

REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS FOR 2025: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NICENE CREED

Material for each day of the Week of Prayer

The texts provided for personal or communal prayer for each of the eight days include two scripture readings and a psalm. The biblical texts for each day highlight in turn, key statements of the Nicene Creed.

Day 1: The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

Day 2: Creation as God's work

Day 3: The Incarnation of the Son

Day 4: The Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Day 5: The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy

Day 6: The Church: Community of believers

Day 7: Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord

Day 8: Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come

Instead of newly written reflections for each day, the scripture texts are followed by short patristic readings from different geographical areas and ecclesial traditions (Greek, Syriac, Armenian and Latin). The aim in selecting these short texts, mostly dating from the first millennium, is to offer an insight into Christian reflection at that time, helping to situate the Council of Nicaea's definitions in both the contexts that gave rise to them and those that were influenced by them. The prayers of intercession and contemplation for each day invite us to actualize the content of the faith shared and celebrated throughout the ages and around.

DAY 1

The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 63:15-17

Psalm 139:1-3, 13, 23, 24b

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

Patristic⁵ Reading

From the Greek tradition

Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will contemplate the bosom of the Father, which the only begotten Son of God has revealed. God himself is love, and through love he is contemplated by us. And while in his ineffable reality he is Father, in his compassion he has become for us mother. **Clement of Alexandria** [c. 150-215], *Which Rich Man Will Be Saved?* 37:1-2

For reflection:

1. How have you experienced God's fatherly care and motherly compassion in your own life?

2. What hinders us from recognizing each person as a child of God?
3. How does acknowledging God as the Father of all affect our perception of and relationship with others?

Prayer

R/ Thanks and praise to you, O Lord

We bless you, O Lord, Father of lights:
from you descend every good thing and every perfect gift. **R/**

You have made the world and all that it contains,
you are the Lord of heaven and earth.
To all mortals you give life and breath and all things. **R/**

You created all the peoples that dwell on the earth.
For them you established the order of time and the boundaries of their space.
In the heart of human beings, you have placed the thought of eternity **R/**

Heavenly Father, according to your great goodness
you grant us a way of life through the Law and the Prophets.
Merciful Father, in Jesus, your Son, you proclaimed the good news of the kingdom. **R/**

God of all consolation,
call us to follow you.
Make firm for us the work of our hands. **R/**

Let us pray.
Father of compassion,
renew our faith in you and bind us together through your love,
so that we can recognise each other as your children,
and come together as one.
We praise you through Jesus Christ, your only begotten Son,
in the communion of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Syriac tradition

What man can contemplate God with vigilant thought, and look upon his majesty, and consider his hidden nature, and can with the eye of his understanding look upon that pure and holy Nature, which has need of nothing? ... He who begs, and entreats, and urges every man to live. He who suffers to give us life, and seeks to find us, and is more pleased at our happiness than we ourselves. He who continually entreats us to take from his riches and to carry off wealth from his storehouse, that we may be rich through his treasures and not poverty-stricken. He who rejoices not so much for his own life as that we live.

- ***Philoxenus of Mabbug*** [c. 440-523], *Discourse 7*

From the Latin tradition

The Fountain of Life is that chief Good, from which the means of life are dispensed to all, while he has life abiding in himself. He receives from none as though he were in need. He confers good on others rather than borrows from others for himself, for he has no need of us ... What then can be more lovely than to approach him, to cleave to him? What pleasure can be greater? He who has seen and tasted freely of the Fountain of Living Water, what else can he desire?

DAY 2

Creation as God's work

Scripture Readings

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 148:1, 3, 9-14

Romans 8:19-23

Patristic Reading

From the Greek tradition

God cannot be seen by human eyes but is seen and perceived through his providence and works. Just as one who sees a fully equipped ship entering port assumes that it has a pilot to guide it, so we must perceive that God is the pilot of the entire universe, even though he is not visible to the eyes of the flesh because he is incomprehensible.

- *Theophilus of Antioch* [2nd century], *Ad Autolycus*, I:5

For reflection:

1. We believe that God is present in all of creation although his presence is sometimes difficult to perceive.
2. Creation is a gift of God subjected to suffering, often inflicted by human beings. How can we better recognize our responsibility for its care and preservation?
3. If possible, spend some time in nature and contemplate how it connects us with the Creator.

Prayer

R/ Blessed are you, O Lord!

