



## A Journey to the Land of the Saints

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### IV • The Paradise of Birds

*The members of the community enter and pray in silence. After the community is fully assembled, the prelude should be presented.*

#### **Prelude**

*"The Paradise of Birds"*

*(from The Voyage of Saint Brendan, translated by John J. O'Meara)*

Stopping to rest on Easter, Saint Brendan and his companions come ashore on an island called The Paradise of Birds and join its unique community of prayer and praise until Pentecost.

*A period of silent meditation follows the reading before the leader begins the penitential prayers.*

#### **Penitential Prayers**

*A bell rings and the members of the community kneel. If anyone cannot kneel, they should remain seated with their head bowed.*

Leader

We bend our knees

All

*(making the sign of the cross)*

**in the eye of the Father who created us,**

**in the eye of the Son who purchased us,**

**in the eye of the Spirit who cleansed us. Amen.**

*All stand.*

Leader

Lord Jesus Christ,

give us the grace of repentance;

give us the grace of earnestness;

give us the grace of submission.

Community

**Give us the strength and courage to confess our guilt**

**as earnestly as were this the moment of our death.**

Leader

Lord Jesus,

keep the eye of God between us and every other eye;

keep the purpose of God between us

and every other purpose;

keep the desire of God between us and every other desire;  
and no mouth can curse us.

Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.

Community  
Leader

**Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.**

Christ Jesus,

keep your pain between us and every other pain;  
keep your love between us and every other love;  
keep your dearness between us and every other dearness;  
and no venom can wound us.

Christ Jesus, have mercy on us.

Community  
Leader

**Christ Jesus, have mercy on us.**

Lord Jesus,

keep the desire of God between us and every other desire;  
keep the might of God between us and every other might;  
keep the right of God between us and every other right;  
and no ill thing can touch us.

Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.

Community  
Leader

**Lord Jesus, have mercy on us.**

Lord Jesus Christ,

with the Father who created us and  
the Spirit that cleansed us,  
Purify our hearts, make holy our souls  
and confirm our faith,

keep safe our minds and compass our bodies all about.

Enfold us...

Community  
Leader

**... and surround us.**

Guide our speech...

Community  
Leader

**... and our thoughts.**

Guard us in our sleeping...

Community  
Leader

**... and in our waking.**

Nurture us in our watching...

Community  
Leader

**... and in our hoping.**

Shield us in our lives...

Community  
Leader

**... and grant us peace in eternity.**

Holy God,

Father, Son and Spirit,

pour down upon us from heaven  
the rich blessing of your forgiveness.

Be patient with us and grant to us

Community	the fear of God, the love of God, and your affection
Leader	so we may do your will on earth at all times ...
	<b>... as the angels and saints do in heaven.</b>
	Holy God,
	Father, Son and Spirit,
	pour down upon us from heaven
	the rich blessing of your peace.
	Peace between nations ...
Community	<b>... peace between neighbors.</b>
Leader	Peace between kindred ...
Community	<b>... peace between lovers.</b>
Leader	Peace between persons injured ...
Community	<b>... peace between foes.</b>
Leader	Holy God,
	Father, Son and Spirit,
	help us to love and bless your creation,
	all that we see, all that we hear, all that we touch.
	Let us share your peace with our fellow creatures at all times,
	living as signs of forgiveness and reconciliation on the earth ...
All	<b>... as the angels and saints do in heaven:</b>
	<b>without malice, without jealousy, without envy,</b>
	<b>without fear, without terror of anyone under the sun.</b>
	<b>And may the Father, the Son and the Spirit</b>
	<b>kindle in our hearts the flame of love to our neighbors,</b>
	<b>to our foes, to our friends, to our kindred all,</b>
	<b>to the brave, to the knave, to the thrall.</b>
Leader	The peace of the Father of Joy,
	the peace of Christ the Lamb,
	the peace of the Spirit of Grace, be with you.
Community	<b>The peace of the Father of Joy,</b>
	<b>of Christ the Lamb, and of the Spirit of Grace,</b>
	<b>be with us all.</b>
Leader	Let us share a sign of peace with those present here
	as a testimony to the peace God offers to the world.

*The members of the community share a sign of peace before sitting down. A brief period of silence follows before the reader begins the Word of God.*

## **The Word of God**

Reader I set the teachings of Christ before you;  
I set the guarding of God about you.  
Community **May it possess us and protect us all.**

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to Saint John.

As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam". Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We

know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.

Community      The gospel of Jesus Christ, source of strength,  
Source of salvation, source of healing grace.  
**May it be a mantle to our bodies.**

*A brief silence follows the reading, until the leader begins the psalm.*

Leader      Psalm 33, Verses 1 through 22.

