

The word of the Bishop

A time to live together sitting around the table of the house, is an invitation that I would address to each family, a time of prayer, in the most appropriate time of the day. I like to think that especially at dinner we can find space for prayer.

Yes, In Lent, the prayer, especially when lived together, becomes a sign that expresses tension and produces hope to find in God the faith and the strength for our choices. There are words that seem boulders yet they find space in prayer: sobriety, silence, contemplation, choices...

There is something that really requires us to put ourselves in the game, large and small; something that appeals to our responsibility and makes the family to be a sign. I would like then that the community table, the altar, may become really a goal to reach every Sunday. To be together, to be a church, to learn to live the Eucharist.

On my part, wherever I will celebrate in these Sundays, I will think of your family and the great family of the Diocese. The Eucharist is for all, with the heart leaned on Jesus who has made his life the first and the only Eucharist.

Happy Lent.

+ Francisco, vescovo

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKLET

The booklet that is in your hands aims to help you, your family and your Christian community to journey in this penitential season of Lent to reach the joy of Easter.

It will be a daily table, but never boring table, to gather the family for prayer, reflection, dialogue and, also make some simple gestures.

This booklet and the small table-cloth which is made of paper given along with the light, will be a simple tool to help us on this journey.

By learning more and more to gather around the table every day, we will experience the beauty of the gift of the great family of the Church, which meets every Sunday around the Eucharistic meal.

The journey of Lent, then, as usual for the Diocese of Bergamo, is a time to care for the mission of Bolivia, Ivory Coast and that of Cuba that will find its concreteness in small and large choices of solidarity of individuals, families and the diocesan Church.

This booklet has as its base the Word of God of Sundays and in the Pastoral Letter of the Bishop "*Women and men capable of the Eucharist.*"

The essentiality of the time of Lent asks us to find a place, possibly in the kitchen, or on the table, where the Word of God can find a place.

THE PROPOSAL OF PRAYER

The pattern of prayer in the family is simplified and is placed at the center of the table. Here we are in three points the new proposal:

- 1.** a daily prayer of blessing the food, is different for each week but the same for the children. The daily meal, either lunch or dinner, becomes an occasion of prayer for adults and also for the little ones (see page 6 and 7).
- 2.** a more substantial prayer on Sunday which introducing the journey of the week, gives the flavor. On this day, instead of the simple common prayer of blessing for the children, you can use the one proposed by this booklet.
- 3.** a significant moment of prayer proposed for Friday, but each one can freely use it on any day during the week at their convenience. This particular day is enhanced by the suggestion of a witness of life and a simple gesture to be made in the family. Also on this day, instead of the simple prayer of blessing common to that of the children, you can use the one proposed by this booklet.

BREAKING AND SHARING THE BREAD OF SOLIDARITY

Sharing a daily meal: CUBA

The expression and the attention that we pay for the smallest will reach down to the Caribbean Sea, to the island of Cuba and the communities of the Diocese of Guantanamo-Baracoa where the priests of Bergamo are rendering their missionary services.

The desire is that this call of attention and solidarity will be accepted and lived in the families of the parish community.

The need is simple and immediate: to support the purchase of food to be able to contribute something for the family who, very often, cannot provide for themselves due to the precarious economic situation. The help that we can offer, even though it may seem little, often becomes existential, perhaps the only meal of the day. To us it remains the joy of a simple gesture, but it gives a lot, and the invitation to treasure what we have, without wasting or complaining because we want more. Let us learn how to give the right value to things and sharing can only make us better. To this concrete gesture we add the proximity in prayer for the young churches in the world.

Breaking of bread in the Christian community: IVORY COAST

The villagers of Agninikro, in Ivory Coast, have asked the Bishop Francis to help them build their church. A home for all in the midst of their houses: this is their dream.

We can help this village and many others to realize the dream. To celebrate the Eucharist, recognize themselves in a supportive community, bringing together the community in the important moments marked by the birth and death, accompany the human and Christian growth of the many children and young people, keep a place of silence and sharing all this and still more is, to permit us live a simple church in the center of the village.

We want to help them build the structure together and support parish activities that focus on the proclamation of the Gospel and offer hope even in a context of poverty and precariousness as that of the African village.

And the community will have the joy of finding itself and also in meeting with our families, in the sharing of faith, beyond the geographical distance, in the great experience of the universal church.



Share the hardships of the poor: BOLIVIA

Entering discreetly in diocesan missions for over 50 years in Bolivia, we acknowledge the activities, the determination and passion that every missionary of Bergamo live daily in close contact with the people and the institutions. They continue the paths of formation, catechesis, celebrations in the city and the field. The closeness to the least, the ones that no one sees is never lacking.

In Tarija a home for "stragglers" in Munaypata meals for children, in Condebamba after school activities, in Santa Cruz attention to young people in prison, in El Alto's presence beside the disabled and the



sick, in Chapare the school and many other small attentions. All of these signs are sustained by the great charity of our parishes. And even if we ourselves live today the experience of an economic crisis that asks a lot to give up something, certainly will not be less task of families in accompanying these signs of providence that help to carry with more force the burden of poverty.

BLESSINGS OF MEAL

Here are the daily prayers for the blessing of the meal. During weekdays it will be the commitment of family prayer. The meal of every day, lunch or dinner as it is, becomes an occasion of prayer for adults and for children.