We praise you and give you thanks,
God of steadfast love
for the great signs of your favor
and your mercy for the whole creation. **R/**

You have made all things.
You declared them to be good,
for your Spirit dwells in them all
and they belong to you, O Lord, who love the living. **R/**

We confess, O Lord, your glory
in the immense starry spaces of the universe and in the smallest seed of life.
We give thanks for the works of your hands
and the creation of all people. **R/**

Blessed are you for the air that gives us life.
Blessed are you for the earth that nourishes us.
Blessed are you for the water that quenches our thirst.
Blessed are you for the fire that warms us. **R/**

Giving voice to the whole creation and gathering together every grief and joy,
we glorify you and give you thanks.
Lord God, you made all things,
and will soon transfigure them, clothing them with your glory. **R/**

Let us pray.
Lord God, Father of lights,
strengthen our hearts in expectation and hope
as we work for unity and together seek the harmony of all creation.
Let us be burning lamps,
until the day of the coming of your Son in glory,
with all his saints in the everlasting kingdom.
Blessed are you, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Syriac tradition

The first book given by God to rational beings is the nature of created things. Instructions by means of ink was added after the transgression.

- *Isaac of Nineveh* [7th century], *First Collection*, 5

From the Latin tradition

For all things were made out of nothing, and their being would again sink into nothing, if the Author of all things did not hold it by the hand of governance.

- *Gregory the Great* [c. 540-604], *Moralia in Job*, XVI:37, 45

DAY 3

The Incarnation of the Son

Scripture Readings

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm 72:7, 12, 16-17

John 1:1-14

Patristic Reading

From the Armenian tradition

He took upon himself all human passions, excluding sin. That is: he hungered who gives food to all the living. He thirsted who gives the water of life to his believers. He felt weariness who is the rest of the weary. He slept who always kept Israel vigilant. He wept who wiped away every tear from all eyes ... He took on our passible body, so that he who is impassible might suffer with the passible body and he who is immortal might die with the mortal body, to free us who are guilty.

- *Gregory of Skevra* [12th/13th centuries], *On True Faith and Pure Conduct in the Virtues*, 15-17

For reflection:

1. How does faith in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, inspire and shape our lives?
2. How have you experienced Christ's consoling presence in your life?
3. Wherever we see someone who is thirsty, hungry, weeping or suffering, Christ is present.

Prayer

R/ Glory to you, O Christ. Glory to you!

Word of God, you became flesh, and came to dwell among us.
You have shared our life in all things;
you died as we all die. **R/**

Son of David, desired by the righteous and the prophets,
you have proclaimed the good news to the poor;
you have proclaimed the Lord's time of favour. **R/**

You came to break the chains of bondage;
you went about doing good;
you have opened the way to the presence of God for all. **R/**

You came into the world in weakness and poverty;
you have confounded the proud with your humility;
you have drawn the weary and overburdened to you. **R/**

You are the Lamb of God and our Shepherd,
the Servant of God and our Lord:
you were made sin for us, our Redeemer. **R/**

Let us pray:
Lord God, our Father
draw our eyes to you
so that together we may walk
from darkness to the light of your face,
revealed to us in Jesus,
your Son and our brother,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit
now and for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Syriac tradition

Now that the highest and lowest creatures have become one, there is no longer high and low. God has even appeared on earth and our [human] nature has ascended to heaven. When God came down to us, the earth became heaven, and when the Son of our kind was raised up, heaven became earth. Then heaven and earth became one.

- *Abdisho bar Bahriz* [9th century], *Commentary on the Celebrations of the Church*, p. 58

From the Greek tradition

This is the grace of the Lord, and these are the Lord's means of restoration for the sons of men. For he suffered to prepare freedom from suffering for those who suffer in him. He descended, so that he might raise us up. He experienced being conceived, so that we would love who is not generated. He went down to corruption, so that corruption might put on immortality. He became weak for us, so that we might rise with power. He descended to death, so that he might bestow on us immortality and give life to the dead. Finally, he became human, so that we who die as human beings might live again, and death should no more reign over us.

- *Athanasius of Alexandria* [c. 295-373], *Festal Letters*, 10:8, 19

DAY 4

The Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Scripture Readings

Exodus 3: 7-8

Psalm 16:5, 7, 10, 11

Philippians 2:5-11

Patristic Reading

From the Latin tradition

God the Father was very merciful: he sent his creative Word who, in coming to deliver us, came to the very place and spot in which we had lost life, and broke the bonds of our fetters. His light appeared and made the darkness of the prison disappear and hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained.

