes.
— *Lord, show them your love today.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Father in heaven, help me to recognise your love in unlikely places.
Teach me to be sensitive to your promptings, in relationship to others.
Keep me generous and balanced in my affections.
Make me grow in the wisdom that comes from knowing that I am loved unconditionally and forever. I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord live in their hearts, in the love they show to others. *Amen*
May God give them love and kindness, to share tomorrow. *Amen*
May God bless them with a restful heart tonight. *Amen*

Opening Prayer

For the breath of your Spirit,
breathing through me today — *Thank you, Lord.*
For your presence, in difficulty and challenge — *Thank you, Lord.*
For your peaceful hidden presence, in heart and mind — *Thank you, Lord.*
For Mary, who believed
and conceived in your presence — *Thank you, Lord.*
For this moment of peace — *Thank you, Lord.*

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you the day that is almost over.
Into your hands I commend all the words and actions
that have made the pattern of this day unique.
May I, like Mary, ponder on all that has happened,
and treasure the experience of living another day in your presence.

Choral Prayer

Luke 1

Praise God in the story of all people,
A God who has made his home among us.
A saviour who would free us from all that holds us back
From a deeper friendship with God.

His presence brings a time of justice,
A time of holiness and freedom from fear,
Just as Abraham had been promised.

A child will become a prophet,
And open up a new way
Into friendship with God.

A relationship of forgiveness
That draws us into the loving kindness,
At the heart of God's life.

A life that casts the darkness from our lives
And guides us into the path of peace.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:46

Having found Jesus in the temple Mary said to him, *Young man, why have you done this to us? I have been so worried looking for you.*

Jesus replied, *Why were you looking for me? You must have realised that I would be here, dealing with the work of my Father.* Mary and Joseph did not understand what he was talking about. Jesus went back home with them obediently. Mary stored these things in her heart and thought about them often, as treasured insights into her Son's life.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

In what ways have I walked in God's presence today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

For those who, in sadness, feel deserted by God.

— *May they find hope*

through Mary at the foot of the cross.

For those who cannot cope with change.

— *May they find strength*

in the confusion of Mary at the Annunciation.

For those who have come close to death.

— *May Mary, who saw her Son die,*

give them the hope of Resurrection.

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, help me to find, in Mary, the inspiration to live the ordinary patterns of life deeply and reflectively.

May Mary's instinct, to welcome your presence, become part of my own way of living.

May your presence be woven through all my work, and help to build a community that makes your kingdom visible.

I ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Mary, help of all people. *Pray for them.*

Saturday - Week One

This is a slow contemplative reading of the Sunday scripture that leads towards union with God, and is an ideal way of preparing for tomorrow's Eucharist. Its simplicity helps to uncover some of the spiritual rhythms at work in our lives.

The prayer rests on an ability to listen to scripture with the heart and hear *the still small voice of God.* (1 Kings 19:12)

Opening Prayer

Lord, open my ears to hear your word.

May these moments of silence

help me to recognise your presence

calling me to life.

Calm my heart and mind with your still small voice. *Amen*

How the word touches me

Read the Gospel passage for Sunday twice, with a brief pause between readings.

Concentrate on a segment or word from the passage that attracts you. Reflect on that for a while.

How the word speaks to me

Read the passage again, followed by a reflection on:

Where do these words touch my life today?

Reflect for a while on what connections the story makes with your life.

How am I challenged?

Read the passage again, reflecting on the phrase:

These words challenge me to.....in the days that lie ahead.

Ending

I pray for a deeper understanding of the Gospel passage.

Final Prayer

Thank you Lord, for your abiding presence in my life, and in these words of scripture.

Stay with me this evening and help me to rest in your presence tonight.

Amen

Other Scripture texts to use from St Matthew's Gospel

Weeds	13:24-30
Paralysed Child	9:1-8
Beatitudes	5:1-12
Sowing Seed	13:4-9
Walking on Water	14:22-33
A Rich Youth	19:16-22

Week Two

*Nothing done in a huge rush or impulsively
is ever really done well.*
St Francis de Sales

Sunday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

As the sun sets on the weekend
I come in peace
To the Lord of all life.
Be with me on the border
Between work and rest,
Help me to move gracefully into a new week.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you a brand new week. Help me to live gracefully through all that will happen. Make my mind and heart ready to receive the blessings you will scatter through each day. Give me a heart, generous enough to be a blessing for others in the week that is waiting.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 118

I thank God for a goodness that never ends
I thank God for a love that lasts.

When I am under pressure, God is always close

I find no need for fear.

Who can do me lasting harm,
When God is my helper?

It is better to take refuge in God
Than to trust in power or popularity.
Even when I lose my balance
God will never let me go.

Thank you, Lord, for your wisdom
Holding everything together.
What everyone else rejected as rubbish
You have turned into a keystone.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Luke 20:27

I will give you an inner guide, the Spirit, who will remind you of my word written in your heart. Peace is my gift to you, my own inner peace is my parting gift. It is not a peace that the world can give, it is my personal gift to each of you. So do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. I am going away but I shall return. I have said this before it happens, to help you to believe and trust the Father in all that takes place.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

What will be my key to living close to God in the week ahead?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, make me aware of the key moments that will mark my journey with you in the week ahead.

— *Keep me sensitive to your presence calling me into life.*

Keep me, Lord, close to those who will struggle with this week's events through sadness and disappointment.

— *May my support strengthen their faith in you.*

I pray that I will have the courage to live the Gospel this week.

— *When challenged may I be honest in living your love and justice.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me on the border of a new week.

This week, with all its uncertainty and challenge,

it is the place where I am called to meet you on my journey.

Keep me sensitive to your presence,

especially in what is rejected in the week ahead.

Make me ready to challenge whatever works against the peace and compassion of your kingdom. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Breathe your peace into the week ahead. *Amen*

Give them courage to live in your kingdom. *Amen*

Monday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for your presence,
For the scattered reminders of you,
In ordinary humdrum routines.
Thank you for the predictable things,
That give me space to remember you.
Thank you for this peaceful evening moment.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day. Thank you for your presence in the routine rhythms of the day. Keep me focussed on the mystery at the heart of daily living. Help me uncover your face in both friends and enemies, and keep me in touch with your life in stillness and storm.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 127

If the Lord does not work with us
Our work will never last.
If God does not protect our efforts,
Then our energy is wasted.
It is useless to get up early,
To work your fingers to the bone.
Don't you know that your real success
Is simply a gift from God?
Don't you see that it's people that count?
God's best gift to us is one another.
Like a quiver full of arrows,
God's children can meet any challenge.
You are blessed through your parents,
And through your children.
Nothing can shake the confidence of those,
Who build on the presence of the Lord.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:27

If God pays so much attention to the wild flowers, that are here today and thrown away tomorrow, don't you think God will also pay attention to you, and do the best for you? Don't you see that you can be so busy about earning and owning things, that you miss what God wants to give to you free of charge? People who don't know God get worried about everything. But you know God, and how God works in little things. So don't worry about what you need. Your Father knows what you need and you will not be forgotten.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How does God touch my heart most often in my daily life?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I believe you have entered our world and history.
— *Help me to find you in the story of this day.*
Lord, I pray for those who have lost a sense of the sacred in their lives.
— *May you surprise them with a sense of your presence today.*
Lord, I pray for those whose ordinary life is difficult and dark.
— *May your presence unfold hope and new life in their hearts.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, help me to see you in the ordinary, and the routine events of all my days. Transform the timetable of my day with the seeds of Resurrection, planted in quiet moments, so that the work I have done today may lead to an eternal richness. I ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Lord of the small and ordinary moments,
bless them with simplicity of heart and peace this night and always. *Amen*

Tuesday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

Thank you Lord, for walking with me today
From the earliest hour until this moment of peace.
Thank you for the signs of your presence, marking my journey today,
And the gentle nudging of your Spirit, in my wayward heart.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

In this evening hour Lord, I bring to you my body, my heart and my mind.
Talk to me about the day that is ending, and help me learn how to walk
each day a little closer to you. I offer back to you all those moments where
you have nudged my Spirit, and invited me into partnership with you.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 127

Lord, you know my heart, your evidence is first-hand.

