

Reaching for God with St Simeon Stylites

We arrive in silence
as Uplifting Instrumental Music
plays

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Leader: Jamee | Cantor: Rose | Reader 1: Barry | Reader 2: Dr Julie |
| Broadcaster: Jamee | Tech support: Dr Julie | | Reader 3: Jeremy |

Collect Prayer

O God, who in your kindness called your servant blessed Simeon to the following of Christ, grant, we pray, through this intercession, that, denying ourselves, we may hold fast to you with all our heart. 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.

Reader 1:

From Alfred Tennyson's St Simeon Stylites

Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more,
that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives...

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim...

Reader 1:

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown?

Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dewes of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and
frankincense.

Reader 1:

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;

For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light

Gathering prayer

Open hands

Through the centuries and around the world Christians from many different traditions have used their hands in prayer. As you begin to pray extend your hands in front of you. Find a comfortable position, perhaps with them resting on your lap or thighs if you are sitting. Let your hands rest open, palms upward, a sign of your desire to be open to God.

Hold this position in stillness, and then when you are ready, you might like to use this prayer:

Jesus the Christ, your open hands transform the pain of the world.
Hold and transform all in me that needs to be made good.

Jesus the Christ, your open hands bring generous life to all peoples.
Help me to be open-handed, sharing your life with those around me.

Jesus the Christ, your open hands carry the blessing of God the Father.
By your Holy Spirit help me to share your blessing with my hands today.

You may find it helpful, at some moment in the day, to quietly return to your 'open hands' position, a sign of your continuing desire to be open to God.

A faint, artistic background illustration of a Taize monk in a brown habit, kneeling in prayer with hands clasped. The monk is positioned centrally, with a large, glowing golden halo above their head. The background is a soft, light blue and yellow wash, suggesting a peaceful, spiritual atmosphere. The monk's face is partially obscured by the text.

Taize Song

Bless the Lord

<https://youtu.be/lsm919bwwag?si=b1fcxEqszi2JnCkg>

Scripture

Reader 2: A lesson from Isaiah 40. 28-31

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks Be to God.

Lectio Divina

We begin our prayer-full reading of scripture:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Reading (Lectio)

Reader 3: A reading from the letter to the Colossians 3.1-4

The New Life in Christ

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks Be to God.

Meditation (Meditatio)

After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

Reader 3: A reading from the letter to the Colossians 3.1-4

The New Life in Christ

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Prayer (Oratio) Read the Scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

Contemplation (Contemplatio)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:
What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

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The New Life in Christ

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Taize Song

The Kingdom of God

<https://youtu.be/MSI2xdDvX6Y?si=soXwtBhCGVoob02y>

Hand to Heart Body prayer

To pray is to learn how to become present to God who is always present to us.

And to discover that God is so close it is as if God is within us.

This experience may be what St Paul referred to as "the inner nature", what Peter called "the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" and what the Orthodox call the 'Cave of the Heart'.

As you go deeper into prayer today place a hand to your heart and let it rest there.

Say whatever you sense you need to say, and then fall silent.

As far as you can, allow yourself to be open to the possibility of God's presence.

Let your hand to your heart be a physical sign of your desire to be present.

You may like to use this simple prayer with echoes from scripture:

Here I am...

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. [2 Corinthians 4.16](#)

Here I am...

⁴ rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight. [1 Peter 3.4](#)

Here I am...

The background is a soft, painterly illustration. In the center, a hermit with a long white beard and a brown robe sits in a wooden chair inside a cave. A large, glowing yellow sun or moon is visible through the cave's opening. The cave is built into a rocky cliff. Below the cave, a small town with several houses and a church with a red-tiled dome is visible. The sky is a pale blue with some white clouds. The word "Silence" is written in a blue, cursive font across the middle of the image.

Silence

Upright in prayer

This exercise can be both an accompaniment to our words of prayer, and a way of praying without words. As you go into prayer speak out what you want to be heard - perhaps a mix of your thanks, your hopes, your yearnings, and your confession - and then become silent. When you are ready, move into an intentionally upright position, perhaps opening your hands as you do this.

There's a long tradition of standing to pray, and it is the traditional prayer position of the Orthodox churches and of the Jewish faith. The upright position carries an awareness of the wonder of God's presence. It also conveys a sense of quiet and persistent waiting for God to reveal God's self. And it implies that we are making ourselves ready to act, perhaps to become, in God's good care and surprising imagination, part of the answer to the prayers that we have made.

Remain upright in this way, then move into activity with this word-prayer:

God you are so close, yet beyond all containing.

With countless others around the world and through the ages who pray this way:

I am upright before you,

Help me to seek you always.

I wait for you,

Help me to be open to your presence.

I ready myself,

Help me to be an answer to the prayers I make.



Lord's Prayer in Aramaic

https://youtu.be/_AdPiRWIam0

Visio Divina

1.Examine the images slowly, noting the colours, people, places and things. Remain with the images for one to two minutes. If you would like, jot down a few words about the images in the chat.

2.Take a second, deeper, look. Where do you see movement in the images? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where are you in the artwork? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?

3.Respond to the images with prayer. Did the images remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Offer that prayer to God.

4.Find your quiet center. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms and legs. Rest in this quiet. Let God pray in you. God prays beyond words.