BEGINNING OF LENT: FROM 18 TO 21 FEBRUARY

Here you are, Lord, in my life.
You with me, on the way, in every moment of our day.
Here we are, Lord, teach us the joy of giving to our brothers,
with an open heart and an outstretched hand, with generosity and altruism. **AMEN.**

FIRST WEEK: FROM 22 TO 28 FEBRUARY

Here you are, Lord, in my life:
in me, in the people you place near me, in the food you give me.
In everything you have made available to us so that we may lack nothing.
Here we are, Lord: so many things we have in our hands
and many fill our lives.
May we know how to say thanks so as not to spoil what we have received. **AMEN.**

SECOND WEEK: FROM 1 TO 7 MARCH

Here you are, Lord, in my life: in the good words, in the fraternal gestures.
Here we are, Lord again speak to our hearts,
as you did with your disciples on Mount Tabor,
so we may understand how beautiful it is to be your friends.
Teach us to look for you every day, for You nourish our lives. **AMEN.**

THIRD WEEK: FROM 8 TO MARCH 14

Here you are, Lord, in my life: in everyday activities such as prayer.
Here we are, Lord, we want to learn from you
to share with the poor what we have, the bread and friendship, time and all the good things.
Help us not to be selfish, thinking only of ourselves. **AMEN.**

FOURTH WEEK: FROM 15 AND 21 MARCH

Here you are, Lord, in my life: the feelings I have,
in the emotions I experience, and in the relationships that I build.
Here we are, Lord, we need not be left alone,
we want to be in the light like Nicodemus to be able to see your love for us
and in the others the face of a brother. **AMEN.**

FIFTH WEEK: FROM 22 TO 28 MARCH

Here you are, Lord, in my life: you have become true food for us.
Here we are, Lord, we are often unable to understand
how great is your love for us.
Like the grain of wheat that falls into the earth, you make us the gift of your own life
and become for us the bread that nourishes the way.
Thank you for the gift of the Mass that fills my heart with joy. **AMEN.**

HOLY WEEK: FROM 29 MARCH TO APRIL 1

Here you are, Lord, in my life, at the beginning of Holy Week.
Here we are, Lord: today you enter Jerusalem, and many welcome you with joy,
spreading their cloaks, with palm branches in their hands.
Also we would like to celebrate with you and for you, sitting at your table. **AMEN.**

HOLY THURSDAY

Here you are, Lord, in my life:
You are the Lord and Master who gives us the Eucharist and wash the feet of your disciples.
Here we are, Lord, to us, your guests, you left your legacy, all that you have.
We want to follow you in this hour, for you it is very important.
Teach us to be always faithful. **AMEN.**

GOOD FRIDAY - HOLY SATURDAY

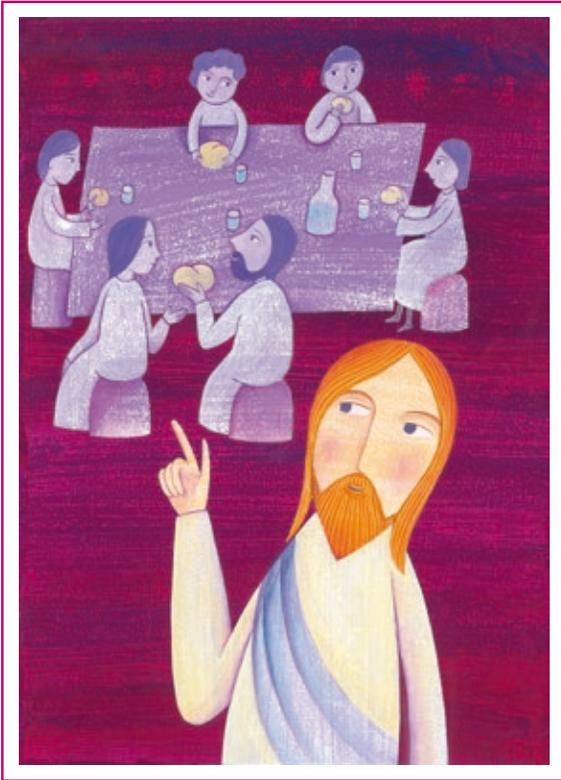
Here you are, Lord, in my life, even when I suffer,
I stand in silence and pain.
Here we are, Lord: we are before the cross and our eyes,
like those of Mary and John, look at you.
Your Spirit comforts me and gives me the strength to follow you.
Thanks for your immense love: you have given your life for us. **AMEN.**

EASTER OF RESURRECTION

Here you are, Lord, in my life: you are Risen and you will be with us forever.
Here we are, Lord, called by name, such as Mary Magdalene,
we will meet you on our street, sitting at our table,
ready as always to love us and support us.
Lord, you are the precious treasure of our lives. **AMEN.**

EVERY BLESSING OF MENSA CAN CONCLUDE WITH THIS FORMULA:

Bless us Lord and the food that we are about to take.
We thank you for those who have it prepared, may we always use it for your good.
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

Today Jesus directs to us to the precious words that help us to live as brothers the Lenten season, right time to "return to the Lord with all the heart" (Joel 2:12). They resound in today's liturgy: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. They are the rules of the table that is depicted behind Jesus. It is a sober and essential feast that nurtures the disciples. Those who are seated there share the bread with their guests and no one takes more than they need, so that no one lacks. Lent is a time to rediscover the joy of sitting at the table of life, the Eucharist celebrated with the brothers and sisters, the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A TABLE TO BEGIN

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW (6,1-6.16-18)

When you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration (...). And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them (...). And when you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting.

Here we are at the beginning of a new Lent. We face a challenging and beautiful time! It is Challenging because we are asked to be united in our lives returning to the essentials, to our most authentic desires, to our deeper faith. Beautiful because this journey is not lonely, but lived in fraternity: the fraternity of our house and the fraternity of our community.

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

In your hands Jesus
 we put the beginning of this Lenten journey.
 Give us the joy of walking together,
 the strength of courageous decisions,
 the serenity to leave ourselves to be sustained by your merciful embrace,
 the ability to recognize our fragility
 and finally give us the desire to sit around one table each Sunday
 to experience the taste of breaking bread together.