I am an open book to you.

You know my every thought from miles away.
Before I say a word you know what will be said.

I look over my shoulder and there you are,
Your reassuring presence surrounds me,
I cannot take it in.

Could I ever avoid your presence?

Is there any place that is out of your sight?
Whether I am underground or in the stars,
Or if I flew to a far horizon and into darkness,
You would find me in a minute.

You made me body and soul and you know me.
You know how I was shaped from childhood.
My life is laid out like a map in your presence.
You know me better than I know myself.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:35

I was starving and you gave me a meal.
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.
I was homeless and you took me in.
I was shivering and you gave me warm clothes.
I was sick in prison and you came to me.
Whenever you did these things to the least of my brothers and sisters,
You did it to me.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

When did I feel closest to God today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for my community and friends.
— *That I may recognise in ordinary lives the eternal life you offer.*
Lord, I pray for those who have suffered insults and prejudice today.
— *May they recognise their God-given dignity whatever happens.*
Lord, I pray for those who have drawn strength from me today.
— *May my prayer bring them peace this evening.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me this evening and be with me as I plan for a new day.
May my struggles and my successes
never separate me from your abiding presence. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord bless them with a quiet heart and mind this evening. *Amen*

Wednesday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

Thank you for the gifts of this day
Filled with a thousand trivial trials
And little opportunities.
Thank you for the strength I borrow from you Lord
In those scattered moments
When I recognised your presence
And responded as best as I could.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

I offer you the silence of these evening moments. Accept all I am at the end of this day. Take the little deaths that I must die, from moment to moment, and weave them into your eternal Resurrection.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 116

I love God,
Because he hears me when I call.
He bends down to listen to my cares.

Things were closing in on me,
Distress gripped my heart,
I called on God's name.

Return to your rest my soul,
For God will treat you kindly.

He has rescued me from death,
Kept my feet from stumbling.

So I will trust, even when I realise
I am crushed by disappointment.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 6:25

That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life, what you are to eat, nor about your body and what you are to wear. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing? Your heavenly Father knows you need both. So set your hearts on God's kingdom first, and on right living, and these other things will be given to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

What anxieties lead me to lose a sense of God's presence?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, help me to end this day in peace.
Lord, help me to let go of disappointments at the end of this day.
Help me to leave the outcome of my work to your providence.
Help me to stay optimistic and cheerful in the service of the young.
As I sleep tonight, teach me the wisdom this day has brought.

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me this evening,
help me to put this day back into your hands.
May your peace settle my heart
and your wisdom grow within me.
Help me to use the experience of today into a wiser tomorrow,
and a richer following of your Gospel.
I ask this through Jesus our risen Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May God bless them with a peaceful heart. *Amen*
May he increase their trust in his providence. *Amen*
May God keep them at home in his presence tonight. *Amen*

Thursday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

I come in the peace of God's presence.

— *To collect the fragments of this day.*

I rest in the silence of God's presence.

— *To hear the mystery I have lived today.*

I come in the wisdom of God's presence.

— *To learn the lessons of this day.*

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day and all the energy and optimism that it has carried. I offer you all my hopes and dreams. Renew and focus my life according to your dream for me. Keep me in touch with the energy and optimism of youth, even as I grow older in wisdom and experience.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 8

Amazing Lord and God

Your name is everywhere

Written through all creation

Little children sing about you.

Toddlers delight in your creation

Silencing the cynicism of godless hearts

I look up at the sky and am lost in space

Then I see myself in perspective

And wonder why you care about me at all.

Yet we are little less than gods in your eyes

You have put us in charge of this world

Made us stewards of all creation.

The cattle, the birds, the fish of the sea

Are all placed in our care by you

Our amazing Lord and God.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

1 Timothy 4:12

It is urgent that the good news is heard. Don't let anyone put you down just because you are young. Witness to the Gospel with your life: by word and action, by love, by faith and by integrity. Stay close to scripture, give good advice and keep that special gift for ministry fresh and active each day.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

In what ways did I experience God as youthful today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

For young people who struggle in school.

— *Keep them in your loving kindness*

For young people exploring relationships.

— *Keep them in your loving kindness*

For young people searching for meaning in life.

— *Keep them in your loving kindness*

When family life is hard for young people.

— *Keep them in your loving kindness*

When friends let young people down.

— *Keep them in your loving kindness*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, young people are both precious and vulnerable as they grow towards maturity, help me to offer them support, guidance and good example.

Let me see the grace of your presence in their lives, and show me how to encourage their goodness.

I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord keep them safe and give them rest, and bring them to peace at the end of this day. *Amen*

Friday - Week Two

Opening Prayer

Lord, let me know the shortness of life,
That I might gain wisdom of heart,
And find peace in your eternal plan for me.
Be with me as I end this day,
Give me peace and truth, as I think over what has happened.
Give me compassion, that I may grow in wisdom of heart.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day and all that has been achieved
through both success and failure.
Thank you for the lessons of love hidden
in the ordinary events of this day
and for being a teacher who stays close to me, as I learn.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 49

Listen everyone, rich and poor alike.
If you have your feet on the ground, listen.
I offer you wisdom, plain and simple,
From the experience of your life.
I have tuned my ear to wisdom,
I played out my problems on the harp.
So why should I fear difficult times,
When life knocks me off-balance.
There is no easy escape from setbacks,
No one is immune to shock and failure.
Everyone knows that the best of us die,
The grave becomes our home.
So don't be impressed by success.
It can't take you beyond the grave.
It is God that rescues us from death,
Gives us life that lasts.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 44:1

I have been here for people who were not even looking for me, it is the Lord that speaks. I kept saying, I am here, in front of you. But they did not see or hear me. I reached out, day after day, and yet people turned their backs. Instead they followed their own whims and wanted to do things their own way, as if I had nothing to offer them. But I will support those who recognise me and not destroy the whole people. All the people will be blessed in those who hear my voice.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

What lessons has God taught me today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

I pray for wisdom for parents as they bring up their children.
— *May they recognise God's presence in their sons and daughters.*
I pray for wisdom for teachers and all educators.
— *May their work uncover God's life at the heart of each student.*
I pray for those who face failure and illness.
— *May they see, in setbacks, the opportunity to grow in wisdom.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me as I draw to the end of another day.
Let your Gospel wisdom open up the meaning of this day.
Help me to leave all my uncertainties in the safety of your certain love,
and rest in your wisdom with a grateful heart tonight.
I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Lord, make them wise, through trusting you. *Amen*
Keep them trusting, by knowing you. *Amen*
Help them to know you, by loving your wisdom. *Amen*

Saturday - Week Two

This is a slow contemplative reading of the Sunday scripture that leads towards union with God, and is an ideal way of preparing for tomorrow's Eucharist. Its simplicity helps to uncover some of the spiritual rhythms at work in our lives.

The prayer rests on an ability to listen to scripture with the heart and hear *the still small voice of God*. (1 Kings 19:12)

Opening Prayer

Lord, open my ears to hear your word.

May these moments of silence
help me to recognise your presence
calling me to life.

