

April 2026 APR Prayer reflection

First of all listen to this month's reflection and then consider the short readings below in preparation for your own prayer or quiet time, using the prayers if helpful.

The prayers this month take the form of mantra's, that is, repeating a word or set of words quietly (speaking them, not just thinking) in order to focus the mind and so quieten it a little.

Mantras have a long history across many spiritual traditions including Christianity. Chanting is a form of mantra, particularly when the chant itself is short and repeats – many of the beautiful Taizé chants are like this, for example:
“Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name, bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life”.

However, just a single word will suffice. The wonderful Fr John Main OSB, offered the mantra “maranatha”, articulated ma-ra-na-tha. This is spoken quietly with full attention to the sound and the how it *feels*, with a gentle in-breath in between – see the prayers below.

Why use a mantra? Here are three good reasons;

- 1) Our minds are very busy places, flipping around and following all kinds of paths into dead-ends, memories, happy, sad, frustrated or just fantasies. Mantras fix the mind in a particular direction and help it settle.
- 2) Saying the mantra out-loud involves using our body, not just the mind. Our minds and bodies are deeply interconnected, they respond to each other and are communicating all the time. Involving the body in prayer ensures we're praying with all that we are, body-mind-spirit.
- 3) Finally, and this is what you'll have heard on the spoken reflection, mantras help us experience unity. Despite what some theologies / philosophies say, humans are not alone, isolated, or separated from each other, the rest of Creation or God. We are one even though we are many. Chanting a mantra 'gives voice' to this unity, and it becomes an *experience*, not just an idea.

To help us reflect on this unity, here are three verses from scripture;

Reflective Readings

John 17:20-22

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Acts 17:28

For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Prayer mantras

Sit comfortably but with intention;

Light a tea-light or incense.

Breath in and out gently for a few seconds....

Repeat the mantra for as long as you prefer.

- 1) Breath in gently, and on the out-breath quietly say *ma-ra-na-tha*.
or
- 2) As above, repeat "*I and the Father are one*" (Jn 10:30)
or
- 3) As above, but use your own mantra – either from scripture, a poem or meaningful text, or make up your own (for example I use "*Love is, just this*").