OUR FATHER

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

From the 18th to 21st February you can bless the table with the prayer that is found at page 6



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

In the desert, dark and bleak, Jesus raises his eyes trustingly to heaven, certain that the Father will not let him miss anything he needs. From confident gesture of his outstretched hand and his serene gaze shines through all his trust in the Father. Only those who have a heart capable of trust renounce to the superfluous, live in the sobriety and deal with determination the trials of life. Those who rely on the goodness of God "and his love, which is always" (Ps 24) know that even the greatest darkness will be illuminated by his love and traversed by the angels, messengers of the tenderness of the Father, who takes care of his children even in times of trial, of loneliness and of difficulty.

A TABLE FOR ABSTEMIOUSNESS

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (1,12-15)

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

Sobriety or simplicity does not make us lack what we need, because the gifts of the Lords are always plentiful even on our table. On the contrary, sobriety makes us more comfortable.

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Jesus, let's begin the journey of Lent along with you in the desert.

Here we remember dimension of sobriety, the need to get rid of a little superfluous, to be more simple and essential and give more space to you, to your Word.

Help us, Jesus, to enjoy more your presence among us!

OUR FATHER

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

From the 22nd to 28th February you can bless the table with the prayer that is found at page 6

A TABLE FOR ABSTEMIOUSNESS

On the set table is found the Word of God with a jug or bottle of water.

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

AMEN.

REFLECTION ACCOMPANIES US

In the fatigue of the family budget, learning to choose together, we have discovered the treasure of believing in God, in him, each one **lacks nothing**.

TESTIMONY SUPPORTS US

We have decided together, as a family, to control our expenses. At the beginning the need took the body to the fatigue of the crisis, for the salary increasingly insufficient to a certain lifestyle, but then we realized that we were happy. No heroic gesture, but we realized what is really necessary, of all the needless that time and heart stole from us.

Now the thing works, dialogue with our children works, the shared choice of fun and commitment, the shopping of which we all feel responsible.

Sobriety that we have met almost by accident has opened our eyes to the world and we have realized that the poor close to us are really there.



GESTURE MOVES US

A person of the family pours water into the glass of each guest: sobriety is taking care of others in the most ordinary events of life.

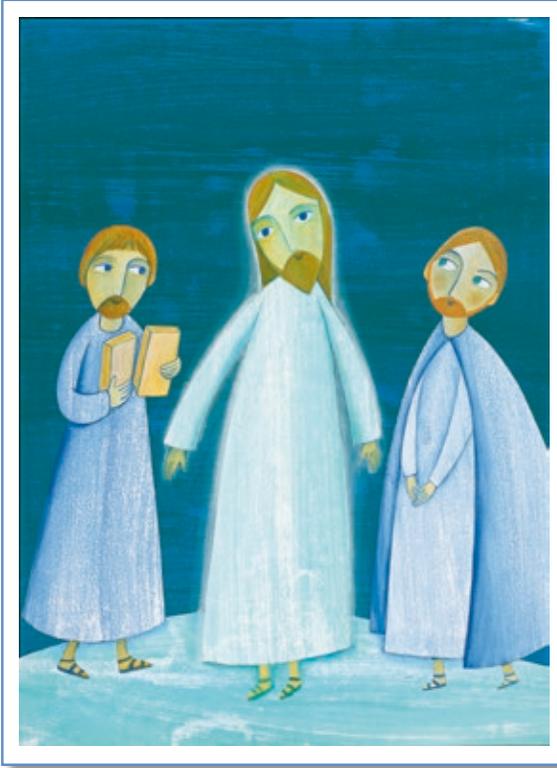
PRAYER NOURISHES US

Lord we possess many things,
teach us to use them for our good and for others.
Lord we claim more and more,
teach us to be happy with ourselves.
Lord we are never satisfied,
let us understand that You are our only asset.

OUR FATHER

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

AMEN.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

Jesus converses serenely with Elijah and Moses. There is an air of the house on their faces, as when conversing sitting around the table and in addition to the food sharing words and thoughts. Also for us, every Sunday, Jesus sets a table to feed us of himself and his words. We too are given to contemplate the face of Jesus in the community of brothers and sisters that celebrate. The robes of Jesus are shining; his bright and radiant face as the sun in the summer. A light is more powerful will dispel the darkness of death of the tomb to announce the victory of the Risen Lord over sin and over death.

A TABLE TO CONTEMPLATE

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (9,2-10)

Peter spoke to Jesus: ‘Rabbi,’ he said ‘it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.’

Look at the face of Jesus, let us contemplate him like Peter, James and John, he fills us with wonder and joy and makes us rediscover the many faces of our brothers..

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Lord,
 as your disciples we want to learn to amaze ourselves of You,
 to feel the sweetness of being with you!
 Come and meet us
 with your loving gaze full of love
 and teach us also
 to look with tenderness
 people who are close to us.

OUR FATHER

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

From the 1st to the 7th March you can bless the table with the prayer that is found at page 6.

A TABLE TO CONTEMPLATE

On the set table is found the Word of God with a flower.

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

AMEN.

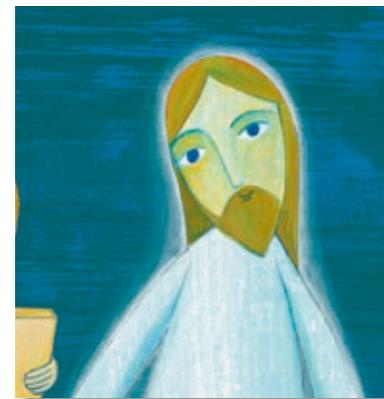
REFLECTION ACCOMPANIES US

How many troubles, how difficult,
as if time no longer belonged to us,
let us repeat in the heart **the Lord is my shepherd**,
to rediscover the joy of the house.

TESTIMONY SUPPORTS US

How hurry from morning to night. Tasks, appointments,
even the sport has become an obligation, and then the
house; the time is not there anymore. Sunday itself, with a
piece of time for Mass sometimes is burnt by the spending
of the week.

