



# Worshipping at Home

The Liturgy of the Empty Hands adapted  
for families and individuals.

This service follows the pattern of Holy Communion, so it retains the familiar foundations of our common worship while acknowledging the absence of consecrated bread and wine.

The Liturgy of the Empty Hands is offered as a gift of prayer and solidarity to an anxious and hurting world. The Liturgy is not a replacement for gathering as God's People, the Church, as embodied in this community - just as viewing an on-line service of holy communion is not a replacement for gathering together in the Church to celebrate holy communion. But it does give us a way of gathering around stories of hope from despair and of resurrection after death. It does create an important way of remaining spiritually connected even when we must be physically distanced.

The Liturgy of the Empty Hands has been shaped for use by both families and individuals. It is designed to be held at home on a Sunday or at that point in the week when you observe the Sabbath. Instructions can be found in **red** text. These are not meant to be read aloud but are to help guide you. If there is more than one person in your household, everyone might wish to say the words in bold together.

The Liturgy of the Empty Hands will also be offered from the Rectory and uploaded on St. Mary's YouTube Channel so that those with access can view it on Sundays at 10am. Whether or not you watch the video, you are encouraged to prepare yourself for worship by making a holy place and by downloading the pew sheet with the readings, the sermon and the prayers. If you have children at home, you might wish to download from St. Mary's website the Roots activity sheet, on which St. Mary's All Stars program is based, so that they can listen and engage with the readings in their own way with the help of that aid.

The Rector, St. Mary's Church



To begin, set aside a holy place in your home. I suggest your place of eating, a table such as a kitchen table or a dinner table.

Place a celebratory cloth on the table (either white or many coloured). Then place an empty cup or glass and an empty plate on the cloth. A handkerchief or tissue covers both the cup/glass and plate.

Any or all of the following symbols may be added from week to week to encourage a prayerful space: a candle, a cross, an image of St. Mary's church, a stone with a heart drawn on it or photos of absent friends or loved ones. If you have children at home, encourage them to choose one item for your holy place.

## GREETING

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

**Amen.**

## A CALL TO WORSHIP FOR DISPERSED PEOPLE

We are connected by God's Spirit,  
hoping for a glimpse of the holy:  
the One who brooded over Creation,  
who engulfed a bush in flame,  
who made a path through the waters,  
who rolled away the tombstone.

We are connected by God's Spirit,  
hoping for a whisper of the truth:  
the Word who first spoke in the silence,  
the voice who raged with the prophet's zeal,  
the host who sang of peace on earth,  
the teacher who blessed the humble and poor.

We are connected by God's Spirit,  
hoping for a touch of compassion:  
the tenderness that shaped the human body,  
the caress that opened eyes of the blind,  
the soothing hand that brought healing calm,  
the warmth that embraced the lonely and lost.

We are connected by God's Spirit, in the presence of mystery:  
of One who is revealed and hidden, known and unknown,  
mother and father of Creation,  
God-with-us, living Word, eternal Spirit, Three and One.

Breathe into us hope, faith and joy.  
Breathe into us compassion, truth and holiness.  
Breathe into us reconciliation, justice and peace. Breathe  
newness of life as we worship today  
in this place and in many places  
joined by your Spirit of comfort and hope.  
**Amen.**

## THE COLLECT

The collect, bible readings, sermon and intercessions are printed  
in the pew sheet.

## THE BIBLE READINGS

## THE SERMON

## THE INTERCESSIONS

## THE PEACE

Offer one another peace with an embrace and words such as  
'Christ's peace be with you,' or other words of affection. For  
individuals, offer this prayer of peace:

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me and before me. Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore. The peace of all peace be mine this day, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## SETTING OF THE TABLE

The cup and plate are uncovered.

This earth is not our earth.  
This is God's earth.

This time is not my time.  
This is God's time.

This table is not my table.  
This is God's table.

God's earth, God's time, God's table....

It is God who provides this feast  
of place and time and community.  
Provision is already made for us all  
to be part of God's story.

God longs for us to be at home with God and one another.  
Place your hand on the table or the wall,  
set your feet on the floor.

Recognise these spaces as being of God and for God  
for everything we have comes from the One,  
the source of all that is.

In this time, we rededicate ourselves  
and our surroundings for God's good purposes.

## THE LITURGY OF THE EMPTY HANDS

**The Lord is with us.**

**We lift our hearts to God.**

**We give thanks to God.**

Lord of all life,  
you created the universe,  
where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth,  
to discover and to cherish.  
You give us happy times and things to celebrate.  
You made us all, each wonderfully different,  
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We thank you, loving Father,  
because, when we turned away,  
you sent Jesus, your Son.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread,  
and after giving thanks to God,  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.  
Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup  
you proclaim the death of the risen Lord, until he comes.

## SHARING

In this empty plate **[lift and show]**,  
we choose to see the world's hunger.  
We remember that millions of people, this day,  
lack bread for Communion,  
bread for breakfast, bread for life.  
We acknowledge that we ourselves hunger, this day,  
in ways that no earthly bread can satisfy.

**Hospitable God,  
meet us in our unmet hungers –  
and help us to put our abundance  
at the service of the poor.**

In this empty cup **[lift and show]**,  
we choose to see the world's thirst.  
We remember that millions of people, this day,  
lack wine for Communion, fruit for juicing, water for life. We  
acknowledge that we ourselves thirst, this day,  
in ways that no earthly cup can quench.

**Hospitable God,  
meet us in our unmet thirsts –  
and help us to put our fullness  
at the service of the empty.**

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst  
for righteousness, for they will be filled.'  
**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

(Matthew 5:6)

Pour out the Holy Spirit  
on this empty plate and this empty cup,  
that they may be for us –  
even in their emptiness –  
the body and blood of Christ.  
So that we may take his Life into our lives,  
and be taken and blessed,  
broken and given for the world.

## LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

We hold up the empty plate...  
It is Christ who is the bread of life,  
**who satisfies the hungry heart.**

We hold up the empty cup...  
It is Christ who is the cup of hope,  
**who revives the thirsty.**

We place this plate and cup on the table.  
**The gifts of God for the people of God.**

In faith and hope, we hold out our empty hands.  
**In our hands and in our hearts,  
we leave space for resurrection,  
for new life and for new meaning.**

## WORDS OF MISSION AND COMMISSION IN PLACE

We shall not seek God among the dead.  
We shall be bearers of hope among the living.  
We shall carry the stories of our hurts and losses that we may  
tell the story of healing and resurrection.

Live then, in the promise of Resurrection Life!  
Live according to the story of the One: Father, Son and Spirit.  
Knowing that the scattered community of God  
is placed in the world, for the sake of the world.  
Glory to God and Peace to All.  
**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May Christ,  
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,  
fill you with his new life;  
✠ and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Sources: A Call to Worship for a Dispersed Community – © Craig Mitchell, 2020. Taize song 'My peace I Leave You' – Jacques Berthier. Sharing and Invocation Sections – Claire Wright, based on Uniting in Worship 2. Blessing – Common Worship © The Archbishops' Council 2006. Remaining Sections – © Amelia Koh-Butler, 2020.