

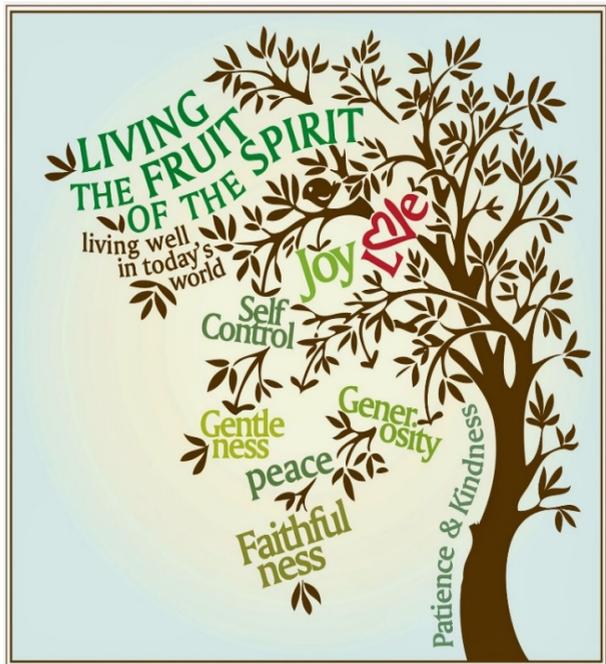
St Mary's Shalford: Novena of Prayer between Ascension and Pentecost

These Prayer Cards may help you to focus each day on one of the nine parts of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit as we join with other disciples in a worldwide wave of prayer 14th - 22nd May 2021

Paul wrote *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". (Galatians 5: 22-23)*

Novenas trace their origin back to the time, following the Ascension of Jesus, when the disciples prayed constantly for nine days until they were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In our Novena in Shalford we pray that the Holy Spirit will fill us with love and

enlighten our minds. We ask each day for the blessings of the Spiritual Fruit so that our lives may reflect the life of Jesus. We also pray especially for the sick and those suffering during the current pandemic, for the bereaved, the lonely, the hungry, the homeless and the abused and we pray for a world of peaceful co-existence.



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Prayer Day 1

Friday 14th May - Love

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 7-10

Love never gives up; and its faith, hope and patience never fail. Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

Reflection: This coming Whitsuntide we ask, in the words of the hymn:

Come down O Love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardour glowing.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit with love freely given, comes to us, so that we will give love freely too. The love demonstrated by the Duke of Edinburgh through the selfless service he gave to this country and to the Queen has, following his death, become an inspiration to so many.

Ask Ourselves: Our Lord asked two main things of us: love of Him and love for our neighbour. Can we ask the Holy Spirit to help us have a sincere love for Him and for our neighbours, throughout our lives?

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us, through the power of your Holy Spirit, to help others, especially those in need. Imbue us with faith, kindness, patience and hope.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May your presence encourage us.
May your spirit imbue us with love.
May you dwell in us forever.

Prayer Day 2

Saturday 15th May - Joy

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: John 15: 10-12

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Reflection: We are filled with joy in believing that Jesus, our Lord is alive, living in our hearts and with the assurance that we are loved. Our joy is unrestrained because Christ's love is unrestrained and unconfined. This joy is infectious reaching out to others. It is a joy that cannot be contained. It should be spread abroad to others as an act of sharing together. Jesus fills us with his joy and that joy should fill us to overflowing, into all aspects of our life. It is a Christ centred joy and all our powers and affections are enriched, and harmonised by such Christ inspired joy.

Ask Ourselves: Do we rejoice enough in our service to those around? Are we truly joyful even when times are hard? Does it show?

Prayer

Jubilate

O be joyful in the Lord all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness and come into His presence with a song. Know that the Lord is God...and we are His people. Lord fill us with that Heavenly joy that overflows as a Spirit filled stream into all aspects of our life.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the joy of your Spirit transform us. May that joy reach out to others that we meet each day. May the gift of joy in believing also be part of our worship.

Prayer Day 3

Sunday 16th May – Peace

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: John 14: 27 (New Living Translation)

I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Reflection: I wonder how many of us continually feel that spiritual gift of peace of mind and heart? After all there are worldly distractions, both surrounding us and coming from within us. Sometimes the only way seems to be quiet and pray. Or perhaps admiring a glorious view or being alone in peaceful woodland can bring that God given sense of peace to the surface. Maybe we mainly seek it when we are conscious of needing it, when in pain, seriously ill, depressed, angry, or distressed by some event in our lives. There is a saying that within each of us there is a God shaped hole waiting to be filled. So as Christians God lives within us as well as 'out there'. And his gift of peace of mind and heart is always there to govern how we feel and live, working alongside the distractions we experience, and often need to do God's work.

Ask Ourselves: How often do we seek out that spiritual fruit of peace and not let the diversions of life take over? Just when we pray or have a particular need? Could we seek out that promised peace of mind and heart more frequently? And would the world become a better place? That's discipleship.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us to remember your promise,
and always be ready to allow the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with peace.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the boldness of your spirit transform us.
May the gentleness of your Spirit lead us.
May the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you.

Prayer Day 4

Monday 17th May – Patience

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: Psalm 40: 1 and 1 Corinthians 13: 4

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard me cry.” “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.”