We suffer our children, nonetheless our meeting of couple.
That's why we have decided to dedicate a bit of time. After
dinner, we turn off the TV and we listen. Anthony tells
anxiously his school performance, Matilda, a teenager at
home, we are able to snatch some confidence and mummy
updates us on the rest of the relatives and then, gradually, it
turns to other topics. Even prayer finds space in this
moment and it helps us to recover the look in the eyes.



GESTURE MOVES US

*The flower is passed from hand to hand: it is the joy of those
who contemplate the face of a friend, the face of Jesus.*

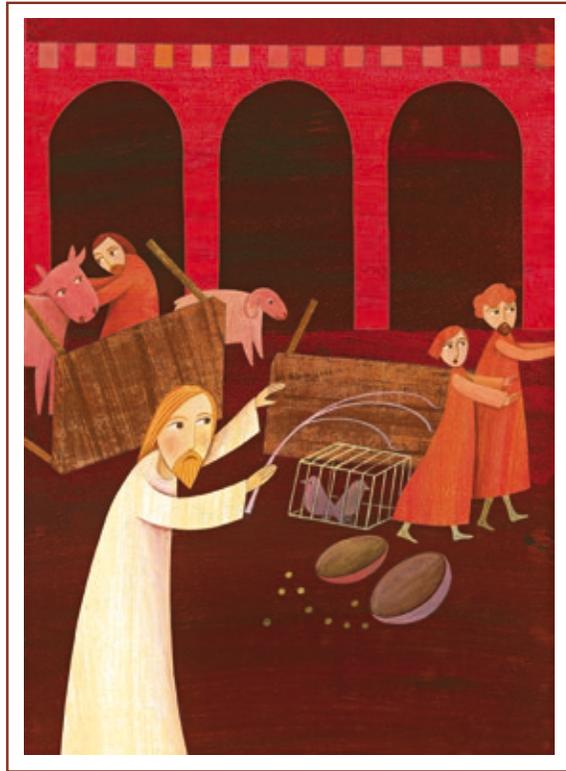
PRAYER NOURISHES US

Lord we are happy to be here,
around the table of our family.
Lord we want to see your face on the face
of our family and friends,
give us the experience of true friendship.
Lord we know that you are in our midst,
**as the shepherd who does leave his flock
in need of anything.**

OUR FATHER

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

AMEN.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

Under the portico of the temple there is a big confusion: tables overturned and coins scattered on the floor, men and beasts flee awed by flicks that Jesus lashes in the air. We can imagine what Jesus found himself before the eyes to his entry in the temple: merchants, money-changers, oxen have turned God's house into a market, instead of a place of intimacy and prayer, of gratuitousness and fraternity, where men get together to lift up their prayers to the Father who dwells in their hearts. Lent is a time to rediscover the joy of free sharing and being faithful to the teaching of Jesus: *"freely you have received, freely you shall give"* (Matthew 10:8).

A TABLE TO SHARE

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (2,13-15)

Jesus found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, "Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market."

Give so as to have: we all do like this and often also with God. Jesus does not want a relationship with him and with our brothers to function like this, but wants to convert our hearts to gratitude.

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Jesus,
reproach us for every time that we do something
so to receive in return.
This is not the logic of your Love!
Teach us to be free,
to give without expecting anything in return,
to share what we have.
So then we discover your joy, the real one!

OUR FATHER

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

*From 8 to 14 March you can bless the table
with the prayer that you find on page 6.*

A TABLE TO SHARE

On the set table the Word of God finds a place with a loaf of bread beside it.

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

AMEN.

REFLECTION ACCOMPANIES US

The table of our house is a gift of grace:
before me you prepare a meal!
And we learn to share bread and life,
to be a family capable of the Eucharist.

TESTIMONY SUPPORTS US

We are a “fine” family. There are preoccupations but in all of these we can do with dignity and make both ends meet, so we can also have time for relaxation. With our children and a group of friend couples since then have decided that to stay alone is not good.

From here was born a journey of faith and charity, more on the daily: help caring of the children, support in times of illness, in the common daily expenses and together we share in prayer one evening of the week. All this has opened our hearts while we were running the risk of becoming more closed and bent on ourselves.

We are aware of the poor, because we ourselves feel this way, needy for the good of others.



GESTURE MOVES US

Bread, broken by Dad or by Mum will be distributed to all and be eaten: it is the sign of sharing.

PRAYER NOURISHES US

Lord the same bread is food for each of us,
it makes us really brothers.

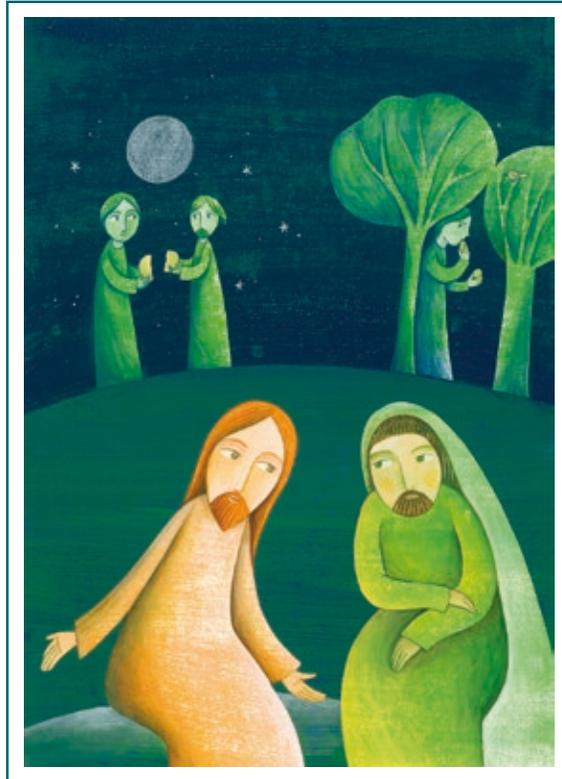
Lord, many people in the world don't have enough bread,
teach us not to waste it and to share with others what we have.

