

THE BEGINNING
OF HOLY WEEK



PRAYERS IN THE PEW™

Spiritual Communion Service at Home

For those temporarily unable to attend Mass due to COVID-19

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION • SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020

***Note:** This prayer service requires a Leader (ideally, the father or mother of the family) and one or more Readers for the readings and intercessions. There are also parts – designated as “All” – which call for a common recitation.

Prior to Palm Sunday, the family may wish to obtain blessed palms from the local parish. Note that some dioceses are prohibiting the distribution of palms due to the danger of spreading the virus. In such a case, the family may then create their own “palm” offerings from local flora if palms are not available or by using other suitable materials at home. All participants hold the symbolic offerings in their hands for the beginning of this service.

– STAND –

OPENING

Leader: During the long weeks of Lent we have tried to prepare our hearts through special acts of prayer and penance. Now we begin the most solemn week of the year, Holy Week, in a kind of temporary exile from our parish. Nevertheless, we join together spiritually with all Christian worshipers throughout the world as we commemorate the Lord's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

All: Six days before the Passover, when the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem, the children ran to meet him; in their hands they carried palm branches and with a loud voice cried out: Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy! Oh gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

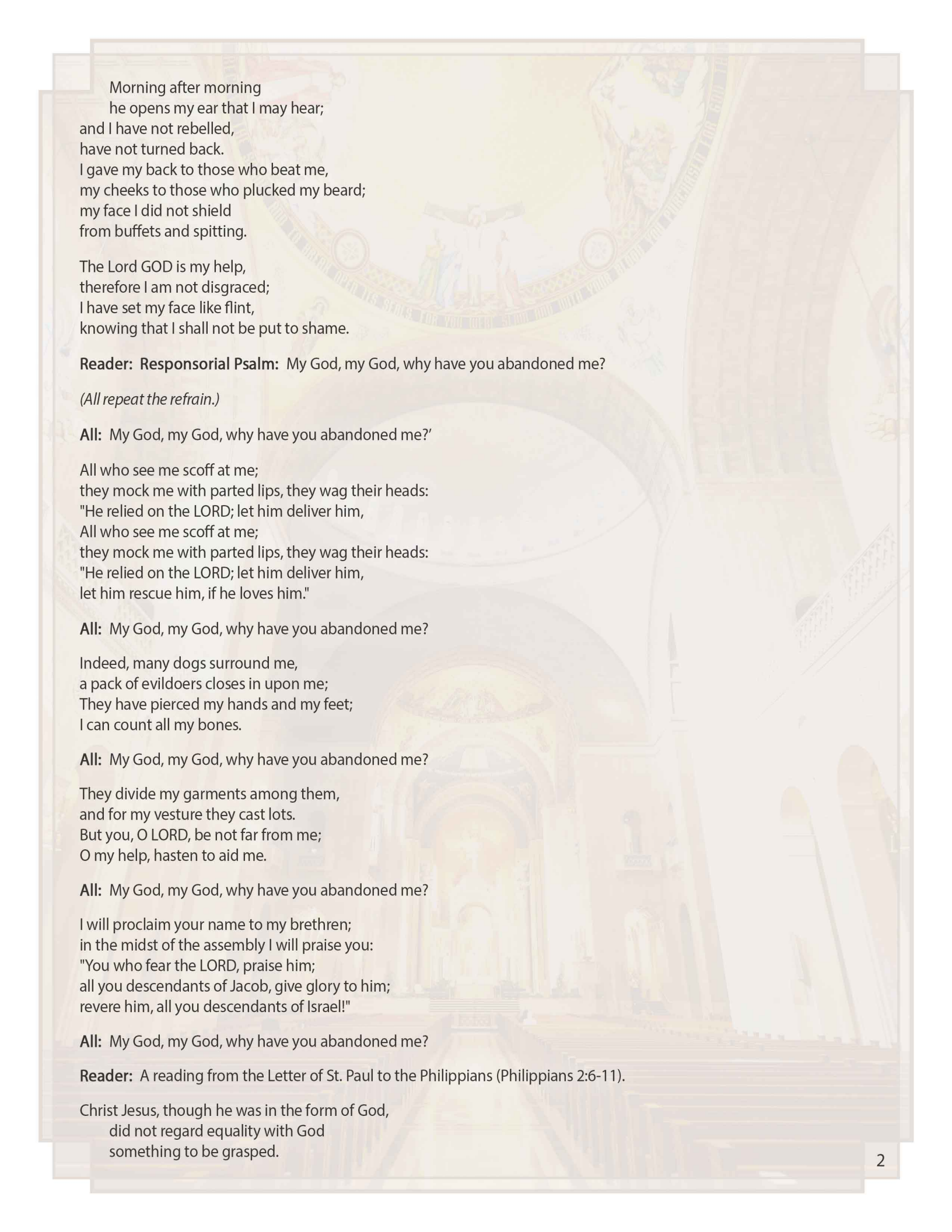
Leader: Let us pray: Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Savior to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

– SIT –

Reader: A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 50:4-7).

