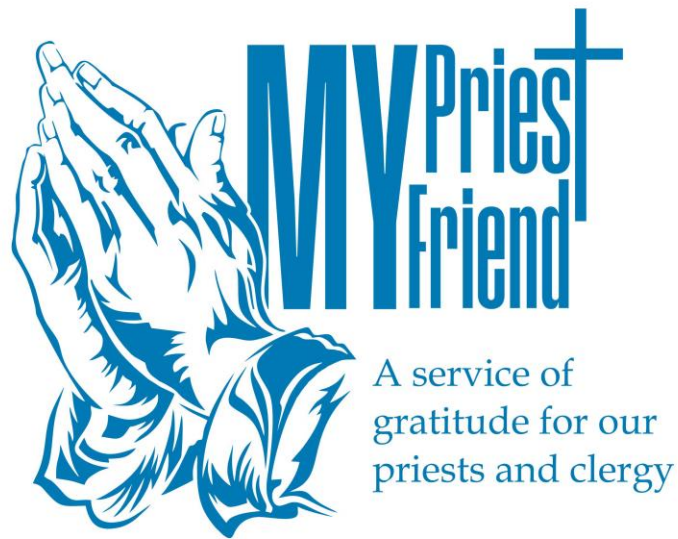




My Priest, My friend

A service of gratitude for our priests and clergy

P: Shepherd of our souls, we come to you today to offer prayers specially for our priests and those who lead your people. Through their sacramental services, we experience your presence in the needy moments of our life. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, patience and strength they need to follow in your footsteps. Amen.

Opening Hymn

He leadeth me: O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

*He leadeth me, he leadeth me;
by his own hand he leadeth me:
his faithful follower I would be,
for by his hand he leadeth me.*

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,
sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom,
By waters calm, o'er troubled sea,
still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

Author: J. H. Gilmore (1862), Tune: HE LEADETH ME (Bradbury)

Kauma

P. †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

C. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

C. Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

P. Holy art thou, O God.

C. Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

P. Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C. O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us.

(To be repeated thrice)

P. O Lord, have mercy on us.

C. O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

P. O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

C. Glory be to you, O God.

P. Glory be to you, O Creator.

C. Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us sing together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

***All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever. Amen.***

(Cong to be seated)

1st Lesson: Ezekiel 33:1-7

2nd Lesson: 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Meditation

Remembering E.J. George Achen

Almost every clergy man who has met him has a story to tell.

It usually goes like this. "E. J. George Achen met me, shook my hands, and held on to my hand asking who else was at home, and enquired everything about me. He took down my birthday and address into his little diary. Then he shared some of his ministry experiences and told me about his latest thoughts on the ways to share the gospel. A few weeks later, I received a postcard from him, in which he wrote a story or a quote or an encouraging thought, along with a reminder to share the gospel with someone."

Conversations with him never ended quickly. When he met you again, he would enquire about life, family, ministry, the challenges, the possibility, the concerns of the flock entrusted to us — everything. It often had an abrupt ending since people had to go somewhere or the other, and George Achen would still be wanting to engage us with meaningful ways to evangelise.

There are interesting stories of Achen praying for people who he had come to see off at Cantonment station, and when Achen finally opened his eyes the train and the passengers had already left. Or while heading home to Hoskote from Bangalore he would hitch a ride on a lorry and he would continue sharing the Gospel not noticing he had passed Hoskote, and then he had to find another ride back home from wherever.

If you met him on the sand-bed at Maramon Convention, he would continue the same. Under a sun that is on its way down for the day, he would hold your hand and enquire everything about you. He would share ways to share the good news to another. He would enquire about your mum's health, because you had told him the last time you met, that she was feeling sick.

So, if you were on your way with someone waiting on the other end of the sand-bed, and you saw E.J. George Achen coming towards you, it was common for many a clergy to take a slightly different route. It wasn't because they did not love Achen — it was because Achen loved you so much. And love takes time. Love pays attention. Love remembers. Love enquires. Love has all the time in the world for you. And he was a clergyman, which meant that he was supposed to be God's love in white robes. That, he was — dare I say, one of the last of his kind? As someone stated, "They don't make 'em like that anymore".

But pastors like me lacked that kind of love. Or most probably, our excuse was that someone else was waiting on the other end of the sandbed. Or our ride home from Maramon convention was waiting, while everyone else was impatiently seated. Either way, encountering E.J. George Achen meant an uncertainty regarding one's ETA (estimated time of arrival), which became complicated when you were travelling with others. So, you would simply take another route on seeing him.

You chose to not walk into love because perhaps we have reached that point in life where we do not have time for love. But E.J. George Achen, was love in white robes.