Community      Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.  
Praise befits the upright.  
**Praise the Lord with the lyre;  
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.**

Leader      Sing to him a new song;  
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

Community      **For the word of the Lord is upright,  
and all his work is done in faithfulness.**

Leader      He loves righteousness and justice;  
Community      **the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.**

Leader      By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
Community      **and all their host by the breath of his mouth.**

Leader      He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle;  
Community      **he put the deeps in storehouses.**

Leader      Let all the earth fear the Lord;  
Community      **let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.**

Leader      For he spoke, and it came to be;  
Community      **he commanded, and it stood firm.**

Leader      The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;  
Community      **he frustrates the plans of the peoples.**

Leader      The counsel of the Lord stands forever,  
Community      **the thoughts of his heart to all generations.**

Leader      Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
Community      **people whom he has chosen as his heritage.**

Leader	The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all humankind.
Community	<b>From where he sits enthroned he watches all the inhabitants of the earth —</b>
Leader	he who fashions the hearts of them all,
Community	<b>and observes all their deeds.</b>
Leader	A king is not saved by his great army;
Community	<b>a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.</b>
Leader	The war horse is a vain hope for victory,
Community	<b>and by its great might it cannot save.</b>
Leader	Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,
Community	<b>to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.</b>
Leader	Our soul waits for the Lord;
Community	<b>he is our help and shield.</b>
Leader	Our heart is glad in him,
Community	<b>because we trust in his holy name.</b>
Leader	Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
Community	<b>even as we hope in you.</b>

*There is a brief silence after the psalm before reading or presenting the audio version of the following reflection.*

Reflection	“Accepting Forgiveness as a Loved Sinner” by Timothy J. Ray
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*A period of silence is observed after the reflection for private meditation, with or without music. Afterward, the leader proceeds to the Prayers and Blessings after the optional hymn.*

Hymn (optional)

## **Prayers and Blessings**

Leader	Praise to the Father, praise to the Son, praise to the Spirit.
Community	<b>The three in one.</b>

*All stand.*

Leader

Let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom,  
in the words our Lord taught us:

All

**“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.”**

(Matthew 6: 9-13)

Leader

Thanks be to you, Eternal Father,  
for you have enwrapped our bodies and our souls,  
safeguarding us in the sanctuary of your love ...

Community

**... and sheltering us under the mantle of your care.**

Leader

O holy God, be a smooth path before us,  
a guiding star above us, a keen eye behind us,  
this day, this night, forever.

We are weary and forlorn, O God,  
lead us to your house, to the peace of heaven.

Community

**Lead us to your house, to the peace of heaven.**

Leader

Help us do your will...

Community

**... and bridle our own.**

Leader

Help us give you your due...

Community

**... and put aside our entitlement.**

Leader

Help us travel your path...

Community

**... and leave behind our own.**

Leader

Help us ponder Christ's death...

Community

**... and find hope in our own.**

Leader

Help us meditate on Christ agony...

Community

**... and strengthen our love for you.**

Leader

Help us carry Christ's cross...

Community

**... and forget our own burdens.**

Leader

Help us embrace repentance...

Community

**... and accept your forgiveness.**

Leader O holy God,  
 help us to control our tongues and our thoughts,  
 so we may trust your wisdom,  
 embrace Christ's redemptive love,  
 and accept the Spirit's gentle graces.  
 For we are weary and forlorn ...

Community **... and ask you lead us to your house,  
 to the peace of heaven. Amen.**

Leader In the silence of your heart,  
 bring your special needs or concerns before God.  
 If you wish us to join in your prayers for these needs,  
 speak them aloud, saying when you are finished,  
 "For this I pray."

*Members of the community offer their particular prayers. The community's response to these individual petitions is:*

***May God's blessing be yours,  
 and well may it befall you.***

*When these personal prayers are finished, the leader offers the final blessing.*

Leader May the God of life encompass you,  
 protecting your form and your frame.  
 May the Christ of love encompass you,  
 shielding you from hatred and from harm.  
 May the spirit of grace encompass you,  
 guiding you towards goodness and away from ill.  
 The blessings of the Triune God surround you ...

Community **... abiding in us forever and eternally. Amen.**

Leader Praise to the Father,  
 praise to the Son,  
 praise to the Spirit.

Community **The three in one.**

Leader *(making the sign of the cross)*  
 The guarding of the God of life be on you,  
 the guarding of the loving Christ be on you,  
 the guarding of the Holy Spirit be on you,  
 aiding and enfolding you  
 each day and night of your lives.

Community **May God, the three in one, encompass us all,**

**shielding us on sea and on land, in day and in night,  
guarding each step and each path we travel. Amen.**

Hymn (optional)

*The members of the community sit or kneel after the service concludes, as they prefer. Silence is observed to allow private prayer or meditation. Individuals should leave quietly as the Spirit moves them.*