Calm my heart and mind with your still small voice. *Amen*

How the word touches me

Read the Gospel passage for Sunday twice,
with a brief pause between readings.

Concentrate on a segment or word from the passage that attracts you.
Reflect on that for a while.

How the word speaks to me

Read the passage again, followed by a reflection on:

Where do these words touch my life today?

Reflect for a while on what connections the story makes with your life.

How am I challenged?

Read the passage again, reflecting on the phrase:

These words challenge me to.....in the days that lie ahead.

Ending

I pray for a deeper understanding of the Gospel passage.

Final Prayer

Thank you Lord, for your abiding presence in my life,
and in these words of scripture.

Stay with me this evening and help me to rest in your presence tonight.

Amen

Other Scripture texts to use from -

St Mark's Gospel

Bartimaeus	10:46-52
Children	10:13-16
Calming a storm	4:35-41
Parables	4:21-32
Going Home	6:1-6
Transfigured	9:2-8

Week Three

*Remember God's presence as often as you can
and notice what God is doing and what you are doing.*
St Francis de Sales

Sunday - Week Three

Opening Prayer

Lord of the evening,
Prepare me for a new week,
Of working with you.
Ease my anxiety, build up my energy,
Let your face shine upon me,
In the events of another week.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord of all history, I offer you a new week
with all its routine and uncertainty.
Make it an adventure into a stronger partnership with you.
May this prayer help me recognise the face of God
more clearly in those I will meet.
Lord, let the light of your face shine through this week.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 4

God, who protects and guards me.
Guide me when I am confused.
When I am troubled, hear my struggles,
And listen to my prayer.
There are so many ways to be deluded.
So many lies that look like truth.
My heart is easily confused,
My mind closed off from your wisdom.
Lord, you never let me down,
Though I do not understand your ways.
In the evening help me reflect in peace,
And bow before your wisdom.
Lord, let the light of your face
Shine on my life with peace,
And I will sleep soundly
In your saving presence.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Monday - Week Three

Scripture Reading

John 14:16

I will give you a guide for the journey, to be with you forever. It is a Spirit that others will not be able to see or understand. But you will understand and recognise this Spirit of truth because it is with you and inside you every day. I have not left you orphans. Anyone who loves me will be loved by my Father and I shall show myself to them.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How has the light of God’s face shone on my life today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, be a light for me on the journey through a new week.

— *Keep me faithful to your guidance in the coming week.*

Lord, help me to be a light to others in the week ahead.

— *May I radiate your honest love to all I meet.*

Lord, I pray for all those who begin this week with darkened hearts.

— *May they find hope and strength to lighten their burdens.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, let the light of your face shine upon all that I do in the week ahead. Keep me free from shame to live in your presence. May my life reflect the light of your face into the darkness and confusion of this world. I ask this through Christ, the light of the world. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Lord, dispel the darkness of this night. *Amen*

Drive far away the shadows of insecurity. *Amen*

Let the light of your face shine on them in the coming week. *Amen*

Opening Prayer

Lord, bring me peace and calm at the end of this day.

Slow the breath of busyness,

Be with me in the silence.

Open up the mystery of this day,

For my highest destiny

Lies in my daily living.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day. Thank you for the shared journey of this day.

With all its routine and disappointment it is the holy ground on which I walk with you, my God. Gather up what is of value and help me to let go of what is not worthy of a child of God.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 46

God is a safe place to live,

A constant support in times of trouble.

When I stand on the brink of disaster,

I can still look ahead, with confidence.

The God of all history is with us.

The Lord of our story gives us strength.

Rivers and fountains of God’s presence,

Flow through my daily life.

I look for the signs of God’s presence,

In the growth of plants and people.

The God of all history is with us.

The Lord of our story gives us strength.

Watch for the signs of peace,

Breaking out in ordinary lives.

Stand back and look for God,

Within and beyond all you see.

The God of all history is with us.

The Lord of our story gives us strength.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Romans 8:14

Those who are moved by The Spirit are the sons and daughters of God. The Spirit does not tie us down, but sets us free to cry out *Abba, Father!* The same Spirit joins with our spirit to confirm that we really are the children of God. If we are God's children, then we are also in line to share with Christ the inheritance that is available only through his death and resurrection.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

Have I lived the day with confidence in a loving Father?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for my community at the end of this day.

— *May we remember that we are brothers and sisters, with a Father in heaven.*

Lord, help those for whom the day has been filled with disappointment.

— *May they remain in touch with God as Father, and grow in confidence as children of God.*

Lord, I pray for young people who have lost confidence in their parents.

— *May they recognise the goodness of God in their family.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Stay with me Lord this evening. As I look back at the day I have lived in your presence, give me the grace to see your family likeness unfolding in others. May the faces of all those I live and work with, bring me closer to you. I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Lord, let the light of your face shine upon them, that they may sleep in your peace at the end of this day. *Amen*

Tuesday - Week Three

Opening Prayer

Jesus breathes peace on his friends at the end of the day.

May the peace of God settle in my heart, and bring me to rest in the Spirit.

Spirit of God breathe through the challenges of this day.

Let your peace bring order to my heart and mind.

Remind me that I am always safe in your presence.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, you have walked with me today, as a friend and guide.

I offer you the successes and failures of this day.

Help me to follow your guidance tomorrow.

Show me how to follow the map of the Gospel,

and feel the tug of your Spirit drawing me in the right direction.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 43

Stand by me Lord.

Be my protector, my guide.

Shield me from the cynical,

From the delusions that surround me.

Lord I am so alone and lost,

Without your presence to guide me.

Give me a map and a compass,

To find my way back to your presence.

Then I can face any challenge,

Draw strength from my God.

Why am I so helpless,

So low in spirits?

Let me trust the Lord again

And praise God's wisdom in all things.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

1 Peter 1:13

Keep yourself ready for action in the service of God. Stay alert and sensitive in every situation. Hold your focus on the hope you feel in the promises and blessings of Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the way God is moving in your life. Don't let the pressures and problems of the day push your life out of shape. Avoid falling back into the pattern you lived before you came to know the reality of God.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How has God been my map and compass today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for those who have lost their way in the confusion of a difficult day.

— *May they find your peace and wisdom this evening.*

Lord, I pray for married couples young and old.

— *May their journey be a sign of the partnership God offers to me each day.*

Lord, I pray tonight for young people, lost in a maze of life choices.

— *Help them hear your Spirit calling them, to know and use their gifts to build a better world.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, be a constant guide on my journey. I need your patience as I struggle to know and do your will. Help me to trust, even when fear and frustration throw me into confusion. Stay close to me now, as Father, Son and Spirit and help me rest in your love this night and always. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Father confirm them as children of God. *Amen*

May the Son inspire them to follow the Gospel. *Amen*

May the Spirit renew them tonight in the service of God. *Amen*

Wednesday - Week Three

Opening Prayer

Bring me to peace in this evening hour Lord
And place me on the solid ground of your presence
After the activity of the day.
Teach me to sit in patience,
In the silence of your love,
So that your plans and timetables may emerge again in my life.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

The day you gave is almost over, and I return it to you with gratitude, for all you have achieved through my success and failure.
Help me to see the promises of resurrection, beneath the surface of even the most lifeless moments of the day. May I live by faith, that your Resurrection will eventually reach every corner of my life.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 40

I waited and waited for the Lord.
Finally God noticed me and listened.
He pulled me out of my misery,
Out of the dark circle of my thoughts.
He put me down on solid ground
Gave me back the confidence I had lost.
God drew me deeper into love,
Taught me how to celebrate life again.
People that turn to God find real happiness,
They see through life to a deeper meaning.
The whole of creation is brimming with God,
For those who have courage to look.
God is gloriously hidden in and beyond creation,
But our words dry up before God's mystery.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Thursday - Week Three

Scripture Reading

Romans 10:8

The message of God must live in your heart and be active in what you do and say. Your life will take on its proper shape, only if you witness to God in the way you live and speak. Life will only have lasting meaning if you believe in your heart that Jesus was raised from the dead. Your heart has only to believe, and your life to witness to the resurrection, for you to share eternal life.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

Where has the solid ground of God’s love been for me today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

I pray for those who carry the burden of grief tonight.