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.



Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
and I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.
I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

Reader: Responsorial Psalm: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

(All repeat the refrain.)

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?'

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
"He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
"He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him."

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
"You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Reader: A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians (Philippians 2:6-11).

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

- STAND -

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

All: Praise and Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Verse before the Gospel (Philippians 2:8-9).

Christ became obedient to the point of death,/ even death on a cross./ Because of this, God greatly exalted him/ and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

*(It is not possible to reproduce the Passion narrative in these few pages due to its length.
Family members are invited to use their personal or family bibles to read all or part of
the Passion narrative on this Sunday that is also known in the Church as **Passion Sunday**.)*

Matthew 26:14 – 27:66 is the official Gospel reading of the Church's liturgy, but the family may wish to read the whole of Chapters 26 and 27 of Matthew's Gospel for their home service.)

(STAND OR SIT – Due to the length of the Gospel, those who are unable to stand during the duration of the reading may sit at any point.)

The Gospel reading begins:

Leader: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

The Gospel reading concludes in the usual way:

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

- SIT -

REFLECTION

Leader: From a sermon by St. John Henry Newman: "The Cross of Christ: the Measure of the World".

It must not be supposed, because the doctrine of the Cross makes us sad, that therefore the Gospel is a sad religion. The Psalmist says, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" and our Lord says, "They that mourn shall be comforted." Let no one go away with the impression that the Gospel makes us take a gloomy view of the world and of life. It hinders us indeed from taking a superficial view, and finding a vain transitory joy in what we see; but it forbids our immediate enjoyment, only to grant enjoyment in truth and fullness afterwards. It only forbids us to begin with enjoyment. It only says, If you begin with pleasure, you will end with pain. It bids us begin with the Cross of Christ, and in that Cross we shall at first find sorrow but in a while peace and comfort will rise out of that sorrow.

And thus, too, all that is bright and beautiful, even on the surface of this world... is a promise beforehand of what is to be; it is a shadow, raising hope because the substance is to follow. And it is God's usual mode of dealing with us, in mercy to send the shadow before the substance, that we may take comfort in what is to be, before it comes.

Thus our Lord before His Passion rode into Jerusalem in triumph, with the multitudes crying Hosanna, and strewing His road with palm branches and their garments. This was but a vain and hollow pageant, nor did our Lord take pleasure in it... And we commemorate this figurative triumph on the last Sunday in Lent, to cheer us in the sorrow of the week that follows, and to remind us of the true joy which comes with Easter-Day.

They alone are able to enjoy this world, who begin with the world unseen. They alone enjoy it, who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast, who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world, who have learned not to abuse it; they alone inherit it, who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.

[Source: John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (Ignatius, 1997), 1243-1245.]

- STAND -

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Leader: Let us now together express the Catholic Faith that has been handed down to us from the Apostles.

All: I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Leader: Turning to our loving Father with confidence and faith, we offer Him our petitions in trust:

(The following petitions may be read by the Leader or others.)

For the Catholic Church throughout the world, that she may remain strong and vibrant in meeting the challenges of modern life with the truth of the Gospel. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For world leaders, that they may direct their peoples according to the principles of justice and foster peace between nations. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have abandoned the Christian faith and turned to the works of darkness and evil: may they be given the grace of conversion of heart. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our families, friends, and co-workers: that they may be concerned for the temporal and spiritual needs of those entrusted to their care. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For those whose lives have been destroyed through wars, injustices, human trafficking and violence. May the Lord grant them restoration and peace. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all victims of the Coronavirus throughout the world, and particularly for those who have died from it, that God may console them and their families and bring a swift end to this scourge. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life throughout the world. We pray to the Lord.

(Here the leader may allow anyone to present their individual intentions, if so desired.)

Leader: Heavenly Father, grant us the grace to live according to your holy will and to follow your way of peace. We ask you to hear these and all our prayers, which we make in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Leader: Even when we are unable to receive Christ sacramentally in the Eucharist, we may still receive His grace through an act of Spiritual Communion. The grace of the Eucharist is so powerful and so total that we may receive it simply by asking for it with sincere devotion.