Rev. E. J. George: The Good Soil that Embraced the Seed by Rev. Mathews George

Hymn

There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save,
Send the light! Send the light!

*Send the light, the blessed gospel light;
Let it shine from shore to shore!
Send the light the blessed gospel light;
Let it shine forevermore!*

We have heard the Macedonian call today,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And our grateful offering at the cross we lay,
Send the light! Send the light!

May the grace of Jesus unto all abound,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
And a Christ-like spirit everywhere be found,
Send the light! Send the light!

L: For My Priest and My Friend

For my priest, my pastor, my shepherd, my friend,
My "Father", my empathy for you knows no end.
In days of suffering, trial and pain,
It is you who I pray Our Dear Lord will sustain.

I always include you in my prayers as you know;
But, of late, I have prayed ever-fervently so.
My heart grieves because of the burden you bear,
Simply because of the collar you wear.

You are the one who directs me, you are the one who shows me the way;
With a presence of love and of mercy, You are "Jesus" to me every day.
Through the Sacraments, His Presence is with me, it is He that you willingly share;
In your everyday words and your actions, by example you show that you care.

You teach and inspire me; I know that you pray
For me, for the faithful, and for those who have swayed
From the arms of God's love, that love the Church gives.
You pray that within us our dear Savior lives.

For now it is my turn to give, and your turn to stand and receive;
From your vocation of selfless giving, its time for a moment's reprieve.
So open your heart to the prayers and the love
That's extended through me from our God up above.

Hang in there, dear Father, you are going to be fine
Find strength in your call, take it one day at a time.
It is my prayer, and of your other sheep too,
That the arms of God's love will carry you.

Rest in that love and the warmth of its glow
In the assurance you're trusted more than you know.
"God bless you, Achens" (and may the whole world hear it!)
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.
Amen.

(Cong. to stand)

Prayer of Confession

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

P: Lord Jesus, we your people pray to You for our priests. You have given them to us to cater for our spiritual needs. We pray for them in their needs.
We know that You have made them priests in the likeness of your own priesthood. You have consecrated them, set them aside, anointed them, filled them with the Holy Spirit, appointed them to teach, to preach, to minister, to console, to forgive, and to feed us with Your Body and Blood.

C:

Yet we know that they are one with us and share our human weaknesses. We know that they are tempted to sin and discouragement as we are, needing to be ministered to, to be consoled and forgiven. Indeed, we thank You for choosing them from among us, so that they understand us as we understand them, suffer with us and rejoice with us, worry with us and trust with us, share our beings, our lives, our faith.

We ask that You give them, Your presence in their hearts, Your holiness in their souls, Your joy in their spirits.

We pray to You, O Lord, for your priests and for us. Amen.

***Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***

Psalm 84

P: How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

C: Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.

P: Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

C: They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.

P: Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.

C: Look on our shield, O God;
look with favor on your anointed one.

P: Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper
in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

C: For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favour and honour;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.
Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

Intercessory Prayers

L: Heavenly Creator, you made priests out of those who came from among us to be people who serve. We are grateful for their ministration of Christ to us and helping us minister Christ to each other. We acknowledge the many gifts they bring to our community: for drawing us together in worship, for visiting us in our homes, for comforting us in sickness, for showing us compassion, for blessing our marriage, for baptising our children, for confirming us in our calling, for supporting us in bereavement, for helping us to grow in faith, for encouraging us to take the initiative and for helping the whole community realise God's presence among us. Amen

C: To be sung
Savior, lead me lest I stray,
Gently lead me all the way;
I am safe when by Thy side,
I would in Thy love abide.

Lead me, lead me,
Savior, lead me lest I stray;

***Gently down the stream of time,
Lead me, Savior, all the way.***

L: Look with mercy, O Lord, on your holy Church throughout the world, on all the bishops who bear the burden of leading and guiding her. We remember and pray for our Bishops- Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Thomas Mar Timotheos, Euyakim Mar Coorilos, Joseph Mar Barnabas, Issac Mar Philoxenos, Abraham Mar Paulose. Mathews Mar Makarios, Gregorios Mar Stephanos, Thomas Mar Theethos, Zacharias Mar Aprem, Dr. Joseph Mar Ivanios and Mathews Mar Seraphim and all the priests and deacons of our Church. Give to each one Your Holy Spirit and lead them through your Word to serve with love.

C: To be sung
Thou the refuge of my soul
When life's stormy billows roll;
I am safe when Thou art nigh,
On Thy mercy I rely.

Lead me, lead me,
Savior, lead me lest I stray;
Gently down the stream of time,
Lead me, Savior, all the way.

