

A VIGIL AT HOME

When waiting is all we can do...

Waiting is all we can do –
and it is the hardest thing we can do.
Our hearts ache with the pain of separation;
our hands long to hold –
our eyes long to see –
and our ears long to hear the voice of the one whom we love.
Our heads know the logic of the separation –
but our hearts tell a different story:
of fear – yearning – and, sometimes, despair.

Into this waiting, we invite God – who waits with us.

Into this waiting, we invite Mary, the Mother – Mary Magdalene – and John who waited at the foot of the cross. They witnessed the suffering of the One whom they loved – and were utterly helpless to ease the suffering which resonated in their own souls.



The dormition of Saint Joseph - Death of St Joseph by Gioacchino

Into this waiting, we invite Jesus and Mary, the wife – who waited alongside Joseph as he approached the end of his life.

Jesus, not feeling the need to heal or restore Joseph to life – but waiting as he commended the spirit of his beloved foster father into the hands of the Eternal Father.

Mary, experiencing a sword piercing her heart as she waits, but waits in trust that the one who protected her will himself be protected on the journey into eternity.

Both gaze with infinite tenderness on St Joseph as he approaches his final journey.

As we keep our own vigil, we pray that Mary's hands work through hands of nurses and carers to soothe and calm N... We pray that someone holds N's hand as Jesus hold Joseph's, firm, gentle, reassuring that he is not alone.

IDEAS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU.

Create a prayer space – with a favourite photograph of your loved one and a few other things of special significance. Think about using an electronic candle so that you can leave it “lit” all the time.

If you are keeping a vigil-at-home with separated members of your family, suggest that they create a similar setting to unite you all... Share photographs.

Try to create a gentle routine – not to the minute, but ensure that you eat and sleep to keep yourself as well as you can.

Agree a prayer-time with your family and/ or close friends who keep this vigil with you. You may have family-members who are not pray-ers or who are too angry and afraid to pray. Be understanding but ensure that they know that you will be praying.

SCRIPTURE THAT YOU MIGHT FIND USEFUL.

It can be useful to choose one – or a couple of words or phrases and have them your mind and heart for the times when anxiety and fear threaten to disturb you.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

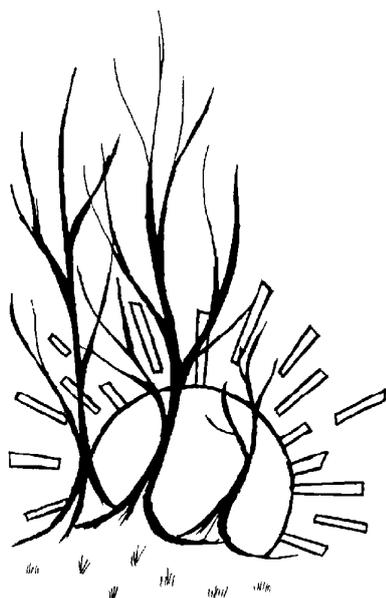
Matthew 11: 28-30

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them.

John 14: 27

St Paul writes: I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 38



Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,

so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord

more than those who watch for the morning,

more than those who watch for the morning.

Psalms 130

USEFUL PRAYERS

The Rosary – a gentle meditative prayer. Use the Sorrowful Mysteries – but also consider using the First Glorious Mystery – The Resurrection as a reminder of the promise that awaits your loved one if they die.



Memorare

Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary,
that it is a thing unheard of,
that anyone ever had recourse to your protection,
implored your help,
or sought you intercession,
and was left forsaken.
Filled therefore,
With confidence in your goodness,
I fly to you, O Mother,
Virgin of virgins.
To you I come, before you I stand,
a sorrowful sinner.
Despise not my poor words,
O Mother of the Word of God,
but graciously hear
and grant my prayer.
Amen

Collect from the Mass in time a Pandemic

Almighty and eternal God, our refuge in every danger,
to whom we turn in our distress;
in faith we pray: look with compassion on the afflicted,
grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners,
healing to the sick, peace to the dying,
strength to healthcare workers, wisdom to our leaders
and the courage to reach out to all in love,
so that together we may give glory to your holy name.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen



A Prayer of Faith, Hope and Trust

Jesus, I believe in you.
Jesus, I hope in you.
Jesus, I love you.

