

WEEK 10 “Unending joy” FOR THE DEPARTED, Book of Common Prayer, p. 253

OPENING INVITATION *Read aloud the prayer slowly. After a time of silence each person identifies a word or phrase that catches your attention.*

Eternal Lord God, you hold all souls in life: Give to your whole Church in paradise and on earth your light and your peace; and grant that we, following the good examples of those who have served you here and are now at rest, may at the last enter with them into your unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

If technology and time permit, watch the accompanying video.




CONTEXT & HISTORY OF THE COLLECT *Take a few minutes to discuss the context of the prayer.*

Prayer for the dead is well documented within early Christianity, both among prominent Church fathers and the Christian community in general. An important element in the Christian liturgies both East and West consisted of the diptychs, or lists of names of living and dead commemorated at the Eucharist.

According to the Catechism in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, "We pray for (the dead), because we still hold them in our love, and because we trust that in God's presence those who have chosen to serve him will grow in his love, until they see him as he is."

Consider how the words reflect faith and hope in this life and into eternity. How do the words connect with your sense of being inspired by those who have lived well and been good examples of a service-oriented life?

After allowing each person to share, take a moment in prayer and ask God to speak through the Word. Then read the collect again, together aloud, slowly. Now, let each person read over the collect silently while being on the lookout for three things to notice and perhaps share:

	Light bulb: This should be something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most or draws your attention.
	Question mark: Anything that is difficult to understand in the collect or a question that may be raised as a result.
	Arrow: A personal application from your life.

SCRIPTURE *Read aloud and consider these scriptural verses as they relate to the collect.*

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-14; John 14: 1-2; Romans 14:8; and Psalm 48:14. Discuss the context of the scripture and how it relates to the collect. In light of the promises read in the scripture passages, how are you enabled or inspired to move through this life more faithfully? How does it call upon your imagination about your own walk of faith and legacy?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION *These questions are only suggestions. Use one, all, or none. Create your own questions; let the group decide where the conversation might go.*

1. What is the hope for one who prays this particular collect?
2. Recalling the collect, the video question(s) and scriptural passages: who are the saints now at rest who have stretched your heart, helped you see light or found a glimpse of the promise of unending joy?

CLOSING *Pray the collect together as a group.*

Eternal Lord God, you hold all souls in life: Give to your whole Church in paradise and on earth your light and your peace; and grant that we, following the good examples of those who have served you here and are now at rest, may at the last enter with them into your unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*