

## **Give Us Wisdom, Give Us Your Spirit**

**[a song to gather the people]**

**[a prayer asking God to enter into our worship and bless it]**

**[a song somewhat akin to “Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak]**

1. The page turns on a calendar. Corks are popped and loved ones are kissed and 2019 rolls into 2020. It's an arbitrary point chosen by people long dead for reasons that aren't that interesting to most of us. We know that time passes and it is only right that we build into our calendar times to stop, reflect, reset, and move on.
2. But move on where? And to what end? In the New Year, we will be embarking on a journey to discover who we are, what our place is in the universe, what our place is on earth and in our communities, and Who God is, and what He requires of us. (Ecclesiastes, Job, Revelation). This will be some heavy lifting. Come with your Bibles and pray daily for wisdom.

**[Break for Contribution – Patrick will facilitate]**

3. Jesus' brother, James, has this to say about that. Let your mind and life absorb these words: (James 1:5-8; 3:13-18)
4. When we seek wisdom, it seeks us in return, for wisdom is not just a concept – it is a person. In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom is described as a woman (and so is Folly 9:13). She opens up the book with a call and a warning: (Proverbs 1:20-33 **Cindy Gentry, reader**)
5. Once this concept is established, the writer/collector of these Proverbs comes back to it in (Proverbs 8:1-4, 10-11 **Cam Webb, reader**)
6. God speaks through the proverbs, here, and says that Wisdom was present with Him at the beginning. If you stop and watch for it – at the high points, along the way – you will see Wisdom. (Proverbs 8:22-31 **Lovie Lester, reader**)

## **[two songs]**

7. Some direct, plain instruction is found here: (Proverbs 8:12-13) There are also promises: (Proverbs 8:17-21). And then...a warning along with a promise: (Proverbs 9:6-12).
8. In the Bible, and in our understanding, wisdom and knowledge are too different things. One can have great amounts of knowledge and be a fool. And one can be wise while having little or no education. Wisdom is knowing how to use the tools you have in the situation you face. There is no wishing...there is motion, action; not motion for motion's sake (We have to DO something!) but because you have mapped out a wise path forward.
9. Note that moving forward doesn't mean the same to us as it does to the word. Their metrics, their goals to reach along the way, are different from ours. We are seeking wisdom from God so that we may honor Him, live for Him, and bring Him into our world. The Wisdom Literature we are about to read and study together will require shifts in our worldview and it will force us to redefine "success" and "progress" and "purpose."
10. And to do that, we are going to need God's help. We are going to need the Holy Spirit of God.

## **[prayer for the coming of the Spirit of God led by Tony Simmons]**

## **[song/songs]**

11. I want to introduce you to a fascinating woman: Edith Stein. Edith was born into an observant Jewish family in Germany back in 1891. The horrors of World War One turned her away from God and she became an atheist. A brilliant woman, she got her nursing qualification and then went on to gain a doctorate in philosophy.
12. In the course of her studies, she read the works of a Carmelite nun, Teresa of Avila, and was convinced of the deity of Jesus. Around that time, the National Socialist Government of Germany passed a law requiring that all civil servants (that included educators) have an Aryan certificate. She couldn't pass that bar, being a Jew by

birth, so she lost her position. She then became a nun in an extremely strict order (Discalced Carmelite) and devoted her life to serving others and teaching them of the power of Jesus, the Father, and of the Holy Spirit. The year was 1938 and those of you who know your history know what is coming next.

13. Her order sent her to the Netherlands as a precaution but the Nazis took that country in 1940. She knew she would not survive the war. She wrote Pope Pius and called on the leaders of the Catholic Church to step up and speak against the outrage of anti-Semitism and racial discrimination. "As a child of the Jewish people who, by the grace of God, for the past eleven years has also been a child of the Catholic Church, I dare to speak to the Father of Christianity about that which oppresses millions of Germans. For weeks we have seen deeds perpetrated in Germany which mock any sense of justice and humanity, not to mention love of neighbor. For years the leaders of National Socialism have been preaching hatred of the Jews.... But the responsibility must fall, after all, on those who brought them to this point and it also falls on those who keep silent in the face of such happenings.

"Everything that happened and continues to happen on a daily basis originates with a government that calls itself 'Christian'. For weeks not only Jews but also thousands of faithful Catholics in Germany, and, I believe, all over the world, have been waiting and hoping for the Church of Christ to raise its voice to put a stop to this abuse of Christ's name. Is not this idolization of race and governmental power which is being pounded into the public consciousness by the radio open heresy? Isn't the effort to destroy Jewish blood an abuse of the holiest humanity of our Savior, of the most blessed Virgin and the apostles? Is not all this diametrically opposed to the conduct of our Lord and Savior, who, even on the cross, still prayed for his persecutors? And isn't this a black mark on the record of this Holy Year which was intended to be a year of peace and reconciliation? We all, who are faithful children of the Church and who see the conditions in Germany with open eyes, fear the worst for the prestige of the Church, if the silence continues any longer."