— *May they find hope and comfort in the Resurrection story.*

I pray for those who feel betrayed by friends.

— *May they find the faithfulness they need, to rebuild their trust in life.*

I pray for young people who have no confidence in their gifts.

— *Lord, send them people who can affirm their goodness.*

I pray for our divided and unjust world.

— *May my life be moved, beyond comfort, to build God’s kingdom of peace.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, may your Resurrection find a welcome in my heart and radiate hope to others in my actions. Make me a sign and bearer of your love to those around me. Tomorrow, help me to be ready to live out the optimism of the Gospel message.

I ask this in the name of Jesus our risen Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord bless them with peace at the end of the day. *Amen*

May the Resurrection be a reality in their lives. *Amen*

May their confidence grow in the service of the Gospel. *Amen*

Opening Prayer

Lord, I bring you the bits and pieces of my day,

The broken plans and promises,

The best and the worst of all that has happened.

I open my hands to you and offer the day to you.

Take what needs to be changed, discard what is of no value.

Help me to recognise what is of lasting value.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you the best and the worst of this day. Take it and make it part of your Cross and Resurrection story, and part of the Gospel pattern in my life.

Help me to trust you tonight with the things that don’t make sense and keep me patient with myself.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 32

You are blessed to have a fresh start,
To have God wipe out past mistakes.

When guilt is kept locked inside,
Both body and spirit pay the price.
When I did not hide from my guilt,
When I faced my failures honestly,
Then my Lord forgave and forgot.

Welcomed me back home.

So let us be honest with our God,
About our mistakes and motivations.
Whatever troubles come to our door,
God can be trusted to cope with them all.

Don’t be like a stubborn mule,
Refusing the guidance of God.
Trust in God in times of trouble,
Make the Lord your hiding place.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Colossians 3

You are members of God's own family. You are loved and chosen to be close to God in all that happens. So live out that family likeness by being patient, understanding, full of loving kindness and compassion. Look out for the needs of others and offer practical help. When arguments break out, be ready to forgive one another, as soon as you can. Live the forgiveness and compassion that I have seen in the life of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How do I hide from my guilt?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

When I feel I have got nowhere at the end of the day.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When I fail to live up to my own expectations.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When people disappoint me and let me down.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When I fail to see hope in what I am doing.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When family and friends seem absent.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When I feel helpless about injustice.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

When health and energy fail.

Give me new hope in my daily living.

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord of the universe and Lord of each life, be with me this evening.

Keep me searching for the patterns and themes of the Resurrection, in the story of this day.

May I be faithful to the Easter mystery at work in my life, and allow it to shape my mind and heart.

Help me to spread the influence of your kingdom to a needy world.

I ask this through the risen Jesus, Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord bless their lives, with the gift of his presence. *Amen*

May God open their hearts, to recognise Resurrection now. *Amen*

May Easter never be far away, and sustain them in hard times. *Amen*

Friday - Week Three

Opening Prayer

Lord, I gather with silent hands the threads of the day
I offer you the loose ends of all that has happened.
Help me to recognise your hand
Weaving its pattern of love through this closing day.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you this day and the strands of your Spirit that have run
through each moment. Thank you for your intimacy in my life,
and the daily opportunity for partnership with you.
Take the unfinished work of my day and use it to build your kingdom.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 31

Lord, I need a place to hide tonight.
Please don't let me down.
In your goodness listen to me,
Make sense of what is happening.
I am surrounded by confusion Lord,
Tempted to make the wrong choices.
You know my inside story Lord,
The troubles and sadness I live with.
I put my life into your hands,
I put my trust in you alone.
Love the Lord all you people,
Trust our God who never gives up on us.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Ephesians 2

With an immense compassion and an incredible love, God took our lives,
deadened by sin, and embraced us with kindness. It was done with no help
from us, it was a total gift, nothing for us to feel clever about at all.
God picked us up, and put us alongside the risen Jesus.
Our lives now make sense because of God's goodness. So we have become
God's work of art. We are reborn in the risen Lord, to live the kind of life
we were called to, from the beginning.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How many strands of hope can I see in the events of my day?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, be with all young people at the end of this day.
—*May they find inspiration to give their lives generously.*
Lord, be with those who are unhappy in their work.
—*May they find deeper meaning in their lives by listening to the Spirit.*
Lord, be with parents separated from their children.
—*May they maintain their love and continue to build bridges.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, be with me in this evening hour. Help me to count my blessings
rather than count the cost of this day in your service. Keep me in touch
with the strands of your spirit woven through your people and plans. Even
though I do not understand each twist and turn of life, help me trust you
to weave something wonderful out of this ordinary day.
I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Spirit of God, woven through their lives, bring them peace. *Amen*
Wisdom of God, hidden in each person, keep them learning. *Amen*
Son of God, raised through death to life, renew their hope. *Amen*

Saturday - Week Three

This is a slow contemplative reading of the Sunday scripture that leads towards union with God, and is an ideal way of preparing for tomorrow's Eucharist. Its simplicity helps to uncover some of the spiritual rhythms at work in our lives.

The prayer rests on an ability to listen to scripture with the heart and hear *the still small voice of God*. (1 Kings 19:12)

Opening Prayer

Lord, open my ears to hear your word.

May these moments of silence

help me to recognise your presence

calling me to life.

Calm my heart and mind with your still small voice. *Amen*

How the word touches me

Read the Gospel passage for Sunday twice, with a brief pause between readings.

Concentrate on a segment or word from the passage that attracts you.

Reflect on that for a while.

How the word speaks to me

Read the passage again, followed by a reflection on:

Where do these words touch my life today?

Reflect for a while on what connections the story makes with your life.

How am I challenged?

Read the passage again, reflecting on the phrase:

These words challenge me to.....in the days that lie ahead.

Ending

I pray for a deeper understanding of the Gospel passage.

Final Prayer

Thank you Lord, for your abiding presence in my life, and in these words of scripture.

Stay with me this evening and help me to rest in your presence tonight.

Amen

Week Four

*In the busyness of your day keep an eye on God.
Be like sailors, who, get to the harbour by looking up to the stars
as well as looking at where they are on their journey.*

St Francis de Sales

Sunday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

Stay with me Lord,
It is Sunday evening,
Time to rest in your risen presence.
Stay with me Lord,
On the verge of a new week,
Talk to me about your new life.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord of all life, I offer you the week that lies ahead. Help me to meet it with your timeless wisdom. Show me when to stick to routine and when to be flexible. Help me to stay focussed on your will rather than my own and bring me to the end of this week more deeply rooted in your life-giving love.

Choral Prayer

Philippians 3:7

Everything I thought was important
Has begun to change.

I need to let go of so many things
Leave more room for Christ Jesus.

Compared with knowing Christ face-to-face,
Everything else is unimportant.

Living with less leaves more space
To embrace the risen Lord.

The struggle of the cross
Is the road to the risen Jesus.