- *Irenaeus of Lyon* [c. 135-198], *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 38

For reflection:

1. We know that we will all die. How does belief in Jesus destroying death change the way we approach this reality?
2. “God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
3. As the Risen One, Jesus is with us until the end of all time. In what ways does his companionship encourage you in your daily life?

Prayer

R/ **Glory and praise to you, O Lord**

Blessed are you, O Christ, Firstborn of all creation:
you are crowned with glory and honour. **R/**

At your Name every knee will bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth
and every tongue will confess that you are the Lord. **R/**

Let us rejoice and sing praises to you, O Christ, beloved Son of the Father:
you are the Risen One, you call us to live in you. **R/**

We adore you, we glorify you, for you are King of kings and Lord of lords:
you have opened to us the kingdom of heaven. **R/**

We give you thanks at all times and we bless your Name:
you are with us always, to the end of the age. **R/**

Let us pray
Lord our God,

glorifying your Son Jesus, you have freed us from death.
Through his resurrection,
awaken our slumbering hearts,
enlighten all who seek you
and make the morning star shine upon us,
Jesus Christ, the Living One,
who is Lord for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Greek tradition

The Saviour came down to earth out of mercy for mankind. He fully suffered our passions, before he suffered the cross and deigned to take on our flesh. For if he had not suffered, he would not have come to dwell in the midst of human life. First he suffered, then he descended and was seen. What is that passion which he suffered for us? The passion of charity.

- *Origen of Alexandria* [c. 185-254], *Homilies on Ezekiel*, 6:6

From the Syriac tradition

The body thanks you, that it was saved by your humiliation.
It was a strayed sheep, and the lion lay in ambush to dismember it,
and sin in secret is the beast that tears it into pieces.
David preserved himself while he saved the sheep,
instead of our body you delivered your body
to that death that devoured us but was not sated.

- *Ephrem of Nisibis* [c. 306-373], *Hymn on Virginity*, 37:5

DAY 5

The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy

Scripture Readings

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Psalm 104:24-25, 27-29, 33-34

John 3:4-8

Patristic Reading

From the Syriac tradition

It is not correct to say that the Spirit departs when we sin to return when we are converted ... What good is it for me if he dwells in me after I have become righteous? If at the time of the fall he does not dwell in me, does not give me a hand, and does not raise me up, how will I feel his help? What physician, when he sees a sick person who falls sick, leaves and abandons him, to come to him when he becomes healthy? Is it not more useful that the physician be with the sick person at the time of his illness?

- *Philoxenus of Mabbug* [c. 440-523], *On the Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit*

For reflection:

1. God's Spirit renews the face of the earth every day, calling us to cooperation.
2. What are the sources of joy in your life and how are they related to the Holy Spirit?
3. Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work, overcoming our divisions and drawing us into deeper unity, and how can we join in this work?

Prayer

R/ Amen, amen! Alleluia!

You are the Spirit breathed upon the face of Adam:
making human flesh a living being. **R/**

You are the Spirit given by the Risen One:
our sins have been forgiven. **R/**

You are the Spirit sent at Pentecost:
you opened the way for the Gospel to reach all people. **R/**

You are the Spirit that awakens our prayer:
we are held in God's love. **R/**

You are the Spirit of God poured out upon the dead:
the graves will be opened, and the dead will rise **R/**

Let us pray:
God our Father,
you have revealed to us the wondrous mystery of your life,
sending your Son into the world
and sharing with us your Spirit of holiness and joy.
Let us rejoice in the Spirit,
who renews the face of the earth and draws us towards unity.
We confess our faith in you,
the One God, three times Holy:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed are you, now and for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Greek tradition

This is my God, the Lord of all, who alone stretched out the heavens and established the breadth of the earth under it, ... who founded the earth upon the waters and gave a spirit to nourish it; whose breath gives light to the whole, who, if he withdrew his breath, the whole would utterly fail. By him you speak, O man. His breath you breathe yet him you know not.

