

A Time of Prayer: Listen

January Edition

LISTENING FOR DIVINE SPARKS

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we praise you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descended on your beloved Son at his baptism in the Jordan to initiate his ministry, and we are grateful that the Spirit empowers us to be Jesus' disciples. Help us to discern your divine sparks around us and guide us so that we understand how you want us to be messengers of your good news in our communities and our diocese. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

<i>New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)</i>	<i>The Message (MSG)</i>
<p>3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.</p>	<p>3 May all the gifts and benefits that come from God our Father, and the Master, Jesus Christ, be yours.</p> <p>4-6 Every time I think of you—and I think of you often!—I thank God for your lives of free and open access to God, given by Jesus. There's no end to what has happened in you—it's beyond speech, beyond knowledge. The evidence of Christ has been clearly verified in your lives.</p> <p>7-9 Just think—you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.</p>

LECTIO DIVINA

Ask someone to read the NRSVA translation of the passage aloud.

Allow for several minutes of silence as each bible study participant contemplates the passage, noticing which word(s), sentence(s), idea(s) or feeling(s) catch their attention. The group can decide how long the period of silence should last, but in the *Lectio Divina* tradition, it is substantial (a minimum of 3-5 minutes is suggested, perhaps working up to a longer interlude).

Invite participants to briefly share with one another those word(s), phrase(s), idea(s) or feeling(s) stirring them. Encourage participants to avoid interpreting or expanding on them at this time, but simply to state them out loud. Explain that time for reflection and discussion will follow later in the prayer time.

Have another person read the MSG translation of the passage aloud, followed by a second period of silence and invite participants to share again. The same or different word(s), phrase(s), idea(s) or feeling(s) may emerge.

Have a third person re-read the NRSVA version aloud again, followed by a final period of silence and invite participants to reflect on what they think is being drawn to their attention by the Holy Spirit. There are no right or wrong answers. It might be helpful to consider the following questions:

- *What is God saying to me about the gifts I bring as a disciple of Jesus?*
- *What are the gifts our parish community can bring to our neighbours to support God's work?*
- *What is God saying to our congregation and our diocesan church through this passage today?*

CLOSING PRAYERS

Loving God, we listen for your divine sparks in our midst. As Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit in baptism is sent by you to bring the good news of your kingdom to all people, help us understand how you wish our parish and diocese to live into our baptismal identity as Jesus' disciples. Show us the people to whom we should go, the path we should travel, and enable us through the gifts of the Spirit you bestow on us to answer your call. We ask this in the name of your beloved Son, **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.



CAPTURING THE DIVINE SPARKS KINDLED

- Consider whether there were sparks kindled during this prayer session. Ask a participant to write down any important ideas that emerged and ensure that there is group consensus around what is captured.
- Who do these sparks need to be shared with at this time? Find a way to share the insights gained with those who need to hear them.

ADDITIONAL BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

- In her commentary, L. Ann Jervis puts this introductory passage of Paul's letter to the Corinthians in its fuller context and underscores why Paul "is convinced that God in Christ has given those 'in Christ' everything they need in order to wait well for 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'." Read the brief commentary here:
<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/first-sunday-of-advent-2/commentary-on-1-corinthians-13-9-2>