Lord you are the one who provide us and to your creatures the daily bread,
grant that we may always know to say thank you.

OUR FATHER

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

AMEN.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

The Gospel of Jesus is the light that illuminates the deepest darkness. The words of the Teacher illuminate the questions and doubts of Nicodemus, who listens to the absorbed words of life: "he who does the truth comes from the light" (Jn. 3:20). Night light is, in fact, that fraternal sharing that lights the two men who break bread together. They are companions, men who put together the bread. In the night embroidered with stars, the broken bread shines like a torch that disperses the darkness and warms the heart. Dark counterpoints from the man who only eats ravenously two loaves. The bread of egoism, consumed in a hurry and secretly, does not illuminate and warm the hearts.

A TABLE FLOODED WITH LIGHT

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (3,14-21)

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "The light has come into the world, but men have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God."

In the dark we hide, but we stumble and fall; in the light we see clearly ourselves and others. Jesus brings light; He himself is light for all mankind.

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

What a beautiful light!
 We understand when it is missing
 and in the dark we can't see
 and fear assails us

You, O Lord, give us the light of the heart
 that makes us distinguish the good.
 Help us not to put it off
 but to make it shine to light up our lives and those of the others!

OUR FATHER

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

*From 15 to 21 March you can bless the table
 with the prayer you will find on page 6.*

A TABLE FLOODED WITH LIGHT

On the set table the Word of God finds a place with a lighted candle beside it.

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

AMEN.

REFLECTION ACCOMPANIES US

I will dwell in the House of the Lord,

to feel always the joy of His presence.

And with me is my family,

grateful for the immense gift of faith.

TESTIMONY SUPPORTS US

Dramatic situations of family life attack without mercy, conflicts at times violent and in no return. For this reason we want to keep the light of faith in our family.

Dad and Mum are engaged in work, in their presence in the family, in accompanying children in their educative journey, in keeping the seed of faith chosen with conviction on the day of baptism.

We know that we are not perfect, we do not believe to be a model family, but we often repeat and want always to continue to search for the best for us and for our children, for a sincere dialogue with others, to be signs and witnesses of a serene Christian life and with a gratuitous social commitment.



GESTURE MOVES US

You will eat the meal by candle-light and with the TV off: sign of a light that does not dazzle but tells the strength of staying together.

PRAYER NOURISHES US

Lord we thank you for the gift of light,

which allows us to see the faces of people we love.

Lord, many times we leave ourselves to be distracted,

teach us to seek the true light

that leads us on the right path.

Lord you are the true light to every man and every woman,

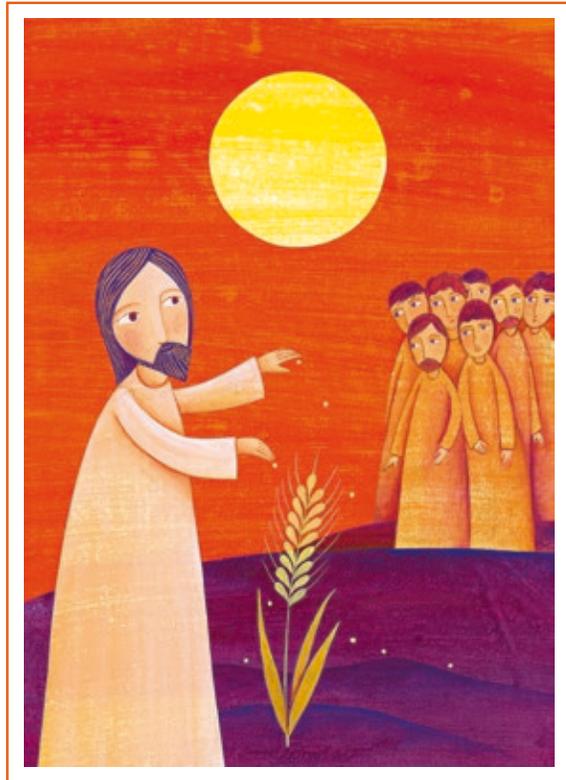
grant that we may know always to search you

in prayer and in friendship.

OUR FATHER

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

AMEN.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

With a sweeping gesture Jesus sowing wheat grains on fertile ground, ready to receive and safeguard them until the moment it will bear fruit. It is the gesture of one who offers and gives his life for his brothers. The disciples do not seem to understand the words of the master: “Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies it remains only a single fruit, but if it dies, it yields much fruit” (Jn 12: 24). They will fully understand on Calvary. The robe of Jesus has the same colour as the scattered seeds. He is the grain that dies to bear many fruits, as the large spike that appeared at his feet. The generous gesture that Jesus performs when sowing the seed is a sign of a life offered generously and without any calculations of convenience. He who knows how to forget himself and offers his life with love will bear many fruits.

A TABLE TO OFFER

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (12,20-33)

I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

A grain, a seed in the ground generates a new plant, which will produce many other seeds: life is multiplied! We lose something in order to gain much more...

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Following you, Jesus,
is learning to give ourselves
in small as well as in big things of each day.
Overcoming our selfishness, our closure,
being more generous is what You teach us,
giving us all of You, even your life.
Enable us to “lose” a little of ourselves
in order to find ourselves richer in You!

OUR FATHER

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

*From 22 to 28 March you can bless the table
with the prayer you will find on page 7.*

A TABLE TO OFFER

On the set table the Word of God is placed with a cross.

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

AMEN.

REFLECTION ACCOMPANIES US

You are with me!