Now, let us take a moment to focus on the words of the Last Supper that we just read in the Passion narrative – “This is my body” and “This is the cup of my blood” – and ask the Lord to unite us to Him through the grace of the Eucharist.

(After a moment of silence, the Leader guides all to kneel and recite together the Spiritual Communion Prayer of St. Gertrude.)

– KNEEL –

All: Oh Christ Jesus, thou faithful and only Trust of my soul, I praise thee, I love thee, I worship and adore thee; and I humbly implore thee, that as thou offered thyself once upon the cross for the sin of the whole world, so thou would now deign to offer thyself to God the Father for my exceeding sins.

O Christ Jesus, my sweetest and my only Love, look with the eyes of thy compassionate mercy on me, a most miserable sinner, here prostrate before thee and imploring with my whole heart the forgiveness of my sins.

O thou princely Flower from the Root of Jesse, by the unutterable love of thy most sweet Heart have mercy on me, and receive me into thy favor, for the glory of thy Name.

O most loving Father, I offer to thee this thy beloved Son as a holocaust of unceasing praise, and as a perpetual sacrifice of propitiation for all our sins. Look, I beseech thee, on the face of thy Christ, and remember that most abundant satisfaction which he made to thee for our sins on the cross, and have mercy on us. Amen.

[**Source:** Paul Jerome Keller, OP, *A Year with the Eucharist: Daily Meditations on the Blessed Sacrament* (St. Benedict Press, 2018), 140.]

– STAND –

CONCLUSION

Leader: We conclude our service now praying as the Lord commanded us to pray:

All: Our Father...

Leader: We pray, almighty God,
that we may always be counted among the members of Christ,
in whose Body and Blood we have communion.
Who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Leader: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

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RECOMMENDED DEVOTION

Pope Francis prayed this Litany of Supplication in his 3/27/20 prayer service in St. Peter's Square in Rome. It is of special comfort during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Leader reads each petition of the Litany, and all respond with the refrains proper to each stanza.

True God and true man, truly present in this holy Sacrament.

Our Savior, God with us, faithful and rich in mercy.

King and Lord of creation and of history.

Conqueror of sin and death.

Friend of mankind, the Risen One, the Living One who sits at the right hand of the Father.

Only begotten Son of the Father, descended from heaven for our salvation.

Heavenly physician, who bows down over our misery.

Lamb who was slain, who offer yourself to rescue us from evil.

Good Shepherd, who give your life for the flock which you love.

Living bread and medicine for immortality, who give us eternal life.

From the power of Satan and the seductions of the world.

From the pride and presumption of being able to do anything without you.

From the deceptions of fear and anxiety.

From unbelief and desperation.

From hardness of heart and the incapacity to love.

From every evil that afflicts humanity.

From hunger, from famine and from egoism.

From illnesses, epidemics and the fear of our brothers and sisters.

From devastating madness, from ruthless interests and from violence.

From being deceived, from false information and the manipulation of consciences.

Protect your Church which crosses the desert.

Protect humanity terrified by fear and anguish.

Protect the sick and the dying, oppressed by loneliness.

Protect doctors and healthcare providers exhausted by the difficulties they are facing.

Protect politicians and decision makers who bear the weight of having to make decisions.

In the hour of trial and from confusion.

In temptation and in our fragility.

In the battle against evil and sin.

In the search for what is truly good and true joy.

in the decision to remain in you and in your friendship.

Should sin oppress us.

Should hatred close our hearts.

Should sorrow visit us.

Should indifference cause us anguish.

Should death overwhelm us.

We adore you, O Lord

We adore you, O Lord

We adore you, O Lord

We adore you, O Lord

We adore you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

We believe in you, O Lord

Deliver us, O Lord

Deliver us, O Lord

Deliver us, O Lord

Deliver us, O Lord

Deliver us, O Lord

Save us, O Lord

Save us, O Lord

Save us, O Lord

Save us, O Lord

Save us, O Lord

Comfort us, O Lord

Comfort us, O Lord

Comfort us, O Lord

Comfort us, O Lord

Comfort us, O Lord

Grant us your Spirit, O Lord

Grant us your Spirit, O Lord

Grant us your Spirit, O Lord

Grant us your Spirit, O Lord

Grant us your Spirit, O Lord

Open us to hope, O Lord

Open us to hope, O Lord

Open us to hope, O Lord

Open us to hope, O Lord

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