I will hold a crucified hand,
On the road to Resurrection.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 13

God's kingdom is like a net full of fish, pulled out of the sea and landed on the shore. The fishermen sort the good fish into baskets and throw the rest back into the sea. If you have understood this parable you are like a wise steward, that knows how to draw out of his store of wisdom things old and things new, at the right time.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How flexible am I at following the promptings of the Spirit in my life?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, I pray for all who will begin this week with anxiety and stress.

— *Give them a strong sense of your presence in all that happens.*

Lord, I pray for families preparing to sleep tonight.

— *May they be at peace, may the sun not set on their anger.*

Lord, be with those for whom this week will be their last.

— *May they come home to you in peace.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord of creation, as I begin a new week,
help me to be your partner in creating a better world.
Keep me flexible and faithful in following the Gospel.
Bring me safely to the end of this week at peace with you,
richer in wisdom and closer to those around me.
I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Bless them with peace in all that will happen this week. *Amen*
Give them courage in all that is uncertain. *Amen*
Cheer their hearts with the gift of more time to do good. *Amen*

Monday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

The Lord is with me in each minute of every day
Each breath is taken in God's presence
I live and breathe his love right now.
Bring me back to the centre of my life this evening Lord
Return me to the source of all love and inspiration
May your Spirit breathe through me in this evening prayer.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, in the cool of the evening, walk with me through my day. Help me not to hide from your presence in what I remember of today. May I recognise humbly what I need to learn and allow you to be my guide.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 30

You deserve all the thanks Lord,
You pulled me out of the mess I had made.
I called to you from the depth of my need,
You put me back together again.
Sing God's praises you saints,
Thank God for his saving wisdom.
When things were going along well,
I felt no need of God at all.
So proud of myself until God turned away,
Then I fell flat on my face.
When I thought my life was over,
You turned my mourning into dancing.
Lord, I cannot keep quiet about your goodness to me
I can never thank you enough.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 5

Try to get along with each other in the community. Warn those who are doing too little, encourage those who are anxious, and reach out to those who are burdened. Be patient with each person and sensitive to individual needs. When you get on each others nerves, don't answer back without thinking. Look for the best in others, and try to bring it to the surface for the good of the whole community. Stay cheerful whatever happens, thanking God for everything. This is the way people are called to live the life of the risen Jesus.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How have people hidden and revealed God's presence today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

For those who live alone or on the edge of the community.
— *May the experience of a friendly face connect them back to life.*
For those weighed down by anxiety.
— *May they learn to trust again through faith,
and the encouragement of friends and family.*
For those who work too hard.
— *May they find more satisfaction in doing less,
and sharing responsibility when they need help.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Father, thank you for the friends and communities that support your Spirit in people. Help me to contribute honestly and generously to the community, and the network of friends and family in which I live. Move my heart to offer both support and challenge to others, as I share my journey towards the risen Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord give them peace with friends and neighbours. *Amen*
May they find God's face in the faces of friends and enemies. *Amen*

and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Tuesday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

Bread of life, feed me with your word
Tree of life, support me with your wisdom
Silence of God, surround me this evening.
Be with me as I gather the pieces of the day
Bring your wisdom to my experience
And sift my life with your love.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, like a child with its Father, I bring you the broken pieces of the day, and the plans that worked out well. Take the fragments of this day, and build them into your plan for a better world. Take my life, and let it be completely at the disposal of your love and wisdom this evening.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 72

Lord, bring your justice into our world,
Your wisdom to those who rule.
Let this wisdom endure for generations,
Fall like rain on parched ground.
Let peace and justice blossom like flowers,
Staying fresh until the moon fails
Let God's wisdom soak the whole earth,
From sea to sea through every land.
Cynicism and self interest will vanish.
Vengeance will evaporate into thin air.
All earth's rulers will give way
Before the light of God's wisdom.
God will rescue the poor from oppression,
Protecting them from tyranny and torture
The harvest will be endless
With food for everyone on earth.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son

Scripture Reading

Proverbs 3

You are blessed if you discover the importance of wisdom in your life, and develop a discerning heart. Wisdom of heart is worth more than any treasure or money in the bank. Nothing comes close to the treasure that wisdom offers. The road to contentment and long life opens up the paths of wisdom, and brings blessings to the whole community. For those who cling to wisdom she becomes the tree of life, for it is out of wisdom that God created the whole universe.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

In what ways do I see God's wisdom at work around me?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, be with those who have made foolish mistakes today.
— *May they leave their failings in your hands to be changed to good.*
I pray for our rulers.
— *May they promote a deeper wisdom and discernment in all their discussions and decisions.*
I pray for parents and educators.
— *May their wisdom of heart ease the anxieties of the young, and inspire them to trust God.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord of wisdom, be with me in this evening hour. Set me free from anxiety and fear as I approach the end of this day. Help me to see my life today against an eternal horizon, and learn wisdom of heart.
I ask this through Jesus our risen Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the Lord bless them with peace of mind. *Amen*
May they rest in a wise and loving Lord tonight. *Amen*

Wednesday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

Lord, I come home to you this evening
To sit awhile with you
And talk about the day.
I bring you my heart and my hands
My feelings and my actions
And I leave them in your care.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, thank you for each event and conversation that has carried me deeper into life. Collect the confusion this day has created, and clarify the emotions and meanings I need to understand.
Iron out the mistakes I have made. In your kindness, prepare me for another day of life with you, my Lord and God.

Choral Prayer

Psalm 85

Bring us home to you Lord,
Don't hold a grudge against us.
Help us make a new start,
Putting the past behind us.
Lord, show us your face,
Then our friendship can begin again.
If only I admit our failings,
God's love can flow back in.
Love and truth will eventually embrace,
Justice and peace will kiss in friendship.
Faithfulness flows through the universe,
Justice falls from the heavens.
Goodness will come to life everywhere,
Peace will blossom in God's footprints.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

1 Peter 4

Care for one another with honest love and with sincere hearts. Loving like this makes up for everything else that can go wrong. Be quick in kindness, and generous in hospitality, keeping cheerful as you do the right thing. Be generous with the special gifts you have to share and, like a good steward, use them for the benefit of everyone.
If you are good with words, let them be God's words too.
If you are a helper then help with God's own love in your heart.
In that way God's goodness will shine through all that you do in Christ Jesus.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

In what ways do I see God shining through others?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

I pray for those who are alone and feeling isolated tonight.
— *May they find in God's presence the promise of home.*
I pray for all who are displaced by war and poverty.
— *May they see your love made visible in the hospitality of their hosts.*
Lord, I pray for grandparents.
— *May their generosity, despite failing energy, bring blessings on many generations of their family.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, be with me as I end another day. Help me build fairness and generosity into my life, so that your kingdom of love and justice might become more visible. Keep me humble and reverent with the mystery of your life, wherever I discover it during the day.
I ask this in the name of Jesus our risen Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May the road unfold in mystery before them. *Amen*
May the Lord walk close by their side. *Amen*
May their hearts be on fire with God's love. *Amen*

Thursday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

As the day ebbs away Lord
Walk with me along this evening shore
Help me gather what the day has washed up.
Help me sift what the day gave us
Gather what is of lasting value
And ponder on its meaning for tomorrow.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, the tide of your love flows secretly through each day. All that this day has offered, I give to you. Let it flow back into the sea of your love. Leave me tonight with the deep peace that comes from knowing you.