Teach our family this daily prayer,
bless our commitments with your grace.

I shall not fear any evil

... and that is enough for us!

TESTIMONY SUPPORTS US

It is very easy to become selfish in this world. It is hard to educate children to be responsible in the use of money, respect and solidarity in personal relationships, the beauty of Faith and of the encounter in the Christian community.

This however is our commitment: to offer the best of what we can, convinced that the world also depends on us. It is not a presumption or obsession for heroism, but the knowledge that you have received so many gifts; of having to learn, day after day, to educate the heart to be on hand, ready to offer and to accept, to make ourselves close to those who live in fatigue and insecurity.

We would like the Crucifix, which now has the face of so many people who are suffering, to find today its home at the center of our family.



GESTURE MOVES US

Dad or Mum makes a small sign of the cross on all of our foreheads: it is the sign of Jesus who, by dying, offers Himself to each of us to be accepted.

PRAYER NOURISHES US

Lord, You who give yourselves to each of us,

do so that we learn to recognize this immense gift.

Lord, teach us to be a gift for others,

do so that we are attentive and generous.

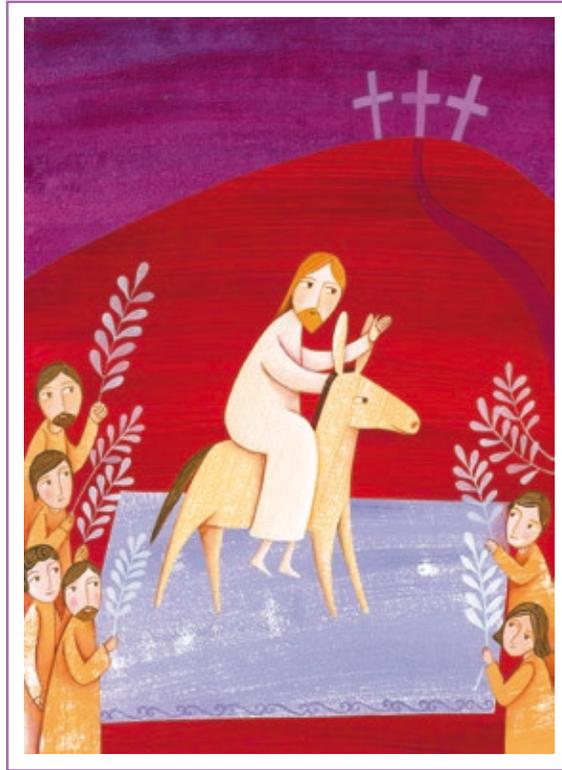
Lord your suffering gives us life,

do so that we always try to follow in your footsteps.

OUR FATHER

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

AMEN.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

It is a Sunday of apparent joy. Jesus is surrounded by men and women who praise him, who see in him the Messiah. They are shaking flowering branches and raising songs of celebration to heaven. Jesus smiles and greets them lovingly, but he knows that his way has not ended and that the destination is the cross on the summit of Golgotha. It will be a precious and embroidered fabric that will accompany us in this journey. Now it is lying under the feet of the donkey that is carrying Jesus on its back, and it is the prefiguration of all that which is to happen. It will be tablecloth spread on the table of the Last Supper, the shroud that will guard the body of Jesus and neatly folded linen that witness his resurrection.

A TABLE FOR JESUS

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (11,1-10)

The disciples took a colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on its back, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, others greenery which they had cut in the fields. And those who went in front and those who followed were all shouting, “Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord”!

Proclaim with joy and shortly after sentence to death, following the moment, the mood, the others ... It is the easiest and most convenient way to take for almost all of us, which however does not make us grow.

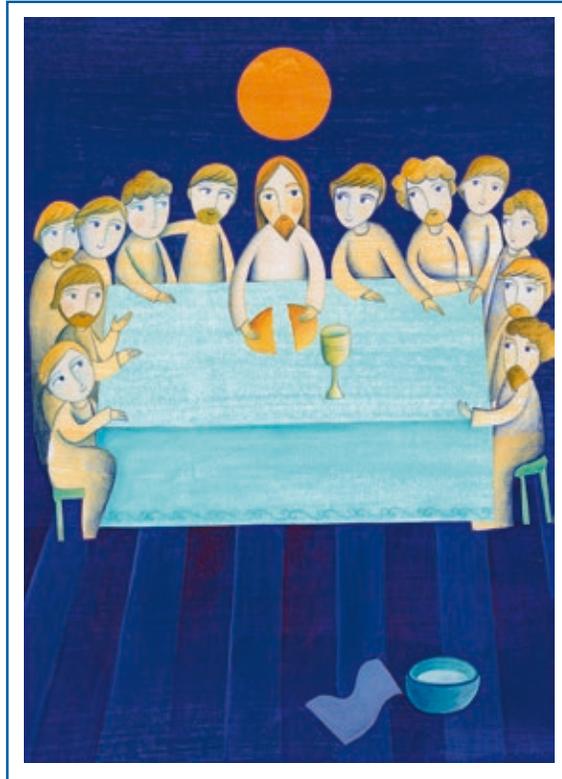
LET US PRAY TOGETHER

How many times,
as the crowd in Jerusalem,
do we proclaim you,
but then at the first difficulty we are ready to betray you ...
You, Lord, instead go beyond our pettiness and always reaffirm
your love for us.
Give us the strength to be more faithful
To your teachings, to your Gospel.

OUR FATHER

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

From 22 March to April 1st. you can bless the table with the prayer you will find on page 7.



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

The tablecloth adorns a large table to which Jesus invited his disciples to celebrate Easter. All eyes are captured by the gesture that the Master is making. After having given thanks, He broke the bread and pronounced words that surprised his guests: “Take and eat; this is my body” (Mt 26:26). On the laid out table Jesus offers his life. The table becomes a place of gratitude, memories, bonds of the life delivered and the precious testament given to friends. The table is the place where one renews the bonds of being sons with the Father and fraternity with men.