L: We pray, O Lord, for institutions established everywhere to spread your gospel. We pray for students who are studying Theology and preparing themselves to be your ministers for the future. We also pray for the new batch of Achens who are being ordained currently in various parishes. Dear Lord be with them always as they face a new life and a new challenge every day. We remember all our Evangelists, and those working in the Missions, Hospitals and Ashrams across the country. Bless them with zeal and hope to face all adversities and problems. We pray for our sexton, office assistants and others who work for the church. Bless them and their families and help us realise their contributions. We submit all those who practise priesthood in some way or the other, by providing, supporting and enriching us. Guide them in their activities and help them to fall back on you, both in times of joy and despair.

C: To be sung
Savior, lead me till at last,
When the storm of life is past,
I shall reach the land of day,
Where all tears are wiped away.

Lead me, lead me,
Savior, lead me lest I stray;
Gently down the stream of time,
Lead me, Savior, all the way.

Frank M. Davis, 1880

Gospel Reading

P: †Peace be with you all.

C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by Apostle **John**.

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

P: In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

C: So, we believe and affirm.

John 10:1-11

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, **†'Peace be with you all'**)

C: We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

The Nicene Creed

P: We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

C: We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified† also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead and of His kingdom there will be no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

(Cong. to be seated)

Birthday & wedding Offertory & Thanksgiving

Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,
Where the flowers are blooming and the sweet waters flow;
Everywhere He leads me I would follow, follow on,
Walking in His footsteps till the crown be won.

*Follow! follow! I would follow Jesus!
Anywhere, everywhere, I would follow on!
Follow! follow! I would follow Jesus!
Everywhere He leads me I would follow on!*

Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,
Where the storms are sweeping and the dark waters flow;
With His hand to lead me I will never, never fear,
Dangers cannot fright me if my Lord is near.

Down in the valley, or upon the mountain steep,
Close beside my Saviour would my heart ever keep;
He will lead me safely in the path that He has trod,
Up to where they gather in the rest of God.

Words: William Orcutt Cushing (1823) Music: Robert Lowry (1826)

Offertory Hymn

Are you sitting idle?
Still there's work to do;
In the Master's vineyard

There's a place for you:
Be a faithful servant,
Ever ready stand.
Where the Master calls you—
Lend a helping hand!

*Lend a hand, lend a hand,
Lend a helping hand;
Weary ones are falling,
Lend a helping hand!
Lend a hand, lend a hand,
Lend a helping hand;
Jesus still is calling,
Lend a helping hand!*

Is your voice now silent?
There are songs to sing;
Come and swell the chorus,
Make His praises ring!
Till the strains are wafted
Over, sea and land,
Reaching up to heaven—
Lend a helping hand!

Do your prayers no longer
Reach the throne of grace,
Asking that some wand'rer
Might his steps retrace?
Earnest prayer may keep him
From the sinking sand;
Yours today may save him—
Lend a helping hand!

Lyrics : J. B. MacKay Music: John Robson Sweney

MESSAGE

(Cong. to stand)

Closing Prayer

P: An Achen's Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank you for this gift of being a shepherd for your people.
When they worry, let me share their tears.
When they laugh, let me celebrate.
When they are sad, let me remember them.
When they pray, let me echo their prayers.
When they need to be heard, let me listen.
When they are being tried, let me encourage them.
When they are lost, send me to find them.
When they are victorious, let me lead the rejoicing.
When they feel unloved, let me remind them of your love.
When they are wounded, let me bring them to your healing.
When they sin, lead me to help them repent.
When they are searching for you, let me point the way.
When they are suffering, give me the strength to sit with them.
O Lord, give me the heart of Christ, the hands of the Spirit and the power of the Word to guide these people. Amen.

C: Dear God, we thank you for choosing our Achens from among us, so that they understand us as we try to understand them, suffer with us and rejoice with us, worry with us and trust with us, share our beings, our lives, our faith. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. Bless their labors with abundant fruit and may the souls to whom they minister be their joy and consolation here and in heaven their beautiful and everlasting crown. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.

Benediction

P: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Galatians 6:14

Dear Lord, bless us in our ministrations, always guiding us and leading us so that we can point out your way, through your word, to these your people. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Doxology and Kiss of Peace

I am thinking today of that beautiful land
I shall reach when the sun goeth down
When through wonderful grace by my Savior I stand
Will there be any stars in my crown

*Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown
When at evening the sun goeth down
When I wake with the blest in those mansions of rest
Will there be any stars in my crown*

O what joy will it be when His face I behold
Living gems at His feet to lay down
It would sweeten my bliss in the city of gold
Should there be any stars in my crown

E. E. Hewitt (1897)