Choral Prayer

Colossians 1:15

In Jesus I see the face of God.
The God who cannot be seen.
In Jesus I see God’s plan unveiled,
A plan for the entire universe forever.
Every force of nature, every human power
Makes sense only in the light of Christ Jesus.
Before time began, Jesus existed.
All creation holds together in Him.
Jesus is the beginning of the Church
And He leads it each day in love.
He is the first on the journey to Resurrection,
In his wholeness I find our home.
Everything broken, unfinished and frustrated
Finds completion and meaning in Him.
By the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus,
Everything is brought into place in God’s plan.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:1

I should let go of anything that holds us back, on the journey toward Jesus. I need to persevere, despite our weakness and bad habits, in the commitment I have made to God. Try not to lose sight of Jesus. On his road, he endured many trials and setbacks. He did not give up because of shame or opposition, and neither should you. Think of Christ’s journey and draw strength from the risen Lord as you travel your road.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

How do I feel I have worked with God’s plan today?

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

I pray for those burdened with worry.
— *May they be drawn to trust God with their future.*
I pray for those consumed by anger tonight.
— *May they find a new perspective in the cross of Christ.*
I pray for those who have lost direction.
— *May they find a guide and friend to walk with them.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, stay with me this evening. As I draw this day to a close, and plan for tomorrow, sit with me awhile. Give me an eternal perspective on my choices today and tomorrow. Help me live in your goodness and enjoy the freedom of your children. I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

Let the sea of God’s presence touch their minds with peace. *Amen*
Let the evening shore silence the troubles in their hearts. *Amen*
May they be drawn back into the sea of God’s goodness. *Amen*

Friday - Week Four

Opening Prayer

May God shield me with peace at the end of this day
May God support me with truth as I examine the day
May God teach me love through the events of the day.
Each person and problem has carried God's presence
Each space and interruption has brought God's goodness
I am surrounded by God's gifts every day.

“Thinking about the Day”

Offering

Lord, I offer you all the plans I made at the start of this day.
I offer you all that happened.
Make your plans succeed where mine have failed.
May I work better with others tomorrow.

Choral Prayer

Ephesians 1:3

We praise God, our loving Father
For the gift of our brother Jesus Christ.
Before time began, God had each of us in mind,
As part of an eternal plan of loving kindness.
As God's sons and daughters,
We are brought close by the love of Jesus.
The dying and the rising of Jesus
Has set each of us free to be children of God.
We have been drawn into God's presence,
Through the plan revealed in Jesus.
A plan to bring everything into harmony,
Through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.
In the cross and Resurrection,
We discover who We really are.
We are claimed as God's own people
And given a place with Christ in heaven.
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 29:11

I will take care of you and bring you home says the Lord. I know what plans I have for you, plans for peace and not for disaster. I will never abandon you. When you call I will answer. When you pray I will listen. When you look for me, with all your heart, you will find me close by.

“Salesian Readings”

Focus Moment

Let me begin to count the blessings God has given me today.

“Magnificat”

Intercessions

Lord, stay with the young and poor this evening.
— *Open their hearts to hope and help me to meet their deepest needs.*
Lord, stay with the elderly and weary this evening.
— *Reassure them that your plans are still at work in their lives.*
Lord, stay with those who are near death, and those who care for them.
— *May they experience the presence of Jesus, as their guide.*

“Our Father”

Final Prayer

Lord, walk with me into this evening and talk to my heart about the day. Help me to recognise your footsteps in the highs and lows of life. Stay close to those I live and work with, so that your kingdom might come to life in all my relationships. I ask this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen*

A Blessing for Family and Friends

May God the Father bless them. *Amen*
The Holy Spirit enlighten them all the days of their lives. *Amen*
May the Lord Jesus protect them, body and soul. *Amen*

Saturday - Week Four

This is a slow contemplative reading of the Sunday scripture that leads towards union with God, and is an ideal way of preparing for tomorrow's Eucharist. Its simplicity helps to uncover some of the spiritual rhythms at work in our lives.

The prayer rests on an ability to listen to scripture with the heart and hear *the still small voice of God*. (1 Kings 19:12)

Opening Prayer

Lord, open my ears to hear your word.

May these moments of silence

help me to recognise your presence

calling me to life.

Calm my heart and mind with your still small voice. *Amen*

How the word touches me

Read the Gospel passage for Sunday twice,

with a brief pause between readings.

Concentrate on a segment or word from the passage that attracts you.

Reflect on that for a while.

How the word speaks to me

Read the passage again, followed by a reflection on:

Where do these words touch my life today?

Reflect for a while on what connections the story makes with your life.

How am I challenged?

Read the passage again, reflecting on the phrase:

These words challenge me to.....in the days that lie ahead.

Ending

I pray for a deeper understanding of the Gospel passage.

Final Prayer

Thank you Lord, for your abiding presence in my life,

and in these words of scripture.

Stay with me this evening and help me to rest in your presence tonight.

Amen

Other Scripture texts to use:

St John's Gospel

A good shepherd 10:11-16

Washing the feet 13:1-5

Be One 17:20-23

A Boy with bread 6:5-15

Love Each Other 15:9-17

Thinking about the Day

With Mary

Mary stood solidly in God's love at the foot of the cross.
Have I felt a sense of God's presence in the challenges of the day?
Mary pondered in her heart things that didn't make sense to her.
Have I tried to live reflectively through the activity of the day?
Mary inspired Don Bosco to draw people together in a community.
Have I sensed God's presence as a bridge between people today?

With Don Bosco's Spirituality

Don Bosco created a spirituality from four elements:

A Home:

Have I felt that I belonged today with those I am connected to?
How have I welcomed others and made them feel at home?

A Church:

Have I been aware of God, present in my own heart through this day?
Have I stopped briefly today, to focus on God, in what is happening?

A School:

Are there any lessons this day has taught me?
Am I committed to being open-minded, and to admitting mistakes?

A Playground:

How far have I relaxed with people today, and been spontaneous?
How much has humour and fun been part of my day?

With Don Bosco, good shepherd of the young

Don Bosco invites us to an optimistic approach to all that happens.
Have I been positive and encouraging today?
Salesian spirituality is active and involved in life.
Have I stood on the side-lines of this day, rather than taking part?
Recognising God in the ordinary is a Salesian gift.
How have I used this gift today?
Jesus, the Good Shepherd is a key figure on our way to God.
Have I shepherded others towards what is life-giving today?
Young people in need were at the heart of Don Bosco's mission.
Has my heart turned to the needs of the young and the poor today?

With Reverence

Have I met this day with reverence for the mystery it holds?
Have I taken time with routines,
or have I rushed impatiently ahead and missed the peace they offer?
Have I appreciated the small repeated gestures, hellos and goodbyes,
and focussed on the people who have touched my day?
Have I squeezed too much into too few hours?

With Loving Kindness

Where has love been offered today? Where has love been rejected?
Where has my heart been moved with kindness and compassion?
Was I able to respond, when my heart was moved in this way?
Have I allowed myself to receive kindness, affection, and praise?
What stops me from receiving loving kindness from others?

With Gentleness

Have I found myself cutting corners and doing things too quickly?
Have I cut people off mid-sentence, in the rush to move on?
Have I been hard on myself when things didn't work out?
Have I been hard on others when they have not met my standards?
Have I been gentle with creation, with tools, food and friends?
Have I been gentle with God's presence in me, and in others?

With an Anxious Heart

Have I been at peace during the day?
Has anxiety touched my day, and if so how did I deal with it?
Has my heart turned to God to ask for peace at any time today?
As I end the day, do I carry any frustration and disappointment?
Do I feel that God's providence has been with me today?
Is there anything I need to let go of, and give to God now?

With Body and Mind

In my body:

Have I been caught by tensions that have taken me away from God?
Has anger made a home in me, and drowned the quiet voice of God?
Has anxiety blocked my sense of God's presence in others?

In my mind and heart:

Have I planned so much that I have missed God in the interruptions?
Have I carried resentment that has blocked the hospitality of others?
Have I stopped to still my heart and mind, and connect with the Lord?