A TABLE TO BE BRETHERN

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (13,1-15)

Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.

After the supper during which Jesus offers his own body as a sign of the eternal covenant of love between God and his people, the disciples are participants in a gesture that reaches the apex of fraternity: Jesus stoops to wash their feet. In the most humble gesture of service there really is the germ of fraternal bond that finds its only nourishment in that Bread and Wine offered.

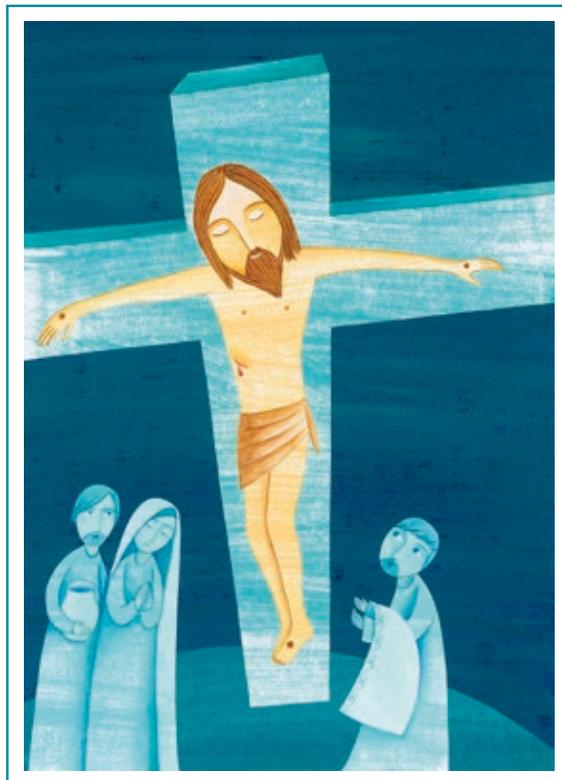
LET US PRAY TOGETHER

We observe You with enchantment Lord.
 We observe your body that stoops at the feet of the disciples,
 your eyes looking with infinite love
 at the faces of Peter, James, John ...
 your hands with so much tenderness
 wash and dry the callused and rough feet of yours.
 And we wonder if ever one day, we too,
 will learn to be such tender servants of our brothers.

OUR FATHER

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

*TODAY you can bless the table
 with the prayer that you find on page 7.*



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

The darkness of pain also invades the hearts of Mary and John. “It was about noon, when the sun was hidden and there was darkness over all the earth” (Luke 23:44). The cross becomes huge, because great is the sacrifice of Jesus. It seems to touch the sky, reaching high to the clouds to show every man the greatness of the love of the Father. The tablecloth becomes the sheet that will host the body of Jesus during the days when it will rest in the darkness of the tomb. In the same way the cloth of the cenacle receives the Eucharist, so also the shroud of Golgotha receives the offered body of the Son. The table of fraternity is also the table of sacrifice.

A TABLE FOR THE SACRIFICE

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (18,1-19,42)

Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfill the scripture perfectly he said: “I am thirsty”. A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, “It is accomplished”; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

Let us look at the cross with dismay: the love of God for every man has received the greatest sacrifice, death on the cross. But it is precisely in the absurdity of this sacrifice that our defeated humanity begins to re-emerge: there are signs of the Passover meal, prepared by the One who will never leave us alone.

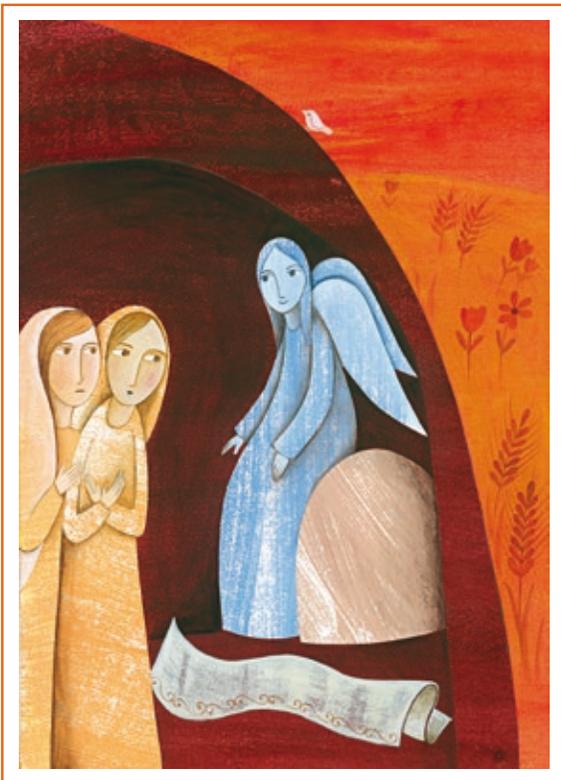
LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Lord,
 today our tables are poor,
 the church altars are bare.
 No feast, no banqueting!
 Today is the most difficult day:
 it seems that everything is finished!
 Help us to recognize the immense gift which you are giving us.

OUR FATHER

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

*TODAY you can bless the table
 with the prayer that you find on page 7.*



LET US MEDITATE ON THE IMAGE

The faces of the women do not hide fear and awe. The angel with “the appearance of lightning and his robe, white as snow” (Mt 28,3) smiles at them, comforts them and indicates the shroud. The body of Jesus is no longer there. After three days in the depths of the earth, the seed has borne fruit. Easter morning is the time when fields abound with wheat and where flowers colour the golden crops. It is the time of the nightingale’s song that announces to all that life has triumphed, that for everyone a banquet of joy, gratitude and fraternity has been prepared.

A TABLE FOR THE NEW BREAD

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (16,1-8)

On entering the tomb the women saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, “There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him. But you must go and tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him, just as he told you”.