Song

Psalm 90/91

<https://youtu.be/sQNJs89E6x8?si=C5TE28oopwdF18lk>

Benediction

As we end this time as a gathered community,
we prepare to serve in all the scattered places of our lives.
Go in the knowledge that God our Creator
sustains and supports you in this service.
Go with the assurance that Christ Jesus equips you
for service amongst the strangers
and the friends of your life.
Go with trusting reliance on the Spirit
who enables you to bear witness,
to care lovingly, and to work for justice.

And may God's peace go with you:
Deep peace of the running waves to you;
Deep peace of the flowing air to you;
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you;
Deep peace of the shining stars to you;
Deep peace of the Son of Peace, to you. **Amen.**

(Source: Rev Dr John Squires)

Closing Prayers

All:

We have gathered, embraced by the love of God,
embraced by the love we share together this day.

We have gathered, inspired by the life and witness of Jesus,
inspired by the life and witness we make together as we re-
member Jesus this day.

We have gathered, empowered, enlivened and encouraged by
God's Spirit,
empowered, enlivened and encouraged by the community we
make together.

And now, let us go, to be bearers of hope and light and love,
to be makers of peace, justice and joy.

We go in the name of God. Amen.

(Source: Sandy Boyce)



Song

Stay with us Lord Jesus Christ

<https://youtu.be/BwkDADfZAow?si=ZR9GM5X1sT99WFxT>

Blessing and Sending

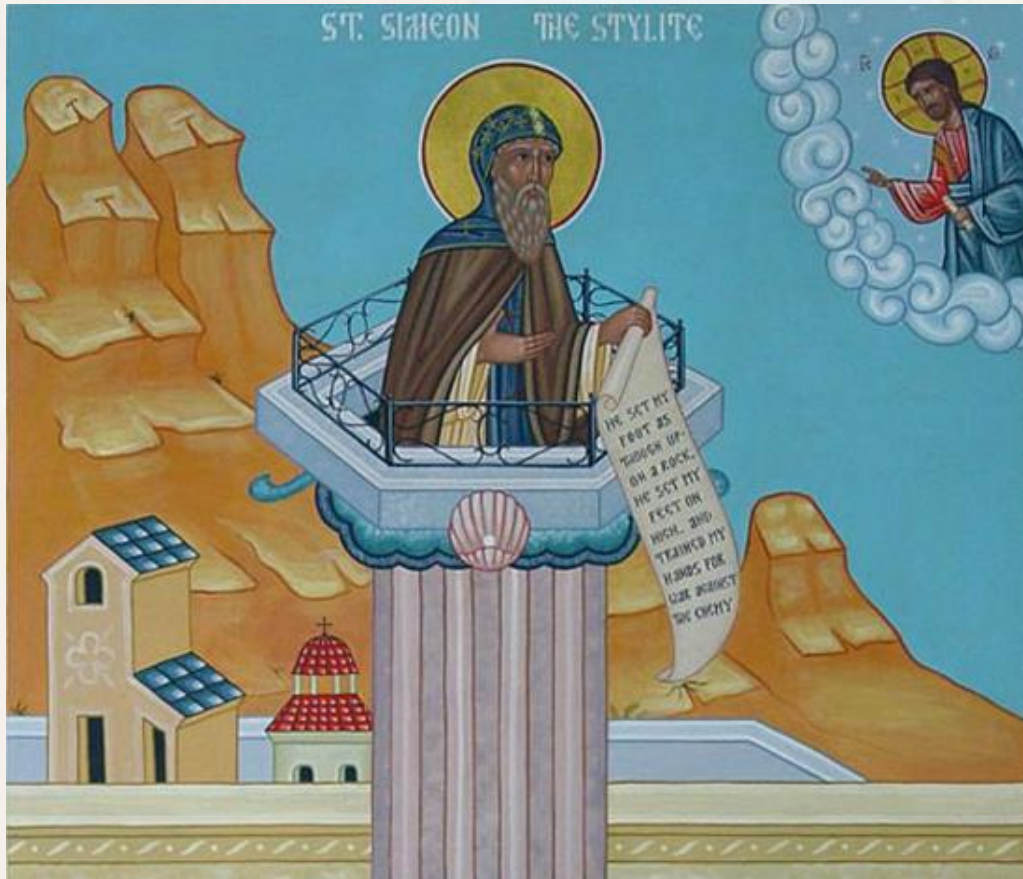
May God's joy be in our hearts and God's love surround our living.
Each day and night and wherever we roam, may we know God's presence.

In growing and learning, in joy and sorrow, in friendship, in solitude,
in beginnings and endings, may God keep us and bless us all the days of our lives.

May the blessing of God - the Beginning, the End, and the Everlasting,
be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go into the world in hope. Don't give in to either despair or fanciful thinking.
Commit yourself, in tough-minded love, To all the good that is growing in the world.
And discipline yourselves, always, to obtain that pearl of great price which is
Christ our Lord.

As you go, remember that the Spirit whispers in your ear all the day long. She
whispers her message of love and liberation; she beckons for you to follow her into
paths as yet unimagined. Go from this place as people of the Spirit, people unafraid
to dream and to vision, to lament and to protest, to work and to pray until the
Kingdom is come. **Amen.**



You can give online at
<https://holyhermits.com.au/give>

Next contemplative
Ash Wednesday
14th Feb 6.00pm

Closing music: <https://youtu.be/W-hrBhA4XkM>