With the living Jesus

When I met selfishness, have I endured patiently?
In my shortcomings and limitations, have I seen the bright side?
When others are short-tempered, have I shown good humour?
When others fail to show appreciation, have I kept cheerful?
When someone turns me down, have I kept calm?
When someone helped me, have I been appreciative?
In answering others, have I spoken with kindness and honesty?

Salesian Readings

Mary, strong in love

We must live unfailingly in loyalty to Jesus, especially when we are overwhelmed with gloom, disgust or desolation. That is how it was with Mary the Mother of Jesus, on the day of the passion. Whilst surrounded by horror, crude insults and all the trauma of death, she stood solid in her love. Even when Jesus showed no sign of awareness, when his eyes closed, when the shadow of death fell across them all, Mary stood resolute in her love.

St Francis de Sales, Treatise 9:11

Mary, inspiring care for the young

Mary showed Don Bosco his field of work among the young, and was a constant inspiration and support. Don Bosco believed that Mary was somehow present in all his work, creating a sense of community and supporting each person on their journey to Jesus. It was under her inspiration that Don Bosco created the first community with young people in Turin, and developed the preventive system as a way to live and work together.

Salesian Constitutions 8 & 20

Held by God's Hand

If we reflect on it, God's presence has been holding us by the hand all the time. In fact we have never been cut off from God during the day. We have been settled in His presence all the time, and perhaps completely unconscious of God's closeness. We may have been like Jacob who said, *Look, I have been so close to God, held in his presence and providence and I did not know it.*

Francis de Sales, Treatise 6:2

Optimism

A Salesian does not usually complain about the current times, but sees and says what is good in the world, especially when it concerns young people. Because our task is to witness to the good news, a Salesian tries to be cheerful and develop a balanced way of life, that celebrates and educates others, in a happiness that comes from holiness.

Salesian Constitution 17

Welcome the Word

For us the word of Jesus, listened to with faith, is a source of spiritual life. It is food for prayer, light to see God's will in the events of life, and strength to live our Salesian vocation faithfully. We try to welcome the word of Jesus as Mary did, and ponder it in our hearts, so that it will bear fruit in our lives and help us to live it with more energy.

Salesian Constitution 87

Emmaus

We sometimes think that when God breaks through into our lives he will appear surrounded by angels and heavenly music. In fact God often comes to us in the ordinary moments and is only recognised in retrospect. Jesus spent a lot of time in sharing meals, in being sociable. He was courageous in conversation, and seemed to enjoy ordinary events, and be able to see through to deeper needs and potential. The ordinariness of the meal at Emmaus, at the end of a long walk, was the very place where Jesus let His risen presence be recognised. It is as if Jesus is challenging us to find Him within our own relationships.

Via Lucis

The signs of the times

Salesian spirituality demands that we are realists and sensitive to the signs of the times in which we live. We are convinced that God speaks through the demands of time and place. In this spirit Salesian spirituality welcomes new initiatives and creativity. As Don Bosco said, "In those things which are for the benefit of young people in danger, or which serve to win souls for God, I push ahead to the point of recklessness."

Salesian Constitution 19

Gentleness

As soon as you realise that you are acting out of anger, counteract the feeling, with a conscious act of gentleness, toward the person who is the focus of your anger. Just as the best remedy for lying is to disown the lie as soon as it is recognised, in the same way it is a good remedy to correct anger instantly. A prayer, made against a present and disturbing anger, ought to be a gentle prayer. Fresh wounds, after all, are easier to heal.

Francis de Sales, Introduction 3:8

The Shadow of our Lives

Meeting our own shortcomings sometimes seems like death, but as Jesus reminds us, the truth sets us free. As we grow older, the awareness of our fragility can lead to a deeper relationship with the mystery of Resurrection. It is as if we meet the Risen Lord in the shadow of our lives. He is there to walk with us through failure and weakness, and help us rise again through wisdom and humility. The path to Resurrection takes us all through the shadow side of life many times. It is often in shame and set-back, that we learn to put our hand into the wounded hands of Jesus and trust the road of Resurrection.

Via Lucis

Anger

When gentleness and humility are good and authentic in a person, they are guaranteed against the outbursts of anger and passion, that insults often provoke. This life is only a progressive journey towards a better life to come. So don't become angry with one another along the way. Let's walk in gentleness with our family and companions, with peaceful and kindly hearts.

St Francis de Sales, Introduction 3:8

Balanced Love

One who knows he is loved will love in return, and one who loves can obtain anything, from even the most unruly young person. This confidence sets up an electric current between youngsters and adults. Hearts are opened, needs are made known. This love allows adults to put up with the weariness, the annoyance, the ingratitude and the troubles, that young people can cause. Jesus Christ did not crush the bruised reed nor quench the smouldering candle. He is our model. If we have this true love we will not seek anything beyond the will of God and the good of souls.

St John Bosco's Letter, 1844

Belonging

Belonging means giving responsibility and holding young people to account. It means building friendships that will last into life. For Don Bosco, the skill of the adult is to create the environment that guarantees this safety and belonging among the young people in their care.

Ordinary Ways

Union with God

Union with God can be maintained by many small movements of the soul toward God. Just as a child in its mother's arms will snuggle closer with small movements, so the prayerful heart seeks closer union with God. At other times union is achieved by a constant and almost unconscious movement of the soul toward God. A huge heavy lump of lead or stone, free from all restrictions will tend to sink, bit by bit into the ground. The prayerful heart, once it is joined to God, sinks deeper and deeper into union with Him.

St Francis de Sales Treatise 7:1

Walking with the Young

We are called to walk alongside young people even when they are walking in the wrong direction! We are to be present with them, accepting them wherever they are, listening to their story, feeling their hopes and their disappointments. We move at their pace, respecting their dignity and freedom. We seek together to become aware of the Risen One present in our lives.

Don Bosco's Gospel Way

Contemplatives in action

In working for the good of young people, we are drawn into an experience of the Fatherhood of God, and are reminded of God's presence in our work. As scripture says, *Apart from me, you can do nothing*. We are challenged to deeper union with God, and to maintain a heart to heart communion with a felt presence of the risen Christ. In listening for the Spirit and constantly trying to do the most loving thing, we become contemplatives in action.

Salesian Constitution 12

No rushing

Nothing done impulsively and in a hurry is ever done well. As the ancient proverb says, we must work with peaceful hearts. He who hurries, says Solomon, runs the risk of stumbling and hurting themselves. We always do things fast enough when we do them well. Drones make a lot of noise but they only make wax. Rivers that run deep and slow, carry huge boats, but shallow turbulent rivers bring ruin and destruction to the land. In all your plans, rely on the providence of God, through which alone your plans will succeed.

St Francis de Sales, Introduction 3:10

Gentle Authority

Try to be friendly and gentle in approaching everyone. Gentleness is a virtue well loved by Jesus. Whatever you do or say, show a well mannered kindness, not only to those in authority, but especially to those in the community that have offended you, or who look upon you with an unkindly eye. He who will not bear gently with another's defects will never achieve true love. There is no one on earth who has no faults, however good they may be. Therefore if you wish others to bear your defects, you should begin by bearing the defects of others.

St John Bosco's Letter, 1885

An unknown way

The true way of following God is to walk by a way that we do not know. When it seems that everything is upside down within us, that is the time to practice trust in God. We should keep living a life of love and not struggle to know the reason for our confusion. Instead we should walk each day in abandonment to God's goodness. When God takes away the consolation of His presence we should join Jesus on the cross and say, 'Thy will be done.'