The good news of the resurrection frees the disciples from disappointment, from bewilderment and fear and makes them explode with joy, giving all men hope and confidence.

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Do not be afraid, Jesus has risen!
This announcement of novelty,
of joy and peace is given to us also like the women at the tomb,
which triumphs over mistrust,
pessimism and gives us the courage to get back on the path.
Help us, Lord, to celebrate together
around your Mess and the table of our homes!

OUR FATHER

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

*TODAY you can bless the table
with the prayer that you find on page 7.*

A TABLE TO LIVE IN THE TRUTH

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

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (16,12-15)

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset. I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come”.

The gift of the fullness of the Holy Spirit enables us to be men and women capable of truth. The only truth is in Jesus Christ, who died and resurrected and who continuously sends the Spirit so that everyone feels called and sent forth to renew the world through the proclamation and testimony of salvation.

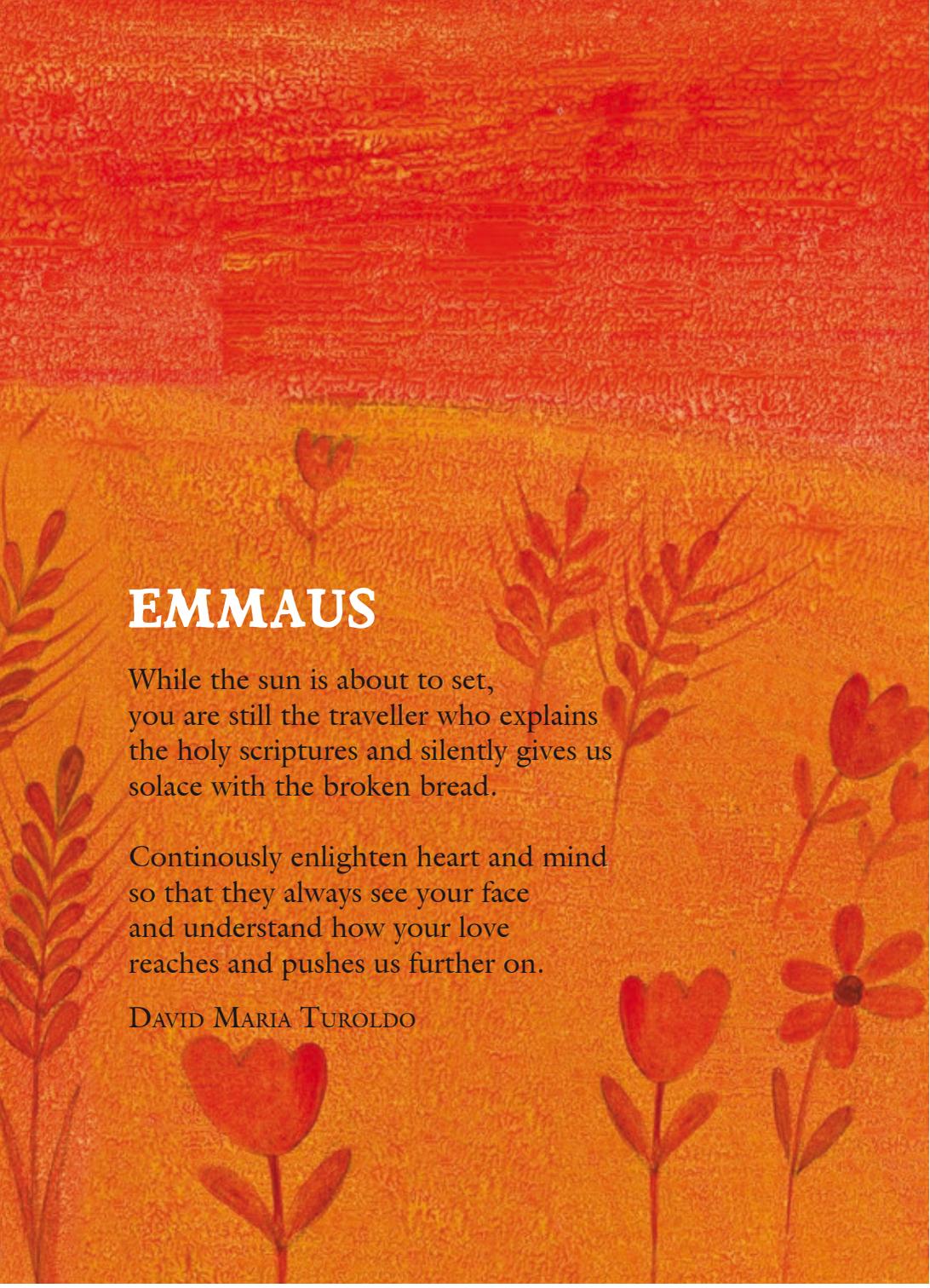


LET US PRAY TOGETHER

Come, Holy Spirit,
and give us a new heart,
which revives in us all
the gifts received from you
with the joy of being Christians,
A new heart
always young and happy.
Come, Holy Spirit,
and give us a pure heart,
instructed to love God,
a pure heart,
which does not know evil
other than to define it,
to fight it and to escape from it;
a pure heart,
such as that of a child,
capable of enthusiasm
and trepidation.
Come, Holy Spirit,
and give us a big heart,
open to your silent
inspiring and powerful word,
and closed to every petty ambition,
a big and strong heart to love everyone,
serve all, with all the suffering;
a big, strong heart,
just blessed to throb with the heart of God.
(Paul VI)

OUR FATHER

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



EMMAUS

While the sun is about to set,
you are still the traveller who explains
the holy scriptures and silently gives us
solace with the broken bread.

Continuously enlighten heart and mind
so that they always see your face
and understand how your love
reaches and pushes us further on.

DAVID MARIA TUROLDI