Prayer for your loved one. (Use these or your own words)

Dear Lord,
you know the pain I feel at being separated from N...
but I know that you are there alongside him/ her
and those who are caring for him/ her.
Keep him/ her free of pain and distress
and let him/ her know that he/she is enfolded in a mantle of prayer.
Give him/her the strength to fight off the virus
and let him/ her get well.
But, dear Lord, if it is his/her time to come to you,
make his/her passing gentle and peaceful,
surrounded by people who will have done the best to make him/her well;
who will hold his/her hands until you take it into yours.
And, gracious Lord, if this is your will for N...
give me the grace to accept whatever comes,
knowing that you will have not forsaken me,
and that N... will be kept safe in your presence until we meet again.
I ask this in the name of Jesus,
Amen.

Prayer for those caring for your loved one.

Healing Lord,
as I hold in my heart N (*name of your loved one*),
I also hold those who care for him/ her.
I thank you for their courage and skills
and their faithfulness to the work of caring for the sick.
I pray particularly for N...N...N...
If you know the names of any of the staff, add them here. If not, simply name the hospital or care home.
I pray for those who will make time to hold their hand on my behalf.
Sustain them in your love,
give them wisdom in the hard decisions they face
and keep them safe as they risk their own health
in service of those like N... (your loved one)
who are so dependent on them today.
We ask this in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

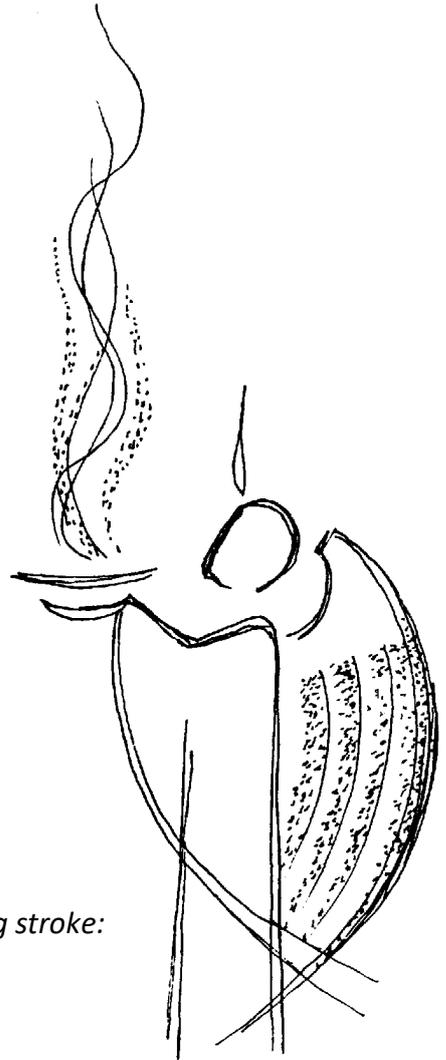


Mt. 25:37

“Christ has no body on earth now but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours;
yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world;
yours are the feet with which he walks to do good;
yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.”
May God bless you and your families today.
St Teresa of Ávila (1515-82)

Watch thou, O Lord,
with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight,
and give thine angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend thy sick ones, O Lord Christ;
rest thy weary ones;
bless thy dying ones;
soothe thy suffering ones;
pity thine afflicted ones;
shield thy joyous ones,
and all for thy love's sake.
Amen
St Augustine of Hippo

More than ever I find myself in the hands of God.
This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth.
But now there is a difference;
The initiative is entirely with God.
It is indeed a profound spiritual experience
to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands.
*Pedro Arrupe SJ...his prayer after suffering a debilitating stroke:
to pray for your loved one – and for yourself.*



O Lord,
support us all the day long until the shades lengthen,
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.
Then, Lord,
in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest and peace at the last,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen
St John Henry Newman