Conference 26, Jane Frances de Chantal

Busyness

There is, I think, a danger of being too busy being Samaritans to listen to the word with silent attentiveness, to go to the mountain of prayer. Often our busyness is tinged with over-anxiety, inducing stress and tension. In some cases one can detect symptoms of a workaholic, incipient or verging on chronic. This can entail a blurring of perspectives, a loss of true focus. When there are clashes of priorities, it tends to be prayer which is jettisoned.

Don Bosco's Gospel Way

Learning

For Don Bosco everyone is potentially a teacher. In a school, it may be the dinner-ladies or the caretaker that help a young person to learn a vital lesson in life. In a parish, the old person sitting quietly at the back who talks and smiles to young people may be a profound teacher of wisdom. So often, in Don Bosco's mind, it was young people themselves who were the best teachers, speaking with an honesty and immediacy that few adult friends could match.

Ordinary Ways

Celebration

As adults we may take ourselves too seriously. When we do so, we are in danger of losing the energy we need to be ourselves. We may even feel threatened by young people's exuberance. Don Bosco encouraged his co-workers to be young with the young. He wanted young people to grow to maturity and yet still have access to that youthful inner energy that could let them play and simply be. He saw play as an act of faith. Each person can only carry a small part of the world.

Ordinary Ways

Meaning

We are not in control of the invasion of mystery into the lives of young people, but we must not miss it. We simply need to be aware, like the disciples after the Resurrection, that *It is The Lord!* standing on the shore of our awareness. Feeding all of us with the bread of his presence among young people. It is this network of friendship that forms the church that holds God's presence.

Ordinary Ways

Signs of Hope

In daily experience we will find people and situations where peace, new life and hope suddenly break through. They are moments when the light of the Resurrection shines through a good friendship or an honest word. They are probably more common than we think. As followers of a Risen Lord there is a challenge for us to be signs of hope. We can help liberate others from their fear by an honest friendship and silent prayer that invites the Risen Lord into every conversation.

Via Lucis

Revelation

There are many moments, scattered through our lives, when we come alive. We grow in awareness, and suddenly see something that was always there, in a totally new way. That sudden insight is rare for an individual, but even more amazing when it happens for a whole group. The men and women in the upper room spent their time waiting, reflecting and in silence. All of a sudden they received inspiration as a group. They were overcome with the joy and energy of insight and wisdom. They would never see the events of Jesus' life in the same way again.

Via Lucis

Being Child Like

Act like small children who, with one hand hold tight to their Father, and with the other lean in to pick berries from among the thorn hedges. In the same way, as you manage the ordinary things of each day, hold fast with one hand to your Father and, from time to time, turn to your Father to see if your actions are pleasing Him. Take care not to let go of that hand in order to gather more. If you let go, you may well fall flat on your face.

Francis de Sales, Introduction 3:10

New Ways

How many times has the Lord stood on the lake-shore of our lives and called out to us to do things differently? How many times have we heard the voice of a stranger go straight to our hearts? To recognise, like St John, that *It is the Lord!* The Risen Jesus seems to slip through our lives and offer us new life in interruptions, coincidences and setbacks. This new offer of Resurrection is always challenging us to look to a wider horizon. It is never a life that can be contained or tamed by plans and procedures. The risen life searches us out, even as we struggle towards it. It is a life that asks us to be open, and ready to move in new ways. We recognise the Lord, inviting us to meet him in ordinary moments, like breakfast.

Via Lucis

Because he shares our nature,
Perhaps the risen Lord,
Who met his friends from the boat
And cooked them fish
On a little driftwood fire,
Will arrange this for us.

Moving On

Hidden in Christ

Love is the active, driving force of the soul and spiritual life. Love gives life, energy, sensitivity and direction to our spiritual lives. So, as soon as we have given our soul to Christ in love, we have in that one act given the whole of our spiritual life into Christ's safe keeping. For now that spiritual life is hidden with Christ and lived by active faith. So where is the good of being caught up into God's love in prayer, when our activities are trapped in the love of earthly and shallow concerns?

Francis de Sales, Treatise 7:7

An Adult spirituality

An adult spirituality is comfortable with mystery and paradox. It recognises the limits of reason; it knows that it doesn't need to know. It teaches the wisdom that I no longer have to be perfect, to solve every problem, to work everything out. It leads me beyond the black and white certainties of the false self that is so quick to analyse and to judge others. It takes me to a place where I discover a deeper kind of knowing. I learn that my life is not about me and the agenda of my small ego, but that I am about life and I learn to live from a new centre. I now see things from a different perspective. I have a new heart, a new way of living. I can now live for God rather than from the social self which I have constructed in response to the expectations of others. This enables me to live the values of the gospel, to work for peace and reconciliation, to reach out to the stranger, to seek to overcome divisions, to learn to live in love. Being human we slip back into the old ways of the false self, so God has given us a means to stay in the true self. It is called prayer.

Lost and Found

Children of God

Jesus famously told the inquiring Pharisee, Nicodemus, that he had to be born again to experience this new kind of life, born of water and the Spirit. This happens, of course, at our baptism. But for many of us the gifts of the Spirit remain dormant. The early Church went to great lengths to demonstrate what really happens at baptism as they practised total immersion. As infant baptism became the norm this was reduced to pouring a little water over the head of the child: hardly the most dramatic symbolism of a death leading to a new life. Baptism, in fact, has become the great sacrament of belonging, but it means much more than this. It should initiate us into this different form of life as we move beyond the limited horizons of the small self and enter more fully into our new identity as children of God.

Treasure Within

Stone Water-Jar

Sometimes, at the end of the day, I go in prayer to Jesus with the stone water-jar which is my life. There are occasions when the water it holds seems clear and fresh. At other times the water is stagnant and muddied. The water symbolises my personal story: what I have become; what I have done; the gifts I have; the love I have given and received; the inadequacies and weaknesses, mistakes and mess too. Inspired and encouraged by the

Mother of Jesus, we come to Jesus in simplicity, trusting in the efficacy of his word. As we gaze back across the twists and turns of our lives, we believe that in his enduring love Jesus can transform the water into wine, beyond our wildest dreams and imaginings. We know that he can give new and abundant life, and a future which is rich and fruitful. We may even dare to hope that he has kept the best wine until now.

Symbols and Spirituality

Compassion

A spirituality of compassion is not about softness, of choosing the comfortable. When we widen the circle of compassion in the way that the Gospel asks us we commit ourselves to the masculine task of giving soul to our world. This is a task for mature men and for mature women, and it is interesting again to see that Mary is told that her soul will be pierced by a sword. In the great Magnificat prayer that Luke brilliantly places on Mary's lips we see the supreme example of a spirituality that embraces both the personal and the political. In the recent years of renewal so many religious and lay women have led the struggle for social justice.

A Time for Compassion

Magnificat

My soul glorifies the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God's saving presence.
For he has recognised my weakness,
And yet all people will call me blessed.
For God has done great things for me, holy is his name.
His compassion is all around for those who want to see it.
He has shown a new kind of strength
and scattered the proud-hearted.
He has exalted the simple and the ordinary.
He has seen and fed deep hungers
And ignored the rich and greedy.
He has not given up on his plan of salvation
As he promised to Abraham and his family in faith.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

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. *Amen.*

Sources of Readings

Trust the Road by David O'Malley
Ordinary Ways by David O'Malley
Via Lucis by David O'Malley
Don Bosco's Gospel Ways by Michael T Winstanley
Symbols and Spirituality by Michael T Winstanley
Treasure Within by Michael J Cuningham
Lost and Found by Michael J Cuningham
A Time for Compassion by Michael J Cuningham
Moving On by Margaret J Cooke

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