Reflection: The common saying, “to have the patience of a saint” means to endure faithfully through whatever difficulties or challenges we encounter in life. The saints of whom we are reminded in Revelations 14: 12 keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. Simple surely? Sadly not! We live in an instant world where news is 24 /7: reactions and opinions are relentless.

Ask Ourselves: How do we, as Christians, try to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and show love, contemplative patience and forgiveness, at the same time as making a difference in this digitally driven world in the midst of a pandemic? We need stillness, the traditional icon of the Ascension, and we need patience to listen to God and act out His commandments.

Prayer

Lord, teach us to be patient: with life, with people and ourselves.
Thy will be done.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

May we accept the things we cannot change,
have the courage to change what we can
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Prayer Day 5

Tuesday 18th May - Kindness

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: Ephesians 4: 30-32

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Reflection: Kindness is not just being nice or polite. It is an act of love and generosity done with a cheerful heart, showing concern, tenderness and compassion, not only to our friends but to strangers and those who annoy and hurt us. Jesus was kind to sinners and the lost. We need to try to forgive, to see the best in everyone and the interests of others as more important than our own. During the pandemic, countless acts of kindness from nurses, doctors, neighbours and friends have shone out. Kindness oils our interactions. It heals rifts, brings comfort and allows the love of the Holy Spirit to flourish both in the giver and the receiver.

Ask Ourselves: Do we have bitter or angry feelings that “grieve the Holy Spirit” and impede the flow of warm love from the Spirit to us? Is there someone we need to forgive? Could we show an act of kindness to someone today?

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to be kind and loving to others, just as Jesus was kind even to those who persecuted Him. May we generously pass on the blessings of the Holy Spirit remembering that one act of kindness could change a life.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

May the boldness of your Spirit transform us.
May the gentleness of your Spirit lead us.
May the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you.

Prayer Day 6

Wednesday 19th May – Generosity

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your own heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Reflection: Generosity and giving are two linked concepts. The one compliments the other and giving involves more than just material things. It is a giving of ourselves our time, talents, and love to meet the needs of others. A generosity born of the outpouring of God's love in our lives, leads to a generous giving to others in their need. We see around us a poverty of more than material things. We are called to be generous in all our giving, in every aspect of our life with family, friends and the community.

Ask Ourselves: How is my giving of my time, talents and thoughts for others? Is it truly generous? Am I prepared to spend time with and for others? Can my giving be generous when the next opportunity arises? Perhaps today.

Prayer

Lord give me the will to share with others what I have so undeservedly been given. Make me loving, courteous, considerate; give me a listening ear, a compassionate heart and a generous mind. Let me live my life in your sight for others so that they too may find you and give thanks for you.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the boldness of your Spirit transform us.

May the gentleness of your Spirit lead us.

May the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you.

Prayer Day 7

Thursday 20th May- Faithfulness

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: Psalm 85: 10-12

Love and faithfulness meet together.

Righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs forth from the earth

And righteousness looks down from heaven.

The Lord will indeed give what is good,

And our land will yield its harvest.

Reflection: We need to think about faithfulness separately from faith. We perhaps have faith in a principle, a person—what about faith in the pilot taking us away? These faiths can change, but faithfulness connected with love do meet together. Think of the wonderful hymn –“Great is thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see: all I have needed thy hand hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me”.

Ask Ourselves: Do we put faith in transient things without love? Is our faithfulness to God and our mission to do his work as true as it should be?

Prayer

O Lord keep us steadfast in faith, a genuine and unadulterated faith. Enable us to remain faithful to what we promised when we were baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us have you as our Father, and continue to live in your Son, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith, and may we be rooted and grounded in love, and comprehend, with the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, so that we may be filled with the fullness of God. Amen

Prayer Day 8

Friday 21st May- Gentleness

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: James 3: 17

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Reflection: We are told in the Bible to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience: to be as a mother caring for her children. These qualities can seem lacking in many of our leaders. Is the answer due to strength, power, leadership and conviction being seen as more effective and betraying no sign of weakness? These are models drawn from human history not from our Lord. "See, your king comes to you, riding on a donkey." A Lord who will wash the feet of his disciples. Gentleness is not being weak, spineless, avoiding conflict or lacking conviction.

Ask Ourselves: In a divided world where there are such differing opinions and heated debate, do we join the raging argument or can we show a controlled strength, be calm and peaceful, pouring oil on troubled waters and soothe, rather than aggravate?

Prayer

Jesus good above all other, gentle child of gentle mother, teach us to be kind, gentle, forgiving, loving, caring, calm and humble.

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Prayer Day 9

Saturday 22nd May – Self-Control

Come Holy Spirit, and fill us with your love and Spiritual Fruit

Reading: 1 Peter 1: 13-15

Be holy. Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

Reflection: Is self-control linked with self-discipline? We might try and exercise self-discipline for Lent, perhaps giving up chocolate, but self-control is necessary to refuse the offer of an after dinner mint treat. I have to discipline myself to avoid reading the paper when I should be attending to what God is calling me to do. Prayer and quietness help us to take our path to follow Jesus

Ask ourselves: Can we exercise self-discipline as well as self-control without looking to God for his help? Do we do that in difficult as well as good times?

Prayer

O Lord give us self-control, to see our weaknesses, and overcome them in your strength. Lord may we bear the fruits of your Spirit. Amen

Silent Prayer followed by The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

God of power, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us, may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us. May the gifts of the Spirit be our goal and strength. Now and always.

Amen