- *Theophilus of Antioch* [2nd century], *Ad Autolycus*, I:7

From the Latin tradition

“Your heavenly Father will give the good Spirit to those who ask him.” This is the Spirit by virtue of whom is poured out in our hearts the love with which we observe the divine commandments, by loving God and neighbour. This is the Spirit by virtue of whom we cry out: “Abba, Father”. It is therefore the Spirit who gives us the capacity to ask, and it is the same Spirit whom we desire to receive. It is he who makes us seek, and it is he whom we desire to find.

- *Augustine of Hippo* [354-430], *Exposition on Psalm 118*, 14:2

DAY 6

The Church: Community of Believers

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 2:2-4

Psalm 133

Ephesians 4:1-6

Patristic Reading

From the Latin tradition

The church is one, spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun but one light, and many branches of a tree but one strength based in its tenacious root ... in the same manner the church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body fractured. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world.

- *Cyprian of Carthage* [c. 210-258], *On the Unity of the Church*, 5

For reflection:

1. The Church is called to shed forth the light of Christ over the world. Where do you perceive this reality in your own context?
2. Even though in Christ the Church is one body, historically the churches are divided. How have you experienced the pain of this division?
3. The Church as the community of the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, is sent to live and spread the message of peace in the world. In what ways might churches enable their members to fulfil this calling?

Prayer

R/ O Lord, hear our prayer!

At the empty tomb, you entrusted the news of your resurrection to the women:
deliver all messengers of the Gospel from fear. **R/**

On the road to Emmaus, you explained the law and the prophets to the disciples:
open our minds to understand the Scriptures. **R/**

In the upper room, you gave your friends the gift of your peace:
help us to keep this peace by our mutual love. **R/**

On the lakeshore, you appointed Peter as shepherd of your flock:
uphold with your Spirit the leaders of our communities. **R/**

On the mountain, you gathered the dispersed disciples before you returned to the Father:
give unity in faith and charity to those who believe in you. **R/**

Let us pray.

God of heaven and earth,

your Son Jesus Christ has revealed you as our Father

and promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit:
grant to your Church to overcome the scandal of our divisions,
so that we may bear witness to your life of communion,
in the unity of our profession of faith
and in the love of mutual service.
Through Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Armenian tradition

Holy fathers and teachers of truth! Leaders and pastors of the Christ's flock! You who preside over and administer the house of God! Today I see you gathered in one spirit and in one body, in adherence to him who is the head of all. Who has brought you to this tranquil harbour of peace, O peacemakers of the world, if not the Holy Spirit who has been given to us from heaven as our peace? And for what purpose, if not to begin the building of the temple of God demolished and destroyed, which the author of evil threw down?

- **Nerses of Lambron** [1152-1198], *Synodal Discourse*

From the Greek tradition

Being many and countless, men, women, children, various and profoundly different in origin and appearance, nation and language, way of life and age, knowledge and arts, manner of life, customs and propensities, sciences and honours, fate, temperaments and habits, all are in the [church], through which all are regenerated and recreated in the Spirit. To all equally she gives and imparts the same divine form and denomination, to be in Christ and bear his name and to have the same relation, simple, undivided and indivisible, in the faith, that no longer allows to recognise even the existence of the many and inexpressible differences present among them, because all universally refer to and meet in the [church].

- **Maximus the Confessor** [c. 580-662], *Mystagogy*, 1

DAY 7

Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord

Scripture Readings

Micah 7:18-19

Psalms 51:1, 7, 10, 12

Matthew 28:16-20

Patristic Readings

From the Greek tradition

Such is the power of faith in Christ, such the excess of his grace: As the element of fire, when it meets with ore from the mine, straightway of earth makes it gold, even so and much more baptism makes those who are washed to be of gold instead of clay. The Spirit at that time falling like fire into our souls, burning up the "image of the earthy", and producing "the image of the heavenly," fresh coined, bright and glittering, as from the furnace-mould.

- **John Chrysostom** [c. 350-407], *Homily on the Gospel of John*, X:2

For reflection:

1. Christians are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. What does your baptism mean to you today?

2. Sin disfigures us in various ways. Through baptism, God liberates us from this humiliation.
3. In spite of different church traditions and practices, how does confessing “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) affect our relationships with other Christians?

Prayer

R/ We thank you, O Lord, and bless your name!

For having called us to faith in baptism,
for the communion we share in the New Covenant,
for your presence in the holy Church. **R/**

For the witness of persecuted Christians,
for the suffering of their martyrdom,
for their participation in Christ's passion. **R/**

For all servants of communion,
for those who pray and work for the reconciliation of churches,
for those who offer their lives for unity. **R/**

Let us pray.