14. In the end, the Church said very little and the Nazis came for the Jews and for the leaders of the church who dared to speak against them (while Rome was silent, the Dutch bishops published a condemnation of the racist policies of the National Socialists). Edith Stein was a target on both counts. The Nazis rounded up 243 baptized Jews, including her, and sent them to Auschwitz. One of the administrators came to her and offered to help her get out of the death line, to escape. She refused.
15. To prepare herself for martyrdom she had, for years, lived with cold and heat, poor food, and harsh conditions so that she would be of use to God in the camps. She asked for wisdom...and for the Holy Spirit...to give her strength and wisdom each step of the way.
16. This is her prayer: [7 readers, one for each section. Each ends by leading the congregation in saying "Lord, hear our prayer."]

### Edith Stein's Prayer to the Holy Spirit

[Known to history as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Dr. Stein was killed by the Nazis in the gas chambers of Auschwitz after refusing to escape the fate that her friends in the faith were facing that day. She prayed this prayer to the Holy Spirit not long before her death]

1. **[Jordan Smith]** Who are you, sweet light, that fills me  
And illumines the darkness of my heart?  
You lead me like a mother's hand,  
And should you let go of me,

I would not know how to take another step.  
You are the space  
That embraces my being and buries it in yourself.  
Away from you it sinks into the abyss  
Of nothingness, from which you raised it to the light.  
You, nearer to me than I to myself  
And more interior than my most interior  
And still impalpable and intangible

And beyond any name:  
Holy Spirit eternal love!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

2. **[Sam Lester]** Are you not the sweet manna  
That from the Son's heart  
Overflows into my heart,  
The food of angels and the blessed?  
He who raised himself from death to life,  
He has also awakened me to new life  
From the sleep of death.

And he gives me new life from day to day,  
And at some time his fullness is to stream through me,  
Life of your life indeed, you yourself:  
Holy Spirit eternal life!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

3. **[Ty and Thomas Lavender]** Are you the ray  
That flashes down from the eternal Judge's throne  
And breaks into the night of the soul  
That had never known itself?  
Mercifully relentlessly  
It penetrates hidden folds.  
Alarmed at seeing itself,  
The self makes space for holy fear,  
The beginning of that wisdom  
That comes from on high  
And anchors us firmly in the heights,  
Your action,  
That creates us anew:  
Holy Spirit – all penetrating ray!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

4. **[Kristy Stone]** Are you the spirit's fullness and the power  
By which the Lamb releases the seal

Of God's eternal decree?  
Driven by you  
The messengers of judgement ride through the world  
And separate with a sharp sword  
The kingdom of light from the kingdom of night.  
Then heaven becomes new and new the earth,  
And all finds its proper place  
Through your breath:  
Holy Spirit victorious power!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

5. **[Kevin Chapman]** Are you the master who builds the eternal cathedral,  
Which towers from the earth through the heavens?  
Animated by you, the columns are raised high  
And stand immovably firm.  
Marked with the eternal name of God,  
They stretch up to the light,  
Bearing the dome,  
Which crowns the holy cathedral,  
Your work that encircles the world:  
Holy Spirit God's fashioning hand!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

6. **[Albert Lemmons]** Are you the one who created the unclouded mirror  
Next to the Almighty's throne,  
Like a crystal sea,  
In which Divinity lovingly looks at itself?  
You bend over the fairest work of your creation,  
And radiantly your own gaze  
Is illumined in return.  
And of all creatures the pure beauty  
Is joined in one in the dear form

Of the Virgin, your immaculate bride:  
Holy Spirit Creator of all!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

7. **[Melinda Simmons]** Are you the sweet song of love  
And of holy awe  
That eternally resounds around the triune throne,  
That weds in itself the clear chimes of each and every being?  
The harmony,  
That joins together the members to the Head,  
In which each one  
Finds the mysterious meaning of his being blessed  
And joyously surges forth,  
Freely dissolved in your surging:  
Holy Spirit eternal jubilation!

("Lord, hear our prayer")

### **[song/songs]**

17. Edith Stein, now known by her new name taken when she took religious orders: Teresia Benedicta a Cruce (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), turned from the one who offered her escape and placed her hands on those around her and said, "Come. Let us die for Him together."
18. **[our readers will pass the communion trays. Shepherds are asked to help fill any gaps]**
19. **[Patrick leads us at the table. MARK has a song during the bread and another during the cup]**

### **[song]**

**[benediction]** “Almighty God, You have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word. Grant us this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.