God our Father, we praise you and bless your name.

Accept our thanksgiving for the unity Christians already enjoy
in the confession of Jesus the Lord.

Hasten the day, we beg you, of the full mutual recognition of our churches
in the communion that you desire, and for which your Son prayed.

We ask this in the power of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Syriac tradition

The Son of God descended from heaven, became man
and from the abyss raised you, so that you would become a son for God.

He became your brother in the womb full of holiness
and made you his brother in the womb of baptism. ...

A son for God he made you, with him, in the water
so that he who is the Only Begotten acquires brothers through the second birth.

For he himself by a second birth became man,
by that second generation he made you a son for God.

- *Jacob of Sarug* [c. 451-521], *Discourse 10*

From the Latin tradition

Man, you dared not lift up your face towards heaven, you turned your eyes towards the earth, and suddenly you received the grace of Christ ... Lift up, therefore, your eyes to the Father, who has begotten you through baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through the Son, and say, “Our Father!”

- *Ambrose of Milan* [c. 337-397], *The Sacraments*, V:19

DAY 8

Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come

Scripture Readings

Revelation 21:1-4
Psalm 85:8, 10-12
Luke 12:35-40

Patristic Reading

From the Syriac tradition

Whoever lives in love in this creation breathes the life coming from God. While yet in this world, he breathes the air of rebirth. In this air the righteous will delight at resurrection. Love is the kingdom whereof our Lord mystically promised the disciples that they would eat in his kingdom: "You shall eat and drink at the table of my kingdom." What should they eat, if not love? Love is sufficient to nourish a man instead of food and drink. This is the wine that gladdens the heart of man. Blessed is he who drinks of this wine!

- *Isaac of Nineveh* [7th century], *First Collection*, 43

For reflection:

1. Love will be the reality of the Kingdom of God. Concrete actions of charity make this Kingdom present in our lives.
2. Living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, how do we embody signs of the coming Kingdom in the world today?
3. We are called to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves for it?

Prayer

R/ Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

O Christ the Lord, who for our sakes became poor
and who promise that the poor will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven,
you fill us with your riches. **R/**

O Lord Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
who reveal a new world to those who trust in you,
you give us your fullness. **R/**

O Christ the Lord, who knelt and prayed with your face to the ground,
you who in sadness traced a way of consolation,
you are the joy that nothing and no one can take away from us. **R/**

O Lord Jesus, who cast down rulers and powers
and who clothe peacemakers with a glorious robe,
you transform us into your image. **R/**

O Christ the Lord, merciful and compassionate
who on the Cross forgave the thief who died with you,

we beseech you: Remember us when you come into your kingdom. **R/**

Let us pray.

O Lord, hasten the coming of your great and glorious day!

In our darkness, many men and women no longer dare to hope.

Protect the flame of faith in the hearts of the weak and the suffering.

May the Church be a faithful herald of the victory of Christ your Son over death

and a beacon of expectation for his return in glory.

He is the Living One, with you and with the Holy Spirit.

now and forever and ever. **AMEN.**

Alternative Patristic Readings

From the Greek tradition

You, O Lord, have freed us from the fear of death. You have made the end of this life the beginning for us of true life. You, for a season, let our bodies rest in sleep and awake them again at the last trumpet. You give our earth, which you have fashioned with your hands, to the earth to keep in safety. One day you will take back what you gave, transfiguring with immortality and grace our mortal and unsightly remains ... You showed us the way of resurrection, having broken the gates of hell, and brought to nought him who had the power of death.

- **Gregory of Nyssa** [c. 335-395], *Life of St Macrina*, 24

From the Latin tradition

By hope God breastfeeds us, nourishes us, strengthens us, and give us consolation in this life of toil. In this hope we sing “alleluia”. Just look what joy there is in hope! What can the reality be? You ask: “What can it be?” Listen to what is said: “They shall get drunk on the plenteousness of your house.” That is the reality that hope is about. We are thirsty. We are hungry. It must be that we shall be satisfied. Hunger while on the road, satisfaction when we come home. When shall we be satisfied? “I shall be satisfied when your glory is revealed.” ... Then it will be “alleluia” in reality, while now it is just in hope.

- **Augustine of Hippo** [354-430], *